



Fresh News

Volume 33, No.1

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2019

Denver, CO 2019



The Four Freshmen Society Convention

Logo by Dan de la Torre



Our President, **Neil Lantz**



LOOKING BACK... LOOKING AHEAD

Happy New Year to the best vocal jazz fan club in the world! 2018 was a great year for the Four Freshmen Society, and 2019 promises to be even greater. Marking the 70th year of the Four Freshmen, Group #25 entertained thousands of fans in their 2018 concerts from coast to coast and their December appearances in Tokyo, Japan and Beijing, China. The Freshmen appearances for 2019 begin on January 12th at the Metropolis Performing Arts Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Be sure to keep up with their tour schedule included in each issue of Fresh News and on the Society website, fourfreshmensociety.com.

A 2018 highlight was the 31st annual Society Convention held in South Bend last October. Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Larry and Janet Thompson, the event offered ample musical opportunity for attendees' participation and/or listening pleasure, including the FFS jam session, three days of Wannabee singing under the direction of Freshmen alum Greg Stegeman, and two wonderful concerts by the Freshmen. Tours of the Notre Dame campus and the Studebaker National Museum were included in the Friday schedule. And, of course, the opportunity to meet new Society members and renew friendships with others on this annual occasion is always a joy.

Relative to the chairmanship of our conventions, I'd like to salute the many FFS members who've stepped up over the past 31 years to chair or co-chair this annual event. Nearly four dozen members have volunteered their time and energy since the inaugural gathering was held in Las Vegas, September, 1988.

And this year, planning is well underway by Co-chairs Kathy Bazz and Nancy Driscoll for the 2019 event in Denver, September 5-7 at the DoubleTree by Hilton. Registration details are included in this edition, and I hope you'll plan to join hundreds of your fellow Freshmen fans in beautiful Colorado. Registration will be accepted beginning February 1st. Please remember that seating is arranged by postmarked date or online date (ON OR AFTER 2/1/19) of the last member of your party. Online registration opens Feb 1st at ffs2019.com.

Still another significant FFS accomplishment in 2018 was the establishment of the Four Freshmen Society Facebook Group. Working with Bob, Stein, and Tommy, Jon Gaines proposed this important

undertaking and, upon approval by the FFS Board of Directors, agreed to manage its administration. Jon provides a monthly progress report, and the results have been very impressive. In the first six months, he reported that nearly 800 persons joined the new Facebook Group, "a great place for fans to tell their stories, share their favorite recordings, and talk about the Four Freshmen as well as other great music."

Of special importance is the number of newly interested Facebook members who have become paid members of the Society, averaging nearly ten each month. Given the growing interest in social media, kudos to Jon and the other Freshmen for their ideas, participation, and support in this effort. If you haven't yet joined the (free) FFS Facebook Group, I urge you to do so. I'm hopeful that our Facebook presence will continue to expand the visibility of the Society to fans who've enjoyed Freshmen music over the years as well as to introduce some younger fans to the group and to the FFS. Your participation is most appreciated.

Best wishes for a great 2019, and I hope to see you in Denver.

FROM SOUTH BEND TO DENVER

by Gil Peterson

I think everyone who attended would agree that our South Bend 2018 Convention was extremely well-planned, exciting and beautifully executed. We, of course, owe all of that to Larry and Janet Thompson and their entire 2018 committee. We owe them all a huge round of applause! **THANK YOU!**

I believe you will also agree that our Thursday Night Jam Session was certainly one of the very best ever. Our masterful emcee, Dave Blackwell, not only demonstrated his remarkable musical skills, but directed the jam session perfectly. Thanks, Dave. What would we do without you? We also had a new participant by the name of Mark Schlichting who mesmerized us all with his jazz fiddle playing. He was truly one of the stars of the show. I hope we see him again in Denver.

Friday and Saturday evening dinners/concerts in the South Bend Century Center Discovery Ball Room were simply superb. Food, service, and sound were outstanding. The Truth in Jazz big band were about as good as it gets. I thought I might have heard a little Kenton, but perhaps I was wrong. Anyway, they were great. The Freshmen were right at the top of their game, as usual. You know by their sound that they all truly believe in the music and the iconic Freshmen sound. They were simply outstanding! The Saturday evening dedications to some of our members added a very special highlight to the evening. What lovely and thoughtful tributes from the Freshmen. Thanks, Group 25.

The Saturday night 70th Year Moment of Celebration was very special, especially to those of us who have followed them through the years. There is no other group that I am aware of that has continuously performed for seven decades. Lets go for seven more!

Clifton Boyd, one of the first recipients of a Four Freshmen Music Foundation grant, gave a very interesting and technical presentation. He is a distinguished music scholar at Yale University. We are very proud of him and wish him only the very best.

What a great convention. Now it is time to look forward to our 2019 Convention in Denver. Denver is a wonderful destination city with endless opportunities for visitors. Kathy Bazz and Nancy Driscoll, our Co-Chairs, have assembled an enthusiastic committee dedicated to delivering another blockbuster convention. You will be reading a lot about this in the Fresh News. Airlines from all over the world fly into Denver. Transportation from the airport to the hotel is very simple and inexpensive. I strongly suggest that you get your registrations in early, beginning February 1, 2019. I am certainly looking forward to seeing each of you and sharing another wonderful musical adventure together.

