

A Call From Julian Bond

by Don Follett

The recent death in August of Julian Bond, a U.S. civil rights leader over the past half century, a long time member of the Georgia state legislature - and a 20-year FFS member - reminds me of a short story:

I had just gotten to my office in Minneapolis that June morning and someone said, "Don, line one is for you."

The sobering voice coming from a cell phone in a car - in low, commanding tones (sounding much like James Bond, movie hero) spoke out: "This is Julian Bond. Do you know where I can get some tickets for the Four Freshmen concert?" He was calling from Washington, D.C., inquiring about the FF Minneapolis gig in a few days. "Other than at the Minneapolis Orchestra Hall box office, I can't help much," I said, lamely; it wasn't as if I had a bunch of tickets in my back pocket. The FF show was slated for the following Monday. We chatted for a few moments and a very business-like Bond hung up. It was a brief, but surprising phone call.

Three nights later, Bond and his wife Pamela were at the Orchestra Hall concert and in genial fashion joined in the afterglow reception backstage of a memorable FF concert - as it was the first in a big Minnesota venue for the then-new FF member Brian Eichenberger, who was from the area (Fresh News, Sept-Oct 2000). Bond's wife grew up in the Minneapolis area and the couple were in town also to visit relatives. Bond had attended at least one FFS National Convention and, when his schedule allowed, always tried to see the quartet on the road, he said. At the time, he was serving as chairman of the NAACP.

Former Freshman Ray Brown spoke of Bond's delight in the Freshmen music in the Fresh News (April 2005). Bond, 75, died Aug. 15 at his Florida vacation home from a vascular disease, according to the New York Times.



The New Four Freshmen are here.

by Curtis Calderon



Dear fans,

The New Four Freshmen are here. I say it like a new group has formed, but I feel like this group is unique, going to go far and has the most in common with the famous earlier groups. I'll explain a little what I mean :)

First off, in Stein Malvey, we have a unique guitar sound, that as he's grown into his part as a rhythm section player, he's really starting to shine. He's always been a great guitar player but was more reserved during the first year as he got accustomed to the group/sound. Now that he's very comfortable in the group, his guitar is becoming a big part of our sound. His groove, his solos, everything. His voice has become very strong over the last year as well and he's sounding great. To me, and will all due respect to all of our former guitar players, his guitar is becoming as unique as Bill Comstock and Don Barbour's. His voice is more reminiscent of Bill Comstock for the second part singing and for those of you who know me, that's just fine by me :) I loved Bill and Don's second part singing and guitar playing because they brought such a unique voice/guitar.

Next, we have our rock, Bob Ferreira. As I gotten to know Bob over these last 14 years, he's continually shown who he truly is, his devotion to the Four Freshmen and you are hard pressed to find a better guy or someone who has worked as hard as Bob for the Freshmen. His drums are just as exciting and energetic as Ross's were and bring a new sound to our group through his sensitivity and creativity, expand and go beyond what Ross set up initially. Both Ross and Bob brought and bring a great energy to kick off the rhythm section and both, very capable musicians. Bob also brings a great solo voice to the group, that I feel might be one of the best solo voices the Freshmen have ever had. Though everyone has always loved the vocal soloists through the years, I've never seen them react to the others as much as they react to Bob Ferreira.

Finally, we get to Tommy Boynton, our newest member. This guy has what it takes to be the next Flanigan. With all respect to past lead singers we've had, Tommy is the first guy with the power up there that reminds me of Bob. He's a hard worker and loves this music. We've only been touring now for six months and he's already shown great improvement in his lead singing and bass abilities. He came in strong and is going to be a monster soon enough. He's developing his own sound on lead and when we sing, it's like a reincarnation of Bob singing with us. They both have their own styles, but the sound and strength of that soaring tenor is there!! Tommy is certainly carrying the sound and in fact, when we played our week at the Dirty Dog Cafe in Michigan, we basically received standing ovations at every show and people LOVED our stuff off of the mic. I attribute much of the enthusiasm to Tommy's singing. Without a great lead singer, you don't have much. When you come to a show now and hear us, I think you'll agree, Tommy is a great addition to the group and Bob Flanigan would be ecstatic!

I get excited thinking about the possibilities with this current Four Freshmen group. The new CD is selling well and in fact at a recent concert we played in northern California, we broke their sales record for CDs sold. Some of our biggest fans, who are also musicians and give great constructive criticism, have sent great reviews of the new CD and Tommy's voice. We have the right combination of everything for us to move up to the next level. I want to personally thank all of you for your great support over the years and your continued support. We are going to release a vinyl version of Four Freshmen and Friends (the latest CD) later this year, so I encourage you to purchase some for gifts for your 20-something year old friends and family to introduce them to the Four Freshmen! Not trying to make a sales pitch as much as I'm trying to spread the music around. We already have great interest in the vinyl version, not only for collectors, but for a lot of our young fans and for our hard core fans who never sold or tucked away their record player :)

The future is here, well, it's coming soon!! :)