

FFS Remembers Palle Christensen

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With the death of Palle Christensen have we lost the greatest fan of The Four Freshmen ever. And we have lost a good friend.

In many ways, Palle was "The great Dane." His influence on FFS, as European Director through 25 years, is well known. Among other things, he was one of the anchormen behind the successful FF-Convention in Amsterdam, Holland, August 2005.

For his contribution for the Danish Society, he received from our Queen Margrethe's own hand, an Order in Merit in silver. An event he loved to tell us about, first of all because our tall Queen, very unusually, under the audience, got up from her chair and looked Palle directly into his eyes.

First time I learned about Palle was in the beginning of the 80's, as he found me by phone in Norway. Like me, he had for many years believed that he was the only guy with that silly love for an American vocal-group called The Four Freshmen. In reality, we must have been sitting together in the first row, by the one and only concert July 1966, in Tvoli, Copenhagen, with Bob, Bill, Ross and Ken.

Palle was the owner of a total LP-collection with our heroes. (One more record than I have, and he would tease me)

We first time met was in Las Vegas at the first FF-Convention in 1988, and since then, at a vast number of Conventions all over, plus privately in Copenhagen with his wife, Lis, and their son, Jesper.

Palle was no singer or musician, but he loved Jazz and knew all about it. Now, hundreds of Danish jazz-friends will miss his pleasant voice, as he once a week through more than 20 years has been DJ on the Copenhagen Jazz Radio in his own broadcast called "The vocal-hour." A broadcasting where Palle never missed any opportunity to play a number or two of his beloved favourites. I had the joy to be with him and take part in these programs several times and remember it with a big smile.

All honour to the memory of Palle.

Dear Freshmen fans,

You might have been informed of this very sad news that Palle Christensen, Copenhagen Denmark, passed away in the morning of June 30, 2014 due to sudden heart embolism. His wife Lis and son Jesper immediately informed me by e-mail and they hadn't seen any sign of his illness and had difficult time to accept it.

Palle has been my first, longest and one of the best friends among FFS for almost quarter of a century. When The Four Freshmen toured in Japan late 1990, I followed the group at three different venues. I was so lucky to share breakfast table with Bob Flanigan at a hotel restaurant in Nagoya.

Among others, he told me there was a guy just like me in Denmark and it was Palle, as I frequently visited Sweden on business at that time. I asked John Bangs, FFAS president, to let me know Palle's address, and I sent Palle a snail mail letter. After exchanging a few letters, I visited him in Copenhagen in 1991. He offered me a drive around the city of Copenhagen for sight-seeing, however, I asked him to stay at his home to listen to his FF library. We enjoyed our common interest and became good friends very easily. I have to admit that his FF library was larger than mine.

Palle had been the very first FF fan to get together with me in Las Vegas and we had a very good time around the pool at Bob Flanigan's home in late 80s. He was so proud of attending the meeting, which became a start of FFS Conventions. My first FFS Convention was in Columbus, Ohio, 1992. Since then, Palle and I shared a hotel room at several conventions, until my wife Michiko joined me. He liked to sleep in bed with three ends of blanket be tightly folded under the mattress, just as if he slipped into a blanket envelope. On the other hand, I pull out the blanket from the mattress to make my feet free to move to any direction. We often laughed about the different preference in bed.

When I joined FFAS (so called at that time), everybody, including Palle, asked me if "FF in Tokyo '68" LP would be available. So, I started to visit second hand record shops in my area for that album, but, no success. I also made some FFS friends in Japan and talked about "FF in Tokyo '68" LP. One very kind guy, Susumu Ohnuki, offered to give that album from his FF collection to Palle. As far as I remember, Palle made an international call to thank him

and me, right after he received the surprise LP package from Japan.

When FF toured in Europe one time in late 90's, he became a voluntary roadie mostly in Holland. He later told me very nice anecdotes with the guys, especially Mike Beisner. Every time he comes to a FFS Convention, he brings a bottle of Scandinavian strong spirit for Bob Flanigan, who was so happy and appreciated Palle for the nice gift.

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Palle Christensen, Betty Bjorno, and Michiko and Yas Ichiura are pictured at the 2005 Amsterdam Convention.