SEE YOU THERE!

COME TO COLORFUL COLORADO

AND THE 32nd ANNUAL FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2019

DENVER FACTS

- Denver's State Capital is 5,280 feet above sea level (the Mile High City)
- The yearly 300 days of sunshine brings tourists from around the world
- There is a spectacular 120-mile vista of the mountains (always to the West)
- Downtown features the walkable 16th Street Mall with free shuttles to restaurants and shopping. The gold-domed Capitol is on one end of the Mall and the restored Union Station is on the other. Union Station has plenty of restaurants and history to boot.



- Denver is the #3 hottest food city in the US according to Zagat.
- The Coors Brewery (in Golden) is close by. They give a great tour and offer free samples at the end!
- The low hotel rates are good for three days before and three days after the convention.



SO... Plan to extend your vacation around the convention dates where you'll hear the world-renowned vocal and instrumental quartet... The Four Freshmen and then enjoy Colorful Colorado!

TOUR 1: ENJOY DOWNTOWN DENVER

Friday, September 6th, 2019 • 9:00am-1:00pm* • \$45 (no lunch)

If you don't have a full day to tour or are only interested in seeing downtown Denver, we have just the tour for you. Beginning at 9:00, you will travel to downtown Denver visiting the iconic Colorado sights such as Union Station, the Broncos Mile High Stadium, the Rockies Coors Field, and the Pepsi Center featuring the Denver Nuggets and the Colorado Avalanche. We'll continue to Confluence Park with its rich history during the Gold Rush days, The Denver Art Museum, Library, Convention Center (Did you know there is a big blue bear in Denver?), and Colorado Capitol – including a photo opportunity on the "One Mile High" Capitol step. We'll see the entertainment venues, historic homes including the Molly Brown House and the Brown Palace Hotel. There will even be a special treat for us as we visit the Denver Money Museum where I've heard there's FREE money! Depending on time, you can browse/shop on the downtown Denver mall with its free mall shuttle. Then you can return to the hotel on the tour bus or stay in the Mile High city as long as you want and return on the light rail. The best part will be the professional Colorado guides sharing Colorado's rich Western history and the famous (and not so famous) Cowboy stories! This tour is perfect if you have limited time or are not interested in going to the mountains.



All tours travel by coach with professional guides and complimentary water. There will be some easy walking at the venues, and we

will be at approximately 5,280 feet above sea level. Register soon for the tours as we expect them to fill up quickly. If you have questions, please e-mail Betty Ball at B.L.Ball@comcast.net.

*Please meet in the hotel lobby at 8:45am. Our guides introduce themselves and begin telling stories before boarding the bus.



TOUR 2: EXPLORE DENVER AND MOUNTAIN AREA

Friday, September 6th, 2019 • 8:30am-2:30pm* • \$68 (incl. lunch)

Join your friends and explore the sights of Denver and the mountains including Red Rocks Amphitheater and Museum, Buffalo Bill's Grave and novelty store, the Continental Divide, Lookout Mountain, downtown Golden, Coors Brewery, lunch, and more. Bring your cameras because the views are spectacular and one-of-a-kind. Then travel back to Denver viewing and visiting iconic Colorado sights such as Union Station, sports stadiums, Confluence Park with its rich history during the Gold Rush days, and the Colorado Capitol Building including a photo opportunity on the Capitol steps at exactly the "One Mile" marker – 5,280 feet. We'll see the eye-catching entertainment venues and historic sites such as the Molly Brown House as well as the famous Brown Palace Hotel. Did you know we have a huge blue bear in Denver? We'll see him and the Colorado Convention Center on the tour. You'll then have time to browse/shop on the famous downtown Denver walking mall or take the tour bus back to the hotel. The best part will be the professional Colorado guides sharing Colorado's rich Western history and the famous (and not so famous) Cowboy stories! This is the only way to see Denver AND the mountains in one day!

All tours travel by coach with professional guides and complimentary water. There will be some easy walking at the venues, and we will be between 5,280 and 7,800 feet above sea level.

Register soon for the tours as we expect them to fill up quickly. If you have questions, please e-mail Betty Ball at B.L.Ball@comcast.net.

*Please meet in the hotel lobby at 8:15am.

Our guides introduce themselves and begin telling stories before boarding the bus.



ACCOMMODATIONS & TRANSPORTATION

DoubleTree by Hilton Denver Hotel, 3203 Quebec Street*, Denver, CO 80207 • 303.321.1333

* There are two DoubleTree by Hilton Hotels on Quebec St. - 8 blocks from one another. You want the southernmost one - 3203 Quebec St., not the Stapleton North one at 4040 Quebec St.

Via Uber App

- Request your ride after you have landed and collected your bags
- You will be asked to choose a terminal (East or West) and a door number on the 6th floor where you will meet your driver
- Look for the Uber U in the window and confirm your driver's name and license plate #
- Price varies from \$22 to \$30. Rates are based on demand.

