

## Talk about ending on a high note.

Your favorite quartet played to a sellout house at the Hopkins (Minn) Center for the Arts in concluding its 2012 season-bringing a sampling of holiday season songs mixed in with the old favorites and some from a pending new album. The Holiday Concert was an early Christmas present to an enthusiastic audience. Did the crowd enjoy it? Two standing ovations at the concert's ending *Day In, Day Out* answers the question. Ironically, the group opened with that number to kick off the new facility in suburban Minneapolis a few years back. It was the group's third straight sellout of 700-plus hand clapping folks at the venue, who had solid support of the local Twin Cities jazz society and the FFS.

The Freshmen talked about their recent road travels, but were refreshed for Hopkins after a short rest and already thinking about 2012. In the preceding two weeks they played dates in Wisconsin, to Florida, to New York before coming to town.

Blending in the seasonal Snowfall album songs, like *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus* with *Plenty of Money and You*, *A Nightingale Sang in Barkley Square*, and *Stardust*, all candidates for the new album, the holiday concert was a great mixture for an enjoyable evening. A dozen or more FFS members were on hand, including lead singer Brian Eichenberger's parents and friends, most of whom live in the area.

For those FFS members at the 2011 convention in Toledo, they heard again what tight harmony can do with an evergreen like Hoagy Carmichael's often-recorded *Stardust*. As Curtis Calderon told the audience, the "new LP will have positive love songs"-- out with the sad in with the glad.

Many of the quartet's arrangements continue to favor Curtis' impressive trumpet and flugelhorn solos and the Hopkins date was no different, especially evident in *Angel Eyes* and *Somebody Loves Me*.

The favorite songs of decades ago still elicit the most applause, but the group's homage to the Beach Boys' *Surfer Girl* drew plenty of smiles and cheers as well. It was a total instrumental effort on *Route 66* with Brian very much in a Flanigan-esque power lead voice.

FFS folks know this particular group has been together for 10 years-- and overall they average 14 years of singing Freshmen music -- and it shows. Hard to believe the group's tight harmony "sound" is in its seventh decade, each group including some strengths of their predecessors.

Following the concert, Christmas gift buyers crowded the CD sales tables where the Freshmen and Minnesota reps, Ann and Roger Johnson, and former rep, Dave Colwell, were busy taking orders, and a signing up a handful of new FFS members. The place was alive; bring on 2012.

# Sue Raney with the UofA Jazz and String Orchestras

Ted Sitterley, FFS Tucson, AZ

The finale of the 34th Annual AzJazz Week was an absolutely amazing display of talent by the University of Arizona Studio Jazz Ensemble, and the Arizona Symphony Orchestra, both enhanced by the fabulous voice and presence of Miss Sue Raney. The audience at Crowder Hall on the UofA campus was also treated to the fine flugelhorn of Sue's husband, Carmen Fanzone. Many of the selections for the evening came from the donated archives at the UofA School of Music including those from Nelson Riddle and Lew Spence.

The song list provided an excellent palate for Sue's range and emotion, with tunes like *You're Driving Me Crazy*, *I Love Being Here With You*, *Listen Here*, *That Face*, *When Your Lover Has Gone*, *I'll See You In My Dreams*, *With A Song In My Heart*", and more. Of particular note was a beautiful song, *Statue of Snow*, written by Sue herself at an early age in collaboration with noted composer/ conductor, Ralph Carmichael. It isn't one that she performs regularly.

Opening the second half of the show was a small group taken from the Jazz Ensemble, with Carmen leading the way on *Just Friends*. It was terrific. We were pleased to hear him featured on three other tunes as well. The guy can play.

After the performance, a small reception was held for patrons to meet and greet the stars of the evening. It is so pleasant to see a couple relate so well to fans they have never met, and may never see again. Sue and Carmen are the real thing, and you should never miss an opportunity to see and hear their talent. Hope the organizers for Reno are able to invite them to the Convention this Fall!!



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