

# The Four Freshmen, Group #27: “WARM!”

by Mark Schlichting

Do you recall the Four Freshmen album of 1958 called *Voices in Love*? It was their seventh album with Capitol Records, and the boys used a string orchestra exclusively to accompany them. As a violinist I was immediately drawn to the album and also to such tunes as *It Could Happen to You*, *Out of Nowhere*, and *In the Still of the Night*, all of which immediately became a part of my vocal repertoire.



Perhaps my most favorite song of all on the album was the tune called *Warm*, because, beyond the words and the harmonies, it evoked a “feeling.”

Such a feeling is personified in the warmth of the four guys who are currently occupying the body of The Four Freshmen, Group #27, and I want to share my first-hand experience of them with you, which began in 2016, took a big leap forward in the summer of 2021, and continues to grow to this day.

Yes, in 2016 Group #24 was touring, but that year was my first brush with Tommy Boynton, who had just joined the quartet a year earlier to replace Brian Eichenberger who had left to tour with The Beach Boys.

I saw Tommy in the theater lobby just prior to their Olympia, WA show, and I asked him if the guys were going to be performing *Their Hearts Were Full of Spring*. He told me that it was in their repertoire, and that they could perform it, but that he didn't think it was on their set list for the evening. After a little more chatting, he excused himself and ran off to tune his bass (the instrument he was playing at that time) and hop onto the stage. The salient point here is that in the midst of all of the “pre-concert preparation,” Tommy was willing to stop and gab with me! Even as a “newbie,” he

wasn't anxious and dismissive; he was relaxed and warm. Afterwards, I was even able to get a photo with the group!

Soon after the Olympia concert, my wife Erin and I joined the Four Freshmen Society (of which we had known nothing prior to that concert), and before I knew it, I was dialoging with Bob Ferriera in various emails. Nothing “earth-shattering;” just discussing mutual friends, some questions and answers, with lots of warmth.

A couple of FF Society Conventions later, board chairman Gil Peterson invited Erin and me to drive to Roseburg, OR to hear the Freshmen perform at what was called the “Concert on the Half Shell” at Stewart Park on July 20, 2021. We were excited to attend, and, presuming that it would be sunny and quite warm at the park, we ordered some “Four Freshmen” souvenir fans several weeks in advance, distributing them to all who wanted them. The concert was spectacular and well-attended. You might find a video or two on YouTube. (Between *Poinciana* and *Easy Street* we swung the camera wide to catch the size of the audience! BIG!)

After the park event, Erin and I returned to the hotel, and our phone rang. It was Gil, inviting us to an “Afterglow” party at a bar across the street from the hotel. I hung up the phone and turned to Erin who said “I'm bushed, so I'm hitting the sack, but you had better go to this, because if you DON'T, you are going to REGRET it!” “Well, okay,” I said. I imagined there would be a lot of other Freshmen fans there too, so I went.

When I arrived at the bar, there was a single booth with six guys: Bob, Tommy, Gil, Clint Newell, Jake, and Ryan. THAT'S ALL! I stood there with my mouth hanging open. “What are you drinking, Mark?” was Gil's query. “How about a glass of cabernet?” I replied. And there we were, just the seven of us! Hobnobbing, laughing, and having fun! Warmth everywhere!



**Our “Afterglow” party with the warm guys of Group #27 along with Gil Peterson and Clint Newell who helped sponsor the Concert on the Half Shell event.  
(I'm on the other side of the camera!)**

The following morning, I had breakfast with Jake in the hotel lobby, and we discussed prior Freshmen groups (I showed him my favorite clip of Group #18's *Live in Japan* video), and he told me about his New England Conservatory days in Boston, his Minneapolis gigs, and his serious plans to spend the morning playing “Frisbee Golf” with “the guys” before preparing for Gil's deck party, happening that evening. There was warmth galore!