Via Taxi

- Taxicabs are readily available at the curb outside DIA
- East Terminal: Island 1, exit door 507
- West Terminal: Island 1, exit door 510
- Estimated cost is \$55 depending on the cab company
- Confirm the cost before you take off

Via Super Shuttle

- You can reserve a seat at <http://group.super-shuttle.com/group-page/airport-shuttles-to-from-doubletree-byhilton-hotel-denver/?gc=KAG9K>.
- Estimated cost is \$39 each way

Via Light Rail

- Use the A-Line train service
- Train cars feature overhead storage, luggage towers and two wheelchair spaces
- Leaves every 15-30 minutes (last train leaves just after 1:00am)
- There are ticket vending machines inside the terminal (cost is \$5.25/senior rate/one way)
- Board beneath the Westin Hotel (follow the signs inside the terminal)
- Take the train to the Central Park Station
- The DoubleTree shuttle picks up guests at the Central Park Station area A-1
- Call the hotel (303.321.1333) to request a pick-up at area A-1
- Estimated time to hotel is 23 minutes

All prices are subject to change.

2019 FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY CONVENTION REGISTRATION INFORMATION

(This information gives further details regarding the Registration Form)

REGISTRATION INFORMATION: Registration begins February 1, 2019. You may register online at **FFS2019.com** or register by mail and pay by check or credit card using the registration form provided. Please provide all requested information including preferred first **and** last names (for name badges).

TABLE ASSIGNMENTS: Please provide all names of others you want seated at your table. Encourage your preferred tablemates to mail or create their online registrations early. **Seating will be arranged by postmark date or online registration date of the last member in your party. MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED ON THE SAME DATE WILL BE SELECTED BY A LOTTERY.**

HOTEL INFORMATION: We recommend you make your hotel reservations early (even before February). Rooms at the DoubleTree by Hilton will be reserved on a first-come, first served basis. Rates for the convention are guaranteed for \$124 plus tax per night for two double beds or a king bed. These rates will be available also for three days before and three days after the convention dates of September 5, 6 and 7, 2019.

TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM: Call DoubleTree by Hilton reservations at 303-321-3333. Be sure to mention the Four Freshmen Society Group rate.

COMMEMORATIVE SHIRTS: The shirts are collared **blue denim**, Ladies' and Men's sizes with our 2019 convention logo. Please order shirts with your registration as shirts will be NOT available for purchase at the convention.

JAM SESSION (MEMBERS' TALENT NIGHT): A great evening of jazz. A talented local jazz group will anchor the evening's festivities as convention attendees perform. Please indicate your song, key, and instrument on the registration form so that the group will be prepared to accompany your song.

TOURS:

Friday, September 6 **Tour #1** (\$45/person) embarks from the hotel at 9:00 AM by bus for Downtown Denver. Lunch is not provided.

Friday, September 6 **Tour #2** (\$68/person) embarks from the hotel at 8:30 AM by bus for the Downtown Denver & Surrounding Mountain Area including lunch.

All gratuities are included in the price of each tour.

MENU VARIATIONS: Please specify if you require vegetarian for evening meals.

REGISTRATION FEES: Early registration, prior to June 1, is encouraged and must be accompanied by payment. Every effort will be made to accommodate late registrations, but priority dinner seating cannot be guaranteed.

PAYMENT SUMMARY: Please complete all information on the Registration Form and forward with your payments. You may pay by check or credit card. If paying by credit card, add \$6 per person to cover the processing fee. Only **MEMBERS** of the Four Freshmen Society may attend this convention. Non-members will be able to join the FFS for \$15 (single or couple—please indicate). Feel free to duplicate the registration form for your non-member friends who may be interested in attending the convention.

TRANSPORTATION FROM AIRPORT TO HOTEL: Light Rail (The **A** Line from DIA to Central Park Station), Uber, Lyft and Taxi are available. You may also rent a car at the airport. Please see the FreshNews for complete details.

HOTEL PARKING: Parking at the hotel is complimentary.

Be sure to read registration information in this FreshNews before filling this form

2019 FOUR FRESHMEN SOCIETY CONVENTION
Denver, Colorado September 5 – 7, 2019

Send form to: Nancy Driscoll
6648 King Street
Denver, CO 80221

PLEASE PRINT

QUESTIONS? 303-600-8496 or 303-921-3215

NAME(S) _____
(First Name) (Last Name) (First Name) (Last Name)

Address _____

Phone# _____
Email _____

City, State, Zip _____

COMMEMORATIVE SHIRT: \$38 EACH (shirts will not be available for purchase at the convention)
Enter NUMBER of shirts wanted by size and gender

MEN (____small) (____med) (____large) (____XL) (____XXL) (____XXXL)

WOMEN (____small) (____med) (____large) (____XL) (____XXL)

MENU SELECTIONS: Do you need vegetarian meals? How Many Friday _____ Saturday _____

