

The Four Freshmen Schedule

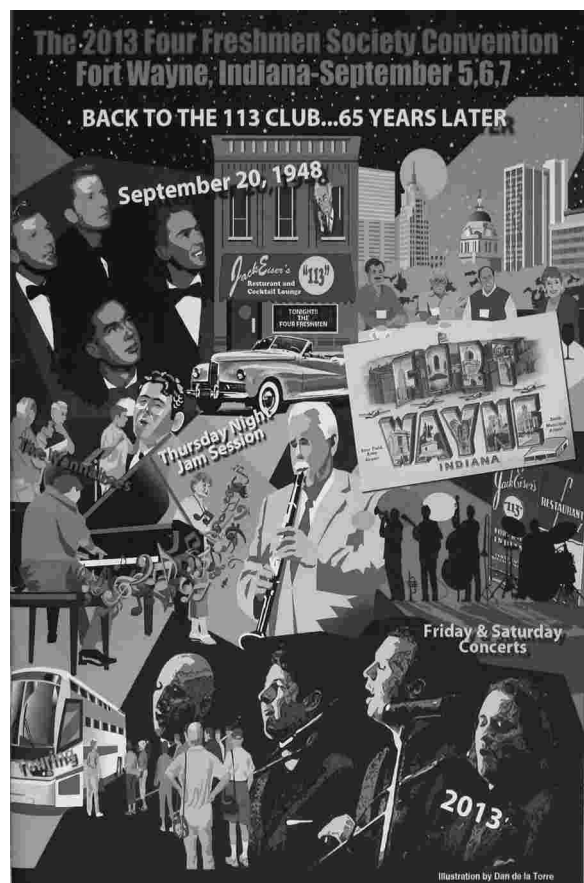
(continued from page 3)

January 4, 2014 **Largo, FL**
Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Dr
Showtime: 8:00p Tickets: 727 587 6793

January 6, 2014 **Naples, FL**
With The Naples Jazz Orchestra,
Cambier Park, 755 8th St
Showtime: 7:00p-9:00p Tickets: 239 207 8299

January 7, 2014 **Englewood, FL**
Englewood Performing Arts Center,
700 E Dearborn St
Showtime: 1:30p and 7:30p
Tickets (Subscription Only): 941 473 2787

January 28-31, 2014 **Tampa, FL**
Busch Gardens, Stanleyville Theater,
10165 N McKinley Dr
With the Glen Miller Orchestra
Showtime: 11:30a, 1:00p and 3:30p
Admission: Free with park admission



The Four Freshmen Back on the "Road" with Kenton

By Wayne Corey (FFS-Wisconsin)

Two chunks of Four Freshmen history make a welcome debut on Tantara's new *Road Shows* CD. The CD features the short-lived Group #18 (1992-94) of the Four Freshmen, two editions of the Stan Kenton Orchestra and a young Ann Richards. The music ranges from interesting to remarkable and was introduced at the FFS Fort Wayne convention.

Tantara is a Joliet, Illinois label run by producer Bill Lichtenauer. The label is renowned among Kenton fans for its tireless research and release of previously unissued Kenton recordings. The company has also recorded numerous unrecorded charts written for Kenton bands.

Harry Connick, Jr.'s *Recipe for Making Love* is the surprise track among the seven Four Freshmen songs recorded in January 1994 at Nick's Cafe in Laren, Holland. The Mike Beisner arrangement is making its first appearance on a commercial recording. The CD also contains the first known recording of Greg Stegeman's unforgettable chart of *Unforgettable*. That arrangement, with modifications, became the centerpiece of Group #20's *Still Fresh* CD in 1999.

Five of the remaining Freshmen tracks are among the usual, albeit beloved, tunes from the Four Freshmen songbook including *In This Whole Wide World*, *Angel Eyes*, *Poinciana*, *Route 66* and *It's a Blue World*. Bob Flanigan supplants Greg Stegeman singing lead on *Poinciana* and proves that he still had some chops.

Group #18 was becoming a great jazz ensemble in January, 1994 but it was never an outstanding example of Freshmen vocal prowess. Probably recorded on two or four track equipment, the CD rarely provides an opportunity to pick out individual voices. Greg is obviously a dominant lead voice while Beisner is a much stronger second voice than I remember. Kevin Stout's third part, never strong, is mostly unheard and unexceptional. Bob Ferreira was in the process of becoming the strongest fourth voice since Hal Kratzsch and Ken Errair but is often buried in the mix.

The Four Freshmen are accompanied by a group billed as "a top Dutch jazz trio." Pianist Rob van Kreeveld is very good and sometimes mixed as loud the voices. Koos Serierse on bass and drummer Eric Ineke are more than adequate. Beisner's trumpet and Stout's guitar and trombone make the best solo music on the disc, however.

Five of the Kenton band tracks were recorded in May, 1955 at a Stanford University campus club. This was the band that would record the esteemed *Contemporary Concepts* album two months later. Kenton devotees believe that band swung harder than any aggregation Kenton put together before or after. Only Bill Holman's chart on *What's New* is live by the 1955 band and was recorded for the *Contemporary Concepts* album but listeners can readily hear the musical direction Kenton, Holman and the band were pointed.

The remaining seven Kenton tracks were recorded in excellent sound at the legendary Rendezvous Ballroom at Balboa Beach. They include a hot take on *Intermission Riff* with outstanding solos by Bill Perkins on tenor and Ken Larsen on trombone. Kenton fans know the names.

The four Ann Richards tracks are good but not essential. At just 19, she sounds young on the three songs recorded in 1955.

While including mostly the Four Freshmen standards on the disc is understandable, the Live in Tokyo video from that same era has superior sound plus a stunning take on Beisner's legendary Sophisticated Suite tribute to Duke Ellington. That music has never been available on a commercial CD and it is an outstanding example of just how hard Group #18 could swing. Meanwhile, *Road Shows* is a welcome addition to the Four Freshmen recorded history and is available at the FFS Music Mart.