

Four Freshmen in Hopkins, MN

by Don Follett

Understandably, the Hopkins (MN) crowd wasn't quite sure what it might hear that evening. There were two new Freshmen on hand; there was early anticipation. What they heard was a rousing combination of new voices and several new songs in a sold-out show in May at the town's Center for the Arts.

For newcomers Tommy Boynton, tenor lead, and Stein Malvey, second voice, it would be the first time to be heard in this area--- and their performances were met with robust applause. Their musical skills seem to fit in well.

The group has made this Minneapolis suburb a steady stop on their calendar - each time to a sellout. Operating in front of a lush multi-colored backlit stage screen, the group served up a variety of signature Four Freshmen songs and maybe some new ones in the making.

Like every iteration of your favorite quartet, these Freshmen are a little different. No kidding!

This night they checked-in with their archives and also an intro of new tunes to their song sheet such as *Don't Be That Way*, *Now You Know*, *Moonglow*, *A Social Call*, *Central Park West*, *The Girl from Ipanema*, *Stompin' at the Savoy* and others. As Freshman founder Ross Barbour used to say, "Sure, we lost a little every time a Freshman left, but we gained a little, too."

Love & Mercy, the Beach Boys Movie

by Jim Corsica.

There is a new movie about Brian Wilson of the BeachBoys. I was expecting to see a reference to the Freshmen and was not disappointed.

There were two:

1) Early in the film, the older Brian, played by John Cusack is explaining to his future wife, Melinda, how he used to listen to Four Freshmen records and wanted to replicate that tight vocal harmony sound.

2) Later in the film during a fantasy montage when Brian is sort of breaking down, there is a montage of sound on the soundtrack, both musical and non-musical, and a snippet of *Day By Day* is heard. I think it was the first two lines.

As someone who has followed Brian and the BeachBoys since I was a teen, I thought the film was fantastic, particularly Paul Dano who plays younger Brian in his formative, creative years. On a couple of occasions, you can actually tell that Dano is singing and accompanying himself. He sounds eerily like Brian.

Great film for anyone "of a certain age."

Over the years the quartet has met the challenge in at least three instances when two new members joined within a year, requiring more rehearsals and catchup time - though, in some cases, the newcomers were committed to the Four Freshmen sound since their youth.

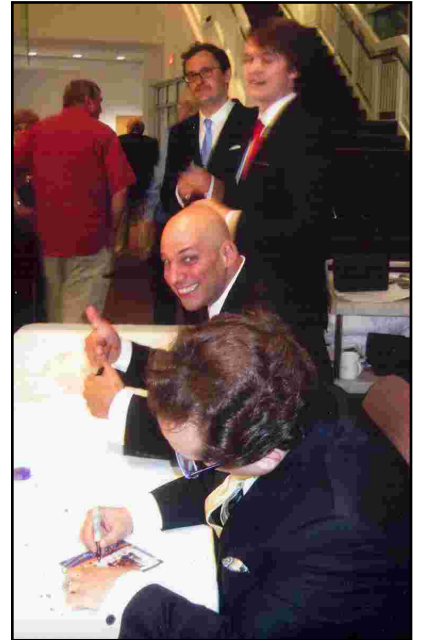


ABOVE: Don Follett (ex-president of the Four Freshmen Society) and his wife Char attending the sold-out concert on May 16 at the Hopkins Theater of Performing Arts. They looked elegant in their Four Freshmen t-shirts, and Char has a knack for turning a t-shirt into a fashionable top with a silk blouse, tie belt, and jewelry.

RIGHT: The Four Freshmen sign CDs outside the concert hall.

Also several of their signature songs have new arrangements, i.e., *Here's That Rainy Day*, (sung a capella) with Tommy demonstrating a strong voice.

Curtis, the workman, has provided Four Freshmen brass sounds since the turn of the century, via his high note trumpet and flugelhorn. Some fans may miss the trombone sounds of the earlier groups, but each Foursome carves out its own identity, seeking its own persona.



Bob Ferriera, the group's senior member who introduced a more pronounced drum sound to the Four Freshmen some 23 years ago, shook the Hopkins hall's decibel meter and temperature gauge, channeling Louie Prima's *Just a Gigolo* and Ray Charles', *Halleluiaah, I Love Her So*. He is also a crowd favorite, ever brave to test new jokes and stage banter. Some are good.

Perhaps the night's best received number was the group's much recorded *There Will Never Be Another You*, with the Four Freshmen jamin' and the audience jumpin' with Curtis' spectacular horn work.

In noting bits of Four Freshmen's 67-year history throughout the evening, the group dedicated their closing number, *It's a Blue World*, to our original Famous Four - Bob Flanagan, Don Barbour, Ross Barbour and Hal Kratzsch.

The new group showed tight harmony with the standards *Day by Day*, *Graduation Day*, (the censored version, see Curtis Calderon) and *In This Whole Wide World*. The new voices will continue to work on a vast Four Freshmen repertoire, they say, striving to get that magic blend - that "purity of sound" (as Curtis calls it), that FFS folks know so well.

Concert Notes: Curtis promised a new CD is on the way and it will include some of the new tunes noted above....Stein made a hit with the audience when some of his youngster relatives

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