HOTEL INFORMATION: Have you made your **DoubleTree by Hilton** reservation? Yes _____ No _____
3203 Quebec St, Denver, CO 80207 303-321-3333
Rates are \$124 / night including breakfast
Rates apply three days before and/or three days after convention date (if rooms are available).
Complimentary Parking
(See Registration Information in FreshNews or the ffs2019.com website for hotel reservation procedure)

REGISTRATION FEE: **POSTMARKED (or online) FEBRUARY 1 to JUNE 1, 2019 - \$195** per person
POSTMARKED (or online) after JUNE 1, 2019 - \$215 per person

Cancellations – Cancellations with full refund before June 1, 2019. Cancellations from June 1 to August 1 will incur a \$50 processing fee. **NO REFUNDS AFTER AUGUST 1, 2019**

TABLE SEATING: Tables of eight. List name of those you want at your table. **SEATING IS ARRANGED BY REGISTRATION POSTMARK or ONLINE DATE OF LAST MEMBER IN YOUR PARTY. MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED ON THE SAME DATE WILL BE SELECTED BY LOTTERY.**

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____

TOURS: Tours will be on Friday September 6th

Tour #1 Four hour Downtown Denver Tour (lunch not provided) 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM **\$45**

Tour #2 Downtown Denver & Surrounding Mountain Area (lunch provided) 8:30 AM–3:00 PM **\$68**

JAM SESSION: Plan to perform at the Thursday night **Musical Jam Session:** _____ Yes _____ No

Since this will be a **Musical Jam Session** and time is limited, we will need your song, key and instrument by May 1, 2019 so we can be ready for you.

PAYMENT SUMMARY:

REGISTRATION: \$195 (or \$215 after June 1, 2017) _____ people @ _____ each = _____

Add \$6 per person if paid by credit card _____ people @ \$6 each = _____

COMMEMORATIVE SHIRTS: men's _____ women's _____ @ \$38 each = _____

TOURS: Tour #1 Downtown Denver _____ @ \$45 each = _____

Tour #2 Downtown Denver & Mountain Area _____ @ \$68 each = _____

NEW MEMBERS ONLY: Four Freshmen Society Membership Fee \$15 = _____

(\$15 fee applies to couple OR single) Couple _____ Single _____

Name if different from above. _____ **TOTAL** = _____

PAYMENT BY CHECK IS ENCOURAGED: Please make checks payable to **FFS CONVENTION 2019** Check No _____

Credit Card: Charge my Amex _____ Discover _____ Mastercard _____ Visa _____

Card Number _____ Expiration Date ____/____

Signature _____ Print Name on Card _____

Card Holder's complete address including zip code _____

Beginning February 1, 2019 you may register online at: <http://www/ffs2019.com>

Form 12/12/2018

Corporate Board of Directors

Mel Meyers, Chairman 419-205-6648
Gil Peterson, Vice Chairman 541-672-0937
Neil Lantz, President 317-849-7443
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Fresh News is published quarterly © 2019, all rights reserved, celebrating THE FOUR FRESHMEN, the best vocal/instrumental quartet in the world. Publication does not imply approval of FFS corporate directors or trustees. Each author is responsible for his/her article.

Deadlines for consideration of articles:

1. Jan/Feb/March - Dec 15
2. Apr/May/June - March 15
3. July/Aug/Sept - June 15
4. Oct/Nov/Dec - Sept 15

Submit manuscripts to the Editor:

Barb Meyers, bam241136@gmail.com, Cell 419-309-7855

FFS New Member/or Renewal Form

Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

(9 digit zip please)

Telephone # _____

Fax # _____

E-mail _____

New Member Fee: \$15 Single or Couple (worldwide)

All Renewals: One Year \$25

Two or more years \$20 each year

FFS dues are not tax deductible.

Please mail form and correct fee to:

Chaz Cone

FFS Membership Dept.

6900 Hunters Knoll NE

ATLANTA GA 30328-1763

Or online at dues.fourfreshmensociety.com

New Members

JB & Barbara Bachmann, Noblesville, IN	Judith Diane Hite, South Bend, IN
Betty & Doug Ball, Golden, CO	Ann & Steve Karsten, Niles, MI
Janeen & Gene Barrett, Ottawa, OH	Jeff & Amber Leaptrott, West Linn, OR
Jerry & Gloria Bass, Corpus Christi, TX	Peggy Lindahl, Fullerton, CA
Janice Bella, North Liberty, IN	Mike Mitchell, Louisville, KY
Becky Bonham, South Bend, IN	Clint Newell, Roseburg, OR
Jill Burk, New York, NY	Ron & Nancy Orman, Fort Wayne, IN
Robert Burris, Columbus, IN	Diana Peterson, Roseburg, OR
Carol & Don Collins, Westfield, IN	Michael & Nancy Rader, Leipsic, OH
Jerry & Lani Doyle, Las Vegas, NV	Fred & Annette Retliff, Kyle, TX
Victor & Mark Evans, Grand Rapids, MI	Brenda Smith, Kansas City, MO
Chick Fleming, Hinsdale, IL	Bud Smith, Winchester, OR
Karen & Frank Gray, South Bend, IN	Sean Smith, Roseburg, OR
Ross Hansen, Roseburg, OR	Paul Walton & Marcia Palmer, Woodstock, MD
Jim & Jamice Herndon, Ada, OK	

Contributors

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Tony Leone, Washington, PA	Jim Sheckler, Lancaster, PA
	Bob Sincavage, Endicott, NY

The Four Freshmen Society Inc.

