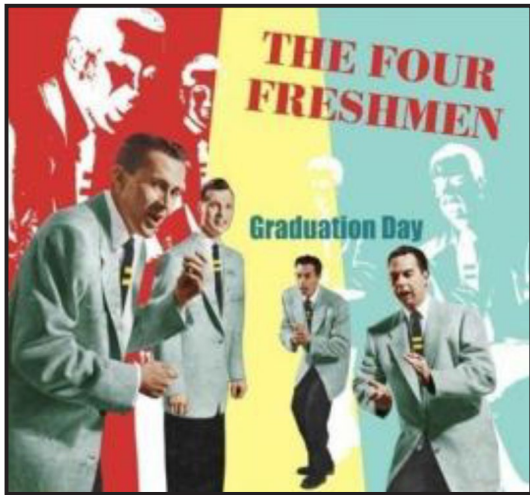


The Four Freshmen: One Fan's Inspirations and Connections

by Mark Schlichting

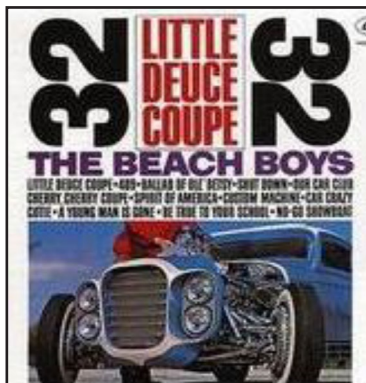


In the Beginning: I was born in 1948, the same year as my favorite vocal group, but I wasn't "turned on" to them until I heard their recording of "Graduation Day" in 1956. Then, I was hooked, at age eight! Their sound was everything I imagined college to be before I attended, everything I remembered college to be after I graduated, but nothing of what college was while I was there! Their music could do that; spin an image and a story that could transcend reality!***

An Early Inspiration: 10 years later, in the spring of 1966 as a senior at Olympia High School, I attempted a FF "Graduation Day" arrangement for a male quartet, and we sang it for the "Senior Farewell Assembly." Although not a carbon copy of the original sound, it was a hit with the students. (At my 50-year Class Reunion on September 10, 2016 several fellow graduates remembered that performance!)

Connecting The Four Freshmen and The Beach Boys:

I bought the Beach Boys' "Little Deuce Coup" album when it came out in 1963. The a capella song "A Young Man Is Gone" was fascinating to me, but as I later found, it was a rip-off of the FF classic "Their Hearts were Full of Spring." You can find both tunes on YouTube and have fun listening! The 2012 BBC interview of The FF and the two Brians-- Wilson and Eichenberger— alludes to this particular piece. If you haven't seen it, search: Four Freshmen 2012 BBC Interview and take a look. (Chaz Cone published it

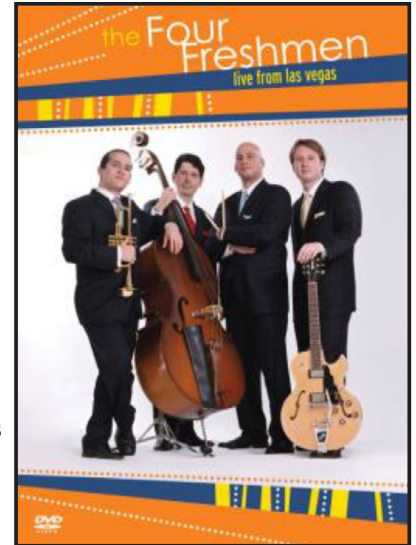


on YouTube only five days after it aired on BBC!)

Reviewing a Hit: When the Four Freshmen released their "Live from Las Vegas" DVD in 2006, I bought it and was so blown away by the talent of their membership and the authentic continuation of their legendary sound that I wrote a review for Amazon which remained on the site until Amazon ran out of inventory and suspended it. The review may be back now. Search: The Four Freshmen - Live From Las Vegas DVD.

Magazine Exposure: While being interviewed in 2008 for a local magazine article which recognized my local music teaching as well as my recent induction into the Washington Music Educators "Hall of Fame," I listed The Four Freshmen as my "Favorite Vocal Group!" (Photo attached.)

Amazing Serendipity: Working in Las Vegas during the summer of 2011, my son Austin, an accomplished composer and arranger, was somehow contacted by Connie Beisner to construct a realization of the piece that her late husband Mike Beisner (a Freshman from 1982-94) had composed for their wedding. Their daughter, Lauren, was being married, and Connie wanted the piece to be performed at Lauren's wedding as well. Austin undertook the realization task, and by all accounts it was a success!



Bellingham music teacher, Mark Schlichting, teaches the fifth-grade strings class at Columbia Elementary School. "What better job to have than something you are passionate about?" he says. Photo by Philip A. Dwyer



Austin Schlichting

**Part one of three... to be continued in
the next issue of *Fresh News*.**