



Brian Eichenberger
Lead Voice

Fresh News



Curtis Calderon
2nd Voice

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FF IN SESSION: BACK TO THE FUTURE!

by Wayne Corey, FFS-Wisconsin

I have heard the future of the Four Freshmen and I love it!

In Session is a great new CD that brings listeners wonderful new arrangements of some great songs Group #22 has put in the book in the past couple of years. But one track makes history. One track is utterly unlike anything any Freshmen group has ever done. One track says Group #22 refused to be musically content. And that one track says the Four Freshmen make music for the 21st century and for people who weren't alive when the Freshmen were founded.

If I Had You, track 10, opens with 8 bars of traditional FF harmonies and Brian Eichenberger's lead voice. And then the chart moves to a brave new musical world.

Suddenly, the rhythm section brings a driving backbeat unlike anything we have ever heard in a Four Freshmen arrangement. When did Max Weinberg join the Frosh? I ask. But it isn't Mighty Max, it is Bob Ferreira pounding the skins and mixed way up! Vince Johnson's insistent bass line propels the chart forward. The listener hears the familiar Freshmen harmonies and Bob and Brian's vocals as we approach the instrumental bridge. And then all hell breaks loose!

The bridge musically transports us to New Orleans as Curtis Calderon's soaring trumpet solo with Vince comping on trombone gives us the French Quarter on a hot Saturday night. But the Frosh don't stop there with their tour de force! After 8 Bourbon Street bars (yes, pun intended) the Freshmen take the track to Memphis and echoes of the great Stax-Volt days as Brian's guitar rips through the next 8 bars. Steve Cropper lives! To borrow a phrase from Mick and Keith, I know it's only rock & roll, but I like it! Sweet Heaven, this is great stuff!

This musical approach, arrangement and mix didn't occur by accident. This is Brian's chart and Brian's mix. This is our future. This is their future. This has all the FF harmonies and all the great musicianship and it rocks! For every fan who has lamented getting younger ears to listen to the Freshmen, this will do it. Let's have more!

In Session would be a huge success if it was *If I Had You* and some filler. But the CDs 11 tracks are all killer, no filler!

Since Ken Albers retired there have been two - two!- FF vocal arrangements that have been so great, so amazing, that anyone who hears them knows instinctively that they have heard the definitive version of that song. Greg Stegeman's *Unforgettable* is one of those charts. The other is Bill Comstock's *Early Autumn*. *Early Autumn* is on **In Session**. It takes your breath away. Bill brought the chart to the Freshmen in 2002 at our Virginia convention. He spent a Friday afternoon working with the guys and they introduced it that night. **In Session** proves it has been perfected. *Early Autumn* came out of Woody Herman's 2nd Herd in the late 1940s. Ralph Burns, the Herd's piano player and arranger, wrote it. Johnny Mercer later added lyrics and Herman is also given composer credit.



Vince Johnson
Baritone Voice



Bob Ferreira
Bass Voice

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