

Coffeyville, Kansas - October 11

by Ann Smith (N. TX Rep)

Who else but a Freshmen fanatic would drive 5-1/2 hours (each way) from Dallas to Kansas (through three states) to see a performance only one week before going to the annual convention? Guilty as charged!

It's been so great to get to see the Freshmen - the newest group - twice before the convention: Oklahoma City (Sept. 6) and Coffeyville, KS (Oct. 11). Compared to Oklahoma City, this was a small auditorium and smaller audience - several hundred compared to several thousand in OKC. Also, the Kansas audience was made up almost exclusively of Four Freshmen fans - most with white hair and having to help each other get to their seats. Their response to this music they love was wonderful - many instances of spontaneous applause at the recognition of old favorite Freshmen tunes. The OKC group was there to hear Wynton Marsalis, primarily, and were not necessarily as familiar with the Freshmen. At least there were not as many died-in-the-wool Freshmen fans in the audience. So, when that group became spellbound by the Freshmen's music, it was particularly thrilling.

One of the highlights of the trip to Kansas was getting to sit in on sound check and watching the group rehearse. For one song at the concert, "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," the Freshmen stepped out in front of the mikes and sang a cappella - not only without instruments but also without mikes. It was breathtaking.

A noticeable change is that the Freshmen are no longer performing with the keyboard accompaniment. This seems like a shame since Brian is such a phenomenal keyboard artist. (Check out "Moonlight in Vermont" on the "Still Fresh" CD.) Amazingly, Curtis and Vince also play keyboard/piano. However, the reason given for the change is that it gives them a tighter sound and is more like the original group. After hearing their more-fabulous-than-ever sound, it seems to be a very wise decision. Hopefully we'll get to hear Brian do his keyboard magic again at some later date.

After the performance the Freshmen were gracious enough to autograph CD's for the fans. This practically doubled the CD sales from what they had been earlier in the evening. Also, they sang "Happy Birthday" to a fan named Lesa before heading out to drive three or four hours to their next destination, Topeka, Kansas. The current Freshmen said they prefer that kind of travel schedule rather than having to get up early to move on. They say that they're so pumped after a performance that they couldn't sleep anyway. I never realized how tough life on the road was for them until reading Ross Barbour's book, Now You Know. I assumed they arrived at their destination by private jet and then were chauffeured by limousine to their performance. Pretty funny, huh, guys?



Coffeyville, Kansas - October 11 - the newest group of Four Freshmen step in front of the mikes and perform "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" a cappella - not only without instruments, but without mikes. It was awesome!



The Freshmen autographed CD's and then sang "Happy Birthday" to a pleased fan, Lesa, after the performance in Coffeyville, Kansas.

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