

Four Freshmen Concert April 24th in New Braunfels, Texas

by Ann Smith, Texas Coordinator

It was a real treat to meet Tommy and to hear him sing. He has an outgoing, friendly personality that lends itself well to the group.

Tommy's voice is amazing. It maintains a fullness in the higher ranges, so that it sounds like a baritone is singing it. And it's a marvel to hear that quality on the higher notes. This really stands out on his solo passages. Also, he sings the kind of strong lead that is reminiscent of Bob Flanigan. The other voices have to sing out to match his strength. It makes for a wonderful blend.

Stein showed a flare for comedy when he addressed the people sitting off to the side in some bleacher type seats. He assured them that the Freshmen weren't just singing to the folks in the center section. He said the group was singing to them, too. The audience seemed to really enjoy the friendliness of his comments, especially the folks in the bleachers.

The concert featured a number of our old favorites in the performance. There were also some new songs. Bob did an upbeat fun and funny version of *Hallelujah, I Just Love Her So*. As usual, he added his own special touch of humor.

The Freshmen sang a haunting version of *Here's That Rainy Day*. It was sung a capella and without mikes. It held the audience spellbound.

To our amazement, the amazing Four Freshmen sang two songs in Portuguese. It sounded wonderful and added greatly to the mood of the songs. The first part of *Girl From Ipanema* was sung in English, featuring a solo by Bob. Then the second part was sung in Portuguese, also with a solo by Bob. The guys sounded really great - as if they had been born singing Portuguese. The second song, *So Danza Samba* was sung entirely in Portuguese. These two songs were arranged by Curtis and he did a great job.

Bob made an announcement that he had gotten word that there was a lady in the audience named Elsie who had come all the way from Sacramento, California to attend this concert. Also, she's 84 years old. She appreciated the recognition and the audience loved hearing her story. It just goes to show that people will go to any lengths to see and hear the Four Freshmen.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Oh no. Not Again!

My email address did not follow me to Florida.

My new email address is bam241136@gmail.com

Thank you — Barb Meyers

The Motivation Behind the Scenes

by Curtis Calderon

You know, we all have different reasons for being in the group, and those reasons probably change throughout the years as well. I can't speak for the other guys, but I can give you a glimpse of a few of the reasons I do what I do with the Freshmen.

First off, I love playing/singing music. I've loved it for as long as I can remember. To make an impact with your music, I think it is essential to have a deep love

for performing. Group #1 had it and it showed. Jazz vocal groups have never been the same because of the Freshmen. This love of music is one of a few things that has always kept me working and connecting with people on a musical and personal level. People appreciate the honesty in music. I think that's where Flanigan and I got along very well... our love for music and our honesty in how we felt and portrayed it. When I first started in the Freshmen, I would have to say that perhaps my love for simply playing/singing carried me through, but it hadn't grown yet to what it is today, love for the Four Freshmen music specifically.

So, when I would write an arrangement or sing or play solos, it was for the love of music for maybe my first seven years in this group to be honest. There's nothing wrong with that at all because you are doing what you love and never holding back. There came a point in time in which, perhaps it was seeing Ross and Bob getting older, mixed with so much time now singing so many different arrangements, that I began to play/sing not just for the love of the music, but for the love of the Four Freshmen. That has only grown and grown and with each arrangement I do, I think "How is this going to help the Four Freshmen move forward, staying relevant, without ever watering down or bastardizing the sound." I now almost feel a duty, to not only myself, but to all the guys that came before me, to help thrust this group back into the mainstream music world, even if only just on a small level.

Considering the amount of time and effort each one of us spends on things in this group, money is such a secondary factor at best. This is the way I've always enjoyed music. You make music first and success will come later. You don't aim for success. You aim for honesty and connecting with people, money always follows that. Of course, money may never be as much as you want it to be, but the second money becomes a main motivating factor for being a Freshmen, it'll be time to leave. I've found as I've gotten older, that even on gigs back home, if money is the main motivator, the music is not as enjoyable. So, these are just a few reasons why I do what I do with the group. You should know the Freshmen are in good hands and always striving for excellence. I will keep on writing new arrangements and we will keep on working with our management to get the name out there. The fine line is letting go of the past when it's holding you back, yet maintaining the integrity of the sound and trying to keep true to the vision the original four guys had. We will always have critics and perhaps even lose some fans along the way because of musical changes, but I firmly believe that we will gain ten times more fans than we ever lose. A testament to that is that the new arrangements are going over very well at shows. To me, the new arrangements build on the past, yet aren't as traditional nor truly depart from the sound. I don't believe in departing from your roots, but I do believe in growing from your roots and not always keeping things the same as they ever were. Judging from crowd responses, I think we are on to something and I'm looking forward to a very bright future for the Four Freshmen!

All the best, Curtis

