

News from the Annual Board of Directors Meetings

The Convention selection committee recommended, and the Board has approved, Reno, Nevada as the site of the 2012 Annual Convention. The dates are October 4, 5 and 6th, 2012 at Harrah's Hotel and Casino. Mark your calendars now! Full details and registration information will be included in a future edition of Fresh News.

Also...Ft. Wayne, Indiana was selected as the site for the 2013 Convention and the dates are September 5,6 an 7th 2013. This does assume that the Mayans were wrong and the world does not end in 2012! The site is a downtown hotel and convention facility on the site of the original Club 113 where the Freshmen had their professional beginning!

Chaz Cone, our Membership Director reports that 2011 is on track to show the biggest increase in membership in a decade. That is the good news...however we continue to be unable to retain paid members. Record keeping began in 1987 and through the years we have had a collective total of 3,923 household members. TODAY WE HAVE ONLY 1,505...WE HAVE LOST MORE THAN HALF OF THOSE WHO HAVE EVER JOINED. We suspect, but cannot really confirm, that our collective ages may be reflected in these numbers. Not likely for a turn around unless we do not continue to recruit from the baby boomers! The Freshmen are performing at three colleges in September 2011 but we are not likely to grab any college age members... They seem to enjoy the music but are not "joiners."

The Four Freshmen Society continues to be very sound financially and our treasury has been deemed adequate for us to provide significant funding to the Freshmen for a new recording effort. They have been working on a new album for some time, untitled but to be a collection of love songs, arranged by Brian. Their plans include have professional instrumental backup, probably to include strings to hopefully propel this effort more into the entertainment mainstream. They showcased a few of the new songs in Toledo and they were very well received. A more detailed discussion of the project appears in the column to the right.

Board of Directors Approves Funds for New Freshmen Album

(editors note)

The following message from Board Member Dave Bentley describes in some detail how this recording project developed. Some of the details have changed but it still represents the substance of the project. The Freshmen have been rehearsing the new songs and plan to move into the studio in California very soon. They have introduced a few of the new songs into their performances and they have been well received by their knowledgeable audiences. The costs of this album are still in development however we have determined that the funds donated in memory of Ross Barbour will be used for this project and serve as a tribute to Ross and his loyal fans and friends. The funding of this project, while significant, will not seriously impact our financial standing.

Some time ago - maybe 8 months - I contacted an old friend who is one of the better jazz writers/critics extant - one Doug Ramsey. I asked him how, in his opinion, the Freshmen could gain some more stature, make a bigger impact on the audience they were attempting to reach; namely, those interested in this kind of music. I told Doug that the boys were performing at the very top of their profession, and that they were keenly aware that, as a jazz-oriented group, they would not/could not reach mass, but rather class. Much like a b to b magazine, they appealed to a very codified segment of America. I had sent Doug a couple of their albums and he was impressed with their professionalism and sound. His answer was simple: get them a publicist. I asked him who and he gave me the name of Terri Hinte, who he had known for a long, long time and who had been the A&R person for Fantasy for 30 years. As well, she had been handling Sonny Rollins for 40 years, so it was a fair statement to say she knew what she was talking about. I contacted Terri and we had a number of long phone conversations. She was interested, she said, but needed to hear how they sounded now. I sent *In Person* and *Snowfall*. She was impressed and said the only way to really go about this was to have them produce some new product, that older stuff would not work.

Back to Doug: I asked him his opinion of the kind of album they should pursue, and his answer was quick: 'have them do love songs, as that is really their milieu'. Pushing ahead a bit more I asked for some tunes, and again, quickly, he came back with - standards such as *Body & Soul* and *Stardust*.

Enter Brian who I called and talked to about Terri, Doug and the idea. He was intrigued, and started the process of tune selection and chart writing. He has done that with exceptional skill.

Nothing has been said about cost for this project to Terri, but safe to say she won't come pro bono.

This is a grand opportunity for the boys, for the society and for the sound we love and support. This album, as yet unnamed, could be seminal, could be the very best that has come from anyone's pen. The idea Brian has put forward for orchestration, for Jeff Hamilton, et al is superb, and I support his request without hesitation. Our bank account seems in reasonable shape and it is time for something truly remarkable to be released. This could be a transformational/transitional album, showcasing this wonderful talent in a way they and we can be very proud of.