Item	Cost	QTY	Total
5 Trombones/5 Trumpets	\$15.00		
50 Years Fresh	\$15.00		
Capitol Collector Series	\$15.00		
Culmination - Greg Stegeman (*)	\$15.00		
Faux Freshmen - Scratchin' the Surface	\$10.00		
Faux Freshmen - Seasons of the Heart	\$10.00		
Faux Freshmen - Unsung	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen (Jazz Factory)	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen and Friends	\$15.00		
Freshmas	\$15.00		
Freshmen Year/Voices in Latin	\$15.00		
Golden Anniversary	\$15.00		
Graduation Day	\$15.00		
In Session	\$15.00		
Ken Albers Arrangements	\$28.00		
Live at Butler	\$15.00		
Live at Clearwater	\$15.00		
Live at Constitution Hall 1979 (Previously Unissued)(*)	\$15.00		
Live at Penn State (*)	\$15.00		
Live at the Franklin	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas CD	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas DVD	\$15.00		
Live from Vegas (DVD & CD)	\$25.00		
Live in Holland	\$15.00		
Live in the New Millennium	\$15.00		
Live Trombones	\$15.00		
Lost Soul - Curtis Calderon	\$15.00		
Love Songs	\$15.00		
More 5 Trombones/In Person Vol. 2	\$15.00		
Remembering Ken (*)	\$15.00		
Return to Romance/Live in Manchester (*)	\$15.00		
Road Shows	\$15.00		
Road to Portsmouth (*)	\$15.00		
Snowfall	\$15.00		
Star Spangled Banner - Single CD	\$5.00		
Star Spangled Banner - Five Pack	\$20.00		
Still Fresh	\$15.00		
The Liberty Years	\$15.00		
Through the Years (*)	\$15.00		
Voices in Brass/In Person Vol. 1	\$15.00		
Voices in Standards	\$15.00		
Four Freshmen and Friends LP	\$20.00		
"Now You Know" (Leather Bound Book)	\$100.00		
Book is \$120 for orders outside US			

Subtotal

Shipping - \$1 per CD for US orders
 \$4 per LP for US orders
 Foreign Country: actual shipping costs for CDs
 and LPs, \$20 for "Now You Know" book

Total

(*) Available to Members Only

Please use "Return Address" label when available - Thanks

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____ - _____

Email: _____

Name on Card: _____

Visa _____ MC _____ AMEX _____ Disc _____

CC #: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration Date: ____/____/____

Please Complete: then

1) mail to: FFS Music Mart
 Barbara Emerson, Director
 74 Doncaster Lane
 Bluffton, SC 29909

or

2) fax: 866-538-9044

or

3) call 843-271-6001
 or 888-448-7429

or

4) email: johnejazz@sc.rr.com

Make check payable to:

The Four Freshmen Society, Inc.

In 1979, the Airmen of Note under the direction of Dave Steinmeyer had a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. They had, as their guests, The Four Freshmen (group 6). That concert was preserved from the sound board by Dave Barnes. It was then cleaned up by Paul Halac. The result was a "new" CD of the Four Freshmen Live at Constitution Hall in 1979, backed by the Airmen of Note, the premier jazz ensemble of the U.S. Air Force. The Music Mart has embarked on a plan to find and release these rare recordings, particularly in years when there is no new CD from the Freshmen themselves. While the Society has done this in the past, we will now try to be more aggressive in this endeavor. We hope to have a "new" CD ready for each convention. We hope you enjoy this new material. Barbara Emerson

Visiting Rod Henley in Las Vegas

by Yas Ichiura

Many of you must know that Rod Henley was a member of the Four Freshmen in group #8 and #11, for almost five years, singing fourth part and playing bass and trombone. He has also been known as a Master of Ceremony of Jam Sessions at previous FFS Conventions. He sings and plays piano at the same time, that you must have enjoyed several times.

Unfortunately, he couldn't join 2018 FFS Convention in South Bend, as his teaching schedule at CSN (College of Southern Nevada) conflicted with our event.



Michiko and I had already planned to stay in Las Vegas after South Bend, before we knew he wouldn't be available. So, I asked for any chance to see him in Las Vegas. His answer was very positive.

To make a long story short, we were invited to his home, for observing the rehearsal of his vocal band Jazzmin, consisting of three men and three women, including his partner, Kathy. They concentrated on rehearsing more Christmas songs at this time of a year. It was amazing for me to see that Rod playing piano, singing his part, and conducting the group at the same time. Michiko and I were so impressed to hear them singing totally acoustically without mics and amps. It was really beautiful. Rod and Kathy kindly invited us for dinner afterwards.

