

With Affection and Gratitude by Claire Conti, North Providence RI

Where to begin! !

My heart is so filled with gratitude for having had The Four Freshmen perform in Rhode Island. As the smallest state we are generally passed over by most entertainers, so my first kudo goes to Don Boland, our State Rep., for bringing in The Freshmen.

I cannot adequately describe the combined consummate talent genius of The Freshmen. I only know my passion for music tells me they are incomparable. Curtis made the trumpet sounds vacillate between his compelling improvisational jazz and the quiet, sweet treatment of a melody as only Curtis can. Brian's and Vince's interchanging of instruments proves again the versatility and artistic aptitude so natural to each of them. Vince's "Slam Stewart" style with the bass is always fascinating - and his whistling captured my interest and my heart!

Bob's marvelous solo rendition of "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?" was another classic example of his artistic interpretation of a song. The arrangements by Brian were distinctly unique and brilliant. What a group!!!

Curtis, Brian, Vince and Bob - - We here in little Rhody may not be as large an audience as you experience elsewhere, but you will never find a more appreciative, a more loving, a more dedicated group of fans so fiercely devoted to The Four Freshmen. Please come back again soon!

VOCAL GROUP HALL OF FAME STATUS by Bruce Camlin

Our local paper (Record-Argus, Greenville, PA, about 15 miles from Sharon and the Hall) (AP) included the following information (November 26, 2004):

Tony Butala, the museum's chairman and founder, accused James E. Winner, Jr., from whom the museum was renting a building, of interfering and trying to profit from the nonprofit hall.

"Quite frankly, you have interfered and muddled enough," Butala, an original member of The Lettermen, wrote in a letter to Winner.

Winner, who along with Butala was most responsible for the hall's creation, said Wednesday that the hall had improperly removed property he and others owned. He withdrew from the hall in 2002 and has said that it was being mismanaged. He said hall officials "basically took everything that wasn't nailed down."

Sharon police arrived at the hall on Tuesday night when Bob Crosby, its chief executive officer, was directing workers to remove memorabilia, chairs, glass cases and other items into rental moving trucks. Police allowed Crosby to take what had already been loaded on a truck and told the men to resolve the matter in court. Winner said he would pursue a case in either civil or criminal court.

OOOHHH'S and AAAHHH'S in PENNSYLVANIA

by Larry V. Thren, Southeast PA Rep

On a very chilly, rain swept November 4th evening in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, the Freshmen entertained an enthusiastic audience of over 700. The occasion was the featured event of the 2004-2005 Anthracite Concert Association, held at Pottsville Area High School.

Oooohh's and Aaahhh's were plentiful throughout the evening concert by the Freshmen as they entertained the audience with 30 wonderful songs from their vast repertoire along with their humor and banter that we have all come to enjoy.

In addition to the enticing harmonies of the Freshmen was Bob's announcement during the first half of the concert of the Freshmen's first studio album in a long, long time. The CD will contain mostly unrecorded Freshmen songs. The loudest applause of the evening came from one of those songs from the new CD - "That Old Feeling" - a Chet Baker uptempo number complete with a Vince Johnson whistle segment. Bob announced that the CD would be called "Four Freshmen In Session" and would be available in about 2 months. Two other Brian arrangements from the new CD that the group sang were "Skylark" and "Somethings Gotta Give."

From the opening "Day In-Day Out" to the closing "We'll Be Together Again" the Freshmen were at their best - smooth, smooth and more smooth! In the solo area, Bob's "How Do You Keep The Music Playing," Curtis' "You Changed," Brian's "If I Only Had A Brain," and Vince's "Round The World" showcased the Four's individual vocal talents.

Stepping upstage away from the microphones was another highlight of the evening, where the Freshmen sang 3 songs, giving the audience a more intimate experience of the silky harmonies of the group.

As if their music wasn't enough, the audience was treated to a 4-page 'program' for the evening complete with 5-color photographs and an extensive biography of each of the Freshmen. In Bob's bio, the longest of the four, he declares "Yeah, I'm kind of like the big man on campus. The other guys really look up to me." With tongue in cheek, he further states, "It's kind of embarrassing that I'm this popular." But Bob concludes "I'm just a normal guy."

I disagree - "normal" denotes average, and neither is a word to describe The Four Freshmen. "Extraordinary" fits a whole bunch better, as it did that evening in Pottsville, Pennsylvania.