

WELCOME RYAN HOWE!

by Bob Ferreira

We are so excited to introduce our newest member to the fold, the amazing Ryan Howe! I will defer to Ryan to tell you a little about himself, so please read Ryan's article. What I will say is that you all are in for a treat once you have the opportunity to hear this fine gentleman perform. He is outstanding. Welcome to the Frosh, Ryan!

GREETINGS TO YOU ALL!

by Ryan Howe

My name is Ryan Howe, and I'm thrilled and deeply honored to be the newest member of this group we all love called The Four Freshmen. Singing the lead part is an incredibly humbling responsibility that I don't take lightly. That being said, I can already tell it is going to be the most fun I have ever had. What joy to ride on top of that wonderful tight harmony.

I've loved this music for a long time. Not as long as most of you, but I can't stress enough how fun and almost surreal this has felt for a fan like myself. My grandfather, Norman, was a longtime fan who passed his love of this music, and music in general, on to me, providing immense support throughout my musical journey. He couldn't have held The Four Freshmen legacy and sound in higher regard. As the internet-savvy grandson it was my job to track down most of The Four Freshmen albums he wanted. Along the way, the sound got under my skin enough that I ended up doing barbershop in high school, vocal jazz in college, and became a teacher of it myself. Would I have gone down the vocal jazz harmony rabbit hole if

the sound that Bob, Don, Ross, and Hal started hadn't made such a big impression on my grandfather? I think so, but I'm certain I wouldn't be writing you this letter today, for sure.

After my undergrad I went to study at Phil Mattson's vocal jazz program, The School For Music Vocations, where I've taught for eight of the last 11 years. In my second week there in 2008, I remember hearing a recording of the group I sang with, Audio Radiance, and thinking the soloist sounded really familiar. My director told me it was Brian Eichenberger, who at the time, sang lead in The Four Freshmen. I remember thinking how cool it was to be in a group that he was also in.

It was also in Iowa that I was actually a contemporary of Tommy Boynton, who you all know and love. Tommy and I sang a lot together over the years, and I was beyond thrilled when he got the gig. There's actually a good chance I've met a couple handfuls of you already at either the San Antonio FFS Convention or the one in Louisville— got to take my grandfather to that one. Tommy and the guys were nice enough to offer to let me "sit in" and sing lead on *Poinciana*. That was a life-changing experience, even if I never expected I'd actually be in the group one day.

I could go on and on about how excited I am to make this incredible music. To this day, I still feel like a kid in a candy shop with the access I have to all these legendary scores! My favorite part of the FFS Conventions (other than the concerts) was the Wannabees sessions. Getting to see those charts and sing that music with everyone and celebrate that iconic writing and sound is the best! You can be sure I'll never miss one of those sessions unless we have a soundcheck or something.

I think I've already written more than I was asked for, but I'll close by saying I couldn't have asked for a better three bandmates to make this music with. I think Bob, Jake, and Tommy are so incredibly talented and are wonderful humans. I cannot wait to really be able to get out there with them more regularly. Likewise, I can't wait to get out there to meet and perform for more fellow fans like yourselves.

Warmest Wishes,
Ryan Howe