Next morning, he picked us at our hotel and drove us to Ghost Town in Nelson, then to Hoover Dam. He also arranged COMP tickets to *Vegas The Show* for us. We enjoyed dancing and singing, as well as the band playing. It would have never been such a nice and enjoyable stay in Las Vegas, if Rod didn't treat us so well.

Thank you Rod and Kathy!



The Four Freshmen...On the Road!

Check the Website: fourfreshmensociety.com or fourfreshmen.com for updates

For bookings: International Ventures Incorporated

Dale Sheets & Dina Sheets-Roth

P.O. Box 256, McGregor, TX 76657

Phone: 661-259-4500

Email: info@ivimanagement.com

Please note: Dates subject to change without notice.

2019

January 12, 2019

Arlington Heights, IL

Metropolis Performing Arts Center, 111 West Campbell St.

Showtimes: TBA

Tickets: 847-577-2121

January 27, 2019

Reading, PA

Pops 50th Anniversary Celebration, Reading Pops Orchestra,
Miller Center for the Arts, 4 North Second St.

Showtime: 3:00p

Tickets: 610-607-6270

February 16, 2019

Wichita, KS

Crown Uptown Theatre, 3207 E Douglas Ave.

Showtime: 7:30p

Tickets: 316-612-7696

February 22, 2019

North Hollywood, CA

El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lanershim Blvd.

Showtime: 8:00p

Tickets: 818-508-4200

February 24, 2019

San Juan Capistrano, CA

The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano

Showtime: 7:00p

Tickets/dinner reservations: 949-496-8930

March 2, 2019

Aiken, SC

Aiken Performing Arts Center, AECOM Theater, 126 Newberry St. SW

Showtime: 2:00p and 7:30p

Tickets: 803-648-1438

March 20, 2019

Abingdon, VA

Barter Theatre, 127 W Main St.

Showtime: 7:00p

March 22, 2019

Bonita Springs, FL

First Presbyterian Church, 9751 Bonita Beach Rd. SE

Showtimes: 2:00p and 7:00p

Information: 239-992-3410 x250

Admission is free but you must pick up tickets around March 15, 2019

March 24, 2019

Sarasota, FL

Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 7333 Scotland Way

Showtime: 2:00p

Tickets: 941-552-5325

April 13, 2019

Redwood City, CA

Fox Theater, 2215 Broadway St.

Salute to Glenn Miller and The Big Band Leaders

Showtime: 2:00p

Tickets: 650-298-3427

April 26, 2019

Hastings, MI

Hastings Performing Arts Center, Hastings High School, 520 W South St.

Showtime: 7:00p

Tickets: 269-945-2002

An analysis of the Four Freshmen “Sound” from 1992

by John Modschiedler

A few years ago Palle Christensen (FFS-Denmark) brought an interesting publication to the attention of FFS member John Modschiedler (a professor at the College of DuPage in Illinois). The work in question, by Matthias Becker, was apparently originally written as a doctoral thesis in Germany.

Subsequently it has been published in book form titled: *Chormusik Im Jazz*. Schulz-Kirchner Verlag. Idstein 1992

As with many Freshmen fan stories, Palle and John both followed up. In the summer of 1992, John and his wife traveled to Germany and contacted Matthias Becker to get his permission to translate his reference to The Four Freshmen so that English-speaking fans could share his splendid work.

What follows is John Modschiedler's translation: Becker, Matthias. *Chormusik Im Jazz (Choral Music in Jazz)*

Idstein, Germany: Schultz-Kirchner, 1992. ISBN 3-8248-0066-7.

Part I ...

4.2.1 The Four Freshmen

As the Four Freshmen began their musical career, the public's demand for big band dance music had significantly declined. The prosperity of the big band epoch belonged to the past, and the number of close harmony groups had been correspondingly decimated.

The Four Freshmen, along with the Mel-Tones, belong to the few quartets of the post-swing era who sought their success without being dependent upon an instrumental ensemble.¹ After an approximately 15-year dependence upon the big bands, the final emancipation of choral singing--it was actually a symbiotic relationship--was brought about by these two vocal groups.

In 1947, under the leadership of Ross Barbour,* the Four Freshmen got together as first year students (Freshmen) at the Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music of Butler University in Indianapolis. They sang under the name of The Toppers Barbershops, in close harmony style, and sought to emulate the famous Mills Brothers and the Ink Spots.

Fresh News Editor's Note: According to Ross Barbour the leadership in 1947 was actually provided by Hal Kratzsch. But perhaps that's just Barbour modesty.

In September 1948 the quartet made its way to Chicago as numerous vocal ensembles had also done before them, for that is where the lure of big booking agents was, and numerous radio stations were looking for innovative musicians. However, the Toppers (The Four Freshmen), with their epigonic/inherited singing style, were not able to offer any musical innovations with the result that they were at first rejected by music agents. In spite of these painful experiences they began to pursue their professional career path; on the 20th of September they made their debut at the Club 113 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and thereafter went on tour for two years with little success.

