

# Freshmen Ride into NIGHT TOWN, Again - Sing Two Big Shows

by Dick Baldwin (NY Rep)

It was SRO at Night Town in Cleveland Heights, Ohio!

One More Time!

This occasion, a Sunday (5-23-04) 5:30 & 7:30 PM doubleheader, saw May Day jazz in one of the nation's Top 100 Jazz venues (DownBeat). Summary - it was NT's good food, solid sound system and the cool Four Freshmen. Outside the near 200-place main room the temp was 88 degrees and the lush flowers/blooms proved it.

The Freshmen are a popular jazz act on the road with a reputation. Check the chief of Jim Wadsworth Productions. Jim books the bills at Night Town as well as other music stages in the Cleveland area. He was also a promoter for the Manhattan Transfer performing on the same Sunday, nearby date in the Cleveland area.

The best of the two Frosh concerts were Greg's "Young & Foolish," which skips along at a nice speed as you now expect. Many former U. S. Divas at some career juncture included "Skylark" in their repertoire and now the FF are developing it as a staple, too. Stan Kenton memories remain on stage with the group reinventing the always soothing "September Song." Nice!

However, the bell-ringer was Brian's arrangement of "You've Changed" with Curtis accenting the middle with light trumpet and words. Earlier in the first show was a trio of Brian's charts - "Something's Gotta Give-That Old Feeling- Mam'selle." A treat. "You've Changed?" Can you peg who had a big record with this tune?

An 86-person bus tour out of Erie, PA dominated the early concert. Remember, Erie's the home for Big Band Dave Stevens, a Freshmen fan and a talented Kenton leader. The second session was mostly a "local" audience of Night Town regulars.

"The Freshmen are one of our **Main** standards by which we judge audience response," says music entrepreneur Wadsworth. "To tell you the truth, we don't even have to advertise the Freshmen other than the appearance date. The Freshmen have a faithful following and a mass rush of reservations come in every time they're here."

Night Town knows that jazz sells when it's Five Stars or Four Freshmen!

The Freshmen play this stellar site every six months and the standard henceforth according to management will be "Only On Sunday."

SHORT TAKES:

1. President Tom Purvis headed the *Live In Holland* CD sales with an assist from Music Mart's Bob Lininger. Tom advised

us of "Purvis Park" on Cedar Road on the way out to US 90 East. And, just a few blocks from Night Town, there it was.

2. Telarc's Vanessa Rubin and John Pizzarelli preceded the Freshmen. JWP continues to book excellent mainstream jazz, but at the same time offers a well-rounded adult music menu, which complements the fine cuisine.
3. Toledo's Valentine Theater, Night Town and then the Bear Creek Dinner Theatre in Bryant, IN was a driving tour in the traditional two vans.
4. Big bands crowd into the NT with the diners, too, re the recent Count Basie Orchestra and Maynard Ferguson's rambunctious swinging unit.
5. Whoever is dressing the Frosh these days is on track. The dark blue pin stripes are sharp. Vince Johnson was a perfect fit in his new suit. Is it official that he has a doctorate from USC in whistling?
6. Bob Ferreira behind his drum set more than ever resembles one of the big band vocalists out of the swinging past. When he does "How Do You Keep The Music Playing" it proves the point. Class shows.
7. Attention! Greg Stegeman's "Culmination" CD is still gaining as a Freshmen Favorite. It's a wonderful recording by an accomplished musician. Greg is part of the Freshmen Legacy and deserves the success. Talent always takes center stage. Flan, Ross and Bill have it right in comments and the liner notes.

## ONCE AGAIN!

by Doris Marzick (NE Ohio FFS Rep)

On May 23rd, my friends and I made our semi-annual trip up 271 to Nighttown in Cleveland Hts.

Once again we knew we would see a great show, and did we ever! Our guys really outdid themselves, playing before two sell-out crowds, and never singing better.

Performing 26 songs, old ones and new ones. It won't take long for the new ones to become crowd favorites. Vince's arrangement of *September Song*, plus his scat number of *All the Way Around the World* are always popular with the crowd. Brian's arrangement of *You've Changed* is a real winner and already a favorite of mine. Other new songs included *Mamselle* and *How Do You Keep The Music Playing?*

Where do they go from here? It seems like there is no room for improvement, but I'm sure they will do it.

They sure looked good too, (as always) in their blue suits and flashy ties!

What a night!