

"Conversation With the Stars"

Aboard the Cruise by Ann Smith, Texas Coord.

"Conversation With the Stars" is a panel discussion featuring the various musical artists performing on the cruise. It's similar to our "Fresh Talk" held at the Four Freshmen conventions. There were actually several sessions of "Conversation With the Stars" - each featuring a different group of artists, in order to include all those performing on the trip.

The Freshmen were asked to tell how they each got started as musicians. Brian said his parents brought him back a toy ukulele from a trip they made to Hawaii when he was real young. He said he was totally fascinated with it and played with it all the time. From this he graduated to an \$80 guitar and then became really hooked on music.

Curtis said that he got started on trumpet when he was in the 6th grade. He said that he just recently found a paper that he wrote at that time saying that he wanted to be a musician. Vince said that when he was in the 3rd grade he wanted to grow up to be a story teller.

Bob said that he started out on drums and was part of a rock group. He joined a jazz choir to improve his voice and was headed towards becoming a music teacher. He got offered a job as a Four Freshmen and said "Who are they?" He's now been a Freshmen for 12 years.

Next the question was posed to the Freshmen: "How do you sing and play at the same time?" Bob said that he concentrates on voice - and yet everything - not just one thing. Brian said that he started out with singing while playing the guitar. Curtis said that he breathes the same - whether singing or playing the horn - and he thinks of the words while playing the horn. Vince said that it's a joy to him to play and sing.

The question was posed to the panel: "What do audiences do that bug you the most?" The unanimous answer was: "recording while we perform". Apparently some people use these pirated recordings and bootleg them for profit, which excludes the artists who did all the work.

This brought up an interesting anecdote from panel member Red Holloway. He said they used to perform in a nightclub in Chicago that they called "The Bucket of Blood." He said that every night there was an ambulance parked out front - and the "black wagon," as he called it, was there too. He said that every night someone got shot, stabbed, or killed, hence the nickname the club earned. He said that one way they got the audiences to settle down and stop fighting was to get them to sing along.

This brought up a story from another one of the panel members about a memorable performance that Peggy Lee gave before a crowd of 20,000 one night. A fight broke out down front near the stage and raged on for about 10 minutes. Peggy never missed a note - continuing to perform as if nothing was happening. When the ruffians were finally dragged off, the audience gave her a standing ovation.

Bear in mind that these last two stories were told in answer to the question: "What do audiences do that bug you the most?"



"Conversation With the Stars" aboard the cruise ship - questions and answers similar to "Fresh Talk"

Fresh Observations...

Donna Gallaway, FFS Sec. Ohio

The Freshmen appeared in Findlay, Ohio, last November and it was one of the best shows I've seen them do in recent years. They were so loose and just plain having fun with their music, as Brian and Vince did a "dueling banjos" type scenario with their instruments on "After You've Gone." So many new arrangements in their show each time we see them - what a great addition to the repertoire as "September Song" and "Everytime We Say Goodbye," and "I Could Have Told You So" flow from the stage. The audience eats up this wonderful ear candy. A standing ovation, a full house, and a very nice reception following the show with all four Freshmen meeting and greeting their fans so graciously - what could be better? Icing on the cake - lots of CD's were sold.

While traveling through the Ozark Mountains last October, Tom and I stopped at a wonderful vinyl shop in the St. Louis, Mo. area. There were album covers on all the walls and the ceiling as well. Even in the Ladies Room the walls were covered, and right in a strategic place, at eye level, were two Freshmen jackets - "In Person" and "More FF and Five Trombones"! So, you just never know where those Freshmen might show up!

We picked up our "Toledo Blade" newspaper a week or so ago and there was an article about the Bowling Green State Univ. Jazz Festival, where local high school students compete. Headlines stated that a guest judge would be there - a former Four Freshmen, Greg Stegeman! How cool is that? Hope he had a good time and heard some good jazz at my alma mater - BGSU here in Ohio.

Hope many members of FFS were tuned into the CBS morning show a few weeks ago and caught our own Chick Trafford being interviewed and sharing his expertise on handwriting - good job, Chick!