In 1950 Stan Kenton² heard the quartet at the Esquire Club in Dayton, Ohio, and recommended them to Capitol Records for whom Kenton produced and recorded his own record albums. There had already been a previous verbal agreement by the Four Freshmen regarding a future collaboration with Woody Herman and his orchestra, but the record contract promised the quartet more independence, and the negotiations to cooperate with Herman were broken off. Moreover, Kenton brought a ray of hope: "We were ready to break up when he (Stan Kenton) came to see us. We had already made up our minds that we were going to go another five or six months and then give up."³

There was such little public demand for the first recordings that Capitol already considered terminating the relationship. However, in 1952 the song title *It's a Blue World* brought about the commercial breakthrough.⁴ Beginning in 1953 the quartet gave innumerable concerts in colleges and universities and thereby won people over to this kind of singing arranged for several voices.⁵ "The reason we have stayed around as long as we have is that from 1953 to 1964 we played at more than 2,000 colleges and universities."⁶ The Four Freshmen thereby followed the example of Stan Kenton, Dave Brubeck, and other musicians. "Kenton was the most powerful force in the development of the stage band movement in colleges and universities.... It has undoubtedly raised the level of American and ultimately world musicianship."⁷

Footnotes

¹ Not taken into account in this case are the bebop vocal groups who accentuated other things with their solo singing and scat improvisations.

² Stan Kenton collaborated again and again with different vocal groups. Cf. The Pastels, The Modern Men.

³ Bob Flanagan (sic) on 19 Apr 89 in an interview with Lillian Arganian after a concert in Columbus, Ohio. File of unknown origin at (Rutgers University).

⁴ Cf. the analysis on p. 171 (of the original, PART II below).

⁵ Certainly not only on the basis of these activities are the universities and colleges still important fertile ground for vocal groups (e.g., The Axidentals, New York Voices, The P.M. Singers, Take 6) and the education of an interested audience.

⁶ Bob Flanagan (sic), cited from John S. Wilson in The New York Times, 23 Feb. 79.

⁷ Lees 1987; 64.

With their tours in Europe, Asia, and the USA, regular television, radio, club, and film appearances (Lucy Gallant; Rich, Young and Pretty), as well as almost 40 long-playing records, The Four Freshmen belong to the few jazz, and jazz-related popular music, vocal ensembles actually known around the world.

The record albums with an instrumental section and a rhythm group: five trombones, five saxophones, five trumpets or five guitars, as well as the recordings with the Stan Kenton orchestra, earned special attention because in them the jazz-like vocal style especially stood out. The greatest credit was due to the head arranger for the Stan Kenton Band, Pete Rugolo, the undisputed magician of sound of modern big band jazz.¹ He also wrote some of the vocal arrangements for The Four Freshmen.

They won the DB Readers Poll 1953-56, as well as 1958, and occupied top spots in the following years. They also won first places in the publications ME, Billboard and Playboy. With their entertaining and audience-pleasing presentations, as well as the quality of the vocal arrangements (Pete Rugolo, Dick Reynolds, Ken Albers), The Four Freshmen belong to the influential vocal groups.

"Their presentation now is an effective mixture of ballads, mild humor, and modern jazz. But their group vocal work is still the most important part of their act."² "L'intelligenza dei Freshmen sta nel fatto di essersi aggiornati nel repertorio, in modo da trovarsi sempre alla ribalta con i successi del momento / Freshmen hanno rappresentato un'epoca del canto corale."³

["The intelligence of the Freshmen is in the fact of having updated their repertoire, so as to always be in the limelight with the successes of the moment The Freshmen have represented an era of choral singing"]³

The discussion in the media regarding their musical style, which to this day has not concluded, interested the quartet, but they did not enter into it and kept their distance from it. In this regard DB observed:

“... the quartet remains one of those very few vocal groups that offers real musical justification for ‘its existence.’”⁴ “To state that this album is long overdue is perhaps to pinpoint the basic reason for the lack of acceptance of the Four Freshmen in jazz circles and by jazz critics. The complaint has always been: ‘Perhaps they can get into a legitimate jazz groove, but they don’t.’ With this album, the beef has been squared. Welcome to jazz, fellas.”⁵

The criticism found fault with the quartet’s weak intonation—often rightly so—which possibly had its origin in the complexity of the musical phrases. However, their persuasive presentation and progressive style of arrangements—clearly stamped with jazz harmonies—was obviously valued more highly by the public or, more likely, was noticed more than occasionally unclearly sung chords.

“This group has good ideas but poor intonation.”⁶ “They’re an exceptionally energetic-sounding quartet who likes to fool around with voicings and blends, but who, unfortunately, just don’t have the vocal equipment to carry through what they’re attempting.... They show off fine ideas much better than their intonation.”⁷ “... there are moments of the weirdest intonation.”⁸

In the mid and late ‘70s the Four Freshmen produced more records. However, Bob Flanagan (sic/Flanigan) remained the only member of the earlier successful group. The quality, the selection of songs, the style of the arrangements and the intonation of these later recordings did not compete successfully with the earlier ones. In an editorial reference by DB the impression was given that the Four Freshmen were still “the old Four Freshmen.” After only four previous changes in personnel which became “two personnel (sic) changes,” ... “The Four Freshmen report they are still doing the old songs in their own way”⁹

4.2.2 The Musical Style

The Four Freshmen built upon the close harmony style of those vocal groups (Modernaires, Pastels, Pied Pipers) which sang with the big bands. At first they adopted the style which can be heard in the recording of *It’s A Blue World*.

