

Our Trip to See the Four Freshmen in Bradenton

by Ray Gardner

I'm extremely thankful for receiving an early Christmas gift to myself! Yesterday the good lady drove me south to Bradenton and the Neel Performing Arts Center - a 2 1/2 hour drive - and worth every second of it because again we got to see Bob Ferreira, Jonathon Gaines, Stein Eric Malvey and Tommy Boynton. To me and many other adoring fans, Bob is undoubtedly the greatest singer and on the same level as Frank Sinatra and other greats. And he's been with the Four Freshmen now for twenty-five years of the seventy years the group has been together entertaining millions of fans all over the world.

We were also privileged to see and chat with Barbara and Mel Meyers (and she edits this *Fresh News* every quarter) and Bob and Candy Suhrheinrich who hosted the annual FFS Convention when it came to Tampa, Florida a couple of years ago. Was very relieved to hear that God answered prayers for the Meyers' son, Matt, who recently underwent successful surgery.

Bob and the "boys" gave a packed house and very appreciative audience nearly a 2 1/2 hour show beginning with a rousing rendition of ten-thousand-five-hundred drums *Day In Day Out* followed by *Give Me The Simple Life* and then began the first of many Christmas tunes throughout the program - *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*. A lot of enjoyable humor was injected throughout the concert before beautiful songs such as *It Could Happen To You* - *Let Me Love You* - *Laura* - *I'll Be Home For Christmas* - *Love Is Just Around The Corner* - *Angel Eyes* - *It's Beging To Look A Lot Like Christmas* - *Masquerade* and *There Will Never Be Another You* just before taking a short break. Upon returning they again pleased the audience with *Walking In A Winter Wonderland* followed by *Ain't Seen Nothin' Like You* before launching into their gorgeous arrangement of Claude Thornhill's *Snowfall*. Bob related some information about the very early days and how the song *Graduation Day* had been banned by some colleges and radio stations in the fifties. They then got everybody toe-tapping as they did two of their recent Latin-flavored songs - *So Danco Samba* and the *Girl From Ipanema*. They performed *Christmastime Is Here* from their "Snowfall" CD and

followed that with *Come Fly With Me* - *I'm Dreaming Of A White Christmas* - *When I Fall In Love* - *Well Alright, OK, You Win* - *Day By Day* and *The Christmas Song*. Finishing up, they went back to the beginning again, paying special tribute to Group #1, Ross and Don Barbour, Hal Kratzsch and Bob Flanigan and singing their first big hit *It's A Blue World* and *Route 66*. Following a standing ovation they graced us with another one of their beautiful ballads *Poinciana*.

As always, they very graciously came to the foyer and signed autographs and chatted for a long time with a lot of their appreciative fans and I got to thank each of them and wish them all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Just my opinion but I will never understand what talent such as this isn't duly recognized as the best in the country. They should be showcased on every television show that features singing and entertainment. To me they've always been the best as well as the World's Greatest Jazz Vocal Recording Artists in the History of Music!