Later they oriented themselves more strongly toward the more progressive big band arrangements of, e.g., Woody Herman, Claude Thornhill, Artie Shaw and most of all on Stan Kenton’s orchestral style, as well as on his use of complex jazz harmonies. “Kenton ... introduced an enriched harmonic palette (sic), a powerful use of brass, ... and a sort of dramatic approach to orchestral jazz that have been imitated ever since”¹⁰ “Too many chords.”¹¹

On account of their musical phrasing The Four Freshmen achieved a modern, progressive sound which clearly distinguished itself from the other vocal ensembles, the rhythm quartets and the average close harmony groups: “... to sing complex and difficult arrangements that the average vocal group would not attempt.”¹²

Alongside the phrasing technique, above all The Four Freshmen sound was given its distinctive character by the high, sometimes falsetto voice of Bob Flanagan (sic). As can be heard on numerous recordings, all four singers were also jazz instrumentalists, which had an advantageous effect on their musical expression and

phrasing. Their joy in playing music, their musicality, and freshness of ideas were in clear contrast to contemporary vocal ensembles and made up for the lack of vocal execution. “The ability of The Four Freshmen as musicians may be the real basis of their sound, in that their singing arrangements are as much orchestral as vocal.”¹³

Appreciation

The Four Freshmen developed their style out of the tradition of mixed close harmony groups. With their self-willed choral arrangements, as a male quartet they brought a new quality to multi-part singing. To be sure, they also utilized epigonic/inherited instrumental phrasing techniques, but they were one of the first groups to find new ways out of the constructions of the close harmony style without thereby fully breaking with the tradition.

The Four Freshmen along with The Mel-Tones belong to the first vocal groups which did not bind themselves to a particular big band and were thereby able to be stylistically as well as financially independent. The thereby underlined the self-reliant character, the aesthetic and artistic claim of multi-part vocal jazz. At the same time they decisively shaped the styles of the ensembles which succeeded them.

The male quartet The Hi-Lo’s can above all only be understood as taking up and continuing the musical ideas of The Four Freshmen (the first development of the close harmony style; a capella introductions and inserted, unaccompanied segments; emphasis on the singing and de-emphasizing the instrumental portion of progressive jazz harmonies). ...

Part II . . .

4.1 The Four Freshmen¹⁴

To begin with The Four Freshmen adopted the close harmony style of the vocal groups of the swing era, as the arrangement of their first hit from the year 1952, *It’s A Blue World* shows.

Shortly thereafter the quartet oriented itself stylistically to Stan Kenton’s or else to Pete Rugolo’s orchestral style of arranging. Both arrangers introduced an enriched harmony into big band jazz, which, coupled with powerful brass-wind passages, brought a dramatically novel element into the music. Ross Barbour of The Four Freshmen confirms this:

“I was a fan of Stan’s ... when I finally saw the band for the first time. All of us were changed, all Four Freshmen. So devoted were we that we copied The Pastels every way we could. (How can four guys sound like five, with a girl on top?) Our instrumental stuff was borrowed from Kenton’s sound. Borrowed? We stole every morsel we could copy.”¹⁵

“Stan Kenton says that The Four Freshmen sound like the Kenton orchestra, or vice versa; certainly there is a similarity in the musical concept that both have employed, and both have left an indelible mark on modern music.”¹⁶

The Four Freshmen adopted two (particular musical techniques from Kenton) for their choral arrangements, which is why the literature always alludes to the quartet sounding like Stan Kenton’s orchestra.

Footnotes

¹ Berendt 1956: 150.

² DB 19 May 54, 4.

³ Lupi 1986: 140.

⁴ DB 11 Jun 59.

⁵ DB 20 Dec 62, 34, review of “The Swingers.”

⁶ ME June 53, 29.

⁷ ME Oct 54, 28.

⁸ ME Aug 59, 26.

⁹ ME 25 Oct 73, 11.

¹⁰ Lees 1987: 64.

¹¹ Alvino Rey cited from Lees 1987: 95.

¹² Audree Coke: liner notes to “live at Butler’s (sic) University.”

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ A series of Four Freshmen arrangements were published by the UNC Jazz Press.

¹⁵ Cited from Lee 1980: 141.

¹⁶ Audree Coke in the liner notes to Live at Butler University.

Editor’s Note: Up until the ME article dated 25 Oct 1973, there were a total of five configurations of The Four Freshmen.

Current Editor’s Note: Originally published in *Fresh News*, Vol. 7, No. 6, Nov-Dec 1994, p. 6, and Vol. 8, No. 1, Jan-Feb 1995, pp. 8-9.

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