

“Freshmen in Stockholm” Brings Nostalgia

by Norman G. Morris, Columbus IN

To Bob Lininger, MM Director:

The Nov.-Dec. '02 issue of Fresh News arrived yesterday, and of course I read it practically cover to cover. I had a bit of a shock when I got to the last page and saw your notice of the 1966 video, “Four Freshmen in Stockholm” with the famed Group No. 4.

My check for \$20 is enclosed for this video.

Maybe it's worth a bit of explanation of why I'll be anxiously awaiting this video. My wife and I were in Stockholm in June of 1966 as a part of a Scandinavian tour. The first morning there I picked up a Stockholm newspaper, purely out of curiosity since I couldn't read a word of it. But in the entertainment section an ad caught my eye. It was a caricature drawing of the Freshmen and it looked as if they were appearing somewhere in Stockholm. I showed it to the desk clerk and asked him if he could tell me what it said.

It turned out that on that very day Sweden was celebrating a big national holiday. As a part of the festivities, the Freshmen were giving a couple of shows on an outdoor stage in the city's big amusement park. Getting more excited by the minute, I had him give me the times for the shows and directions to the park.

When we arrived at the park, we soon learned that this was more than just a summer park show. The King of Sweden (Gustav) was going to be there to preside over a program of folk dancing from all parts of the country. There were some band and orchestra concerts going on in various areas of the park. In fact, the Four Freshmen were far from being - for most of the Swedes - the main attraction. Nevertheless, the boys had a good reception for their first show, and of course we were thrilled to pieces at our luck of seeing them in this unlikely venue.

Immediately after the show, my wife made a mad dash for the dressing room door underneath the stage and tried to open the door. She was promptly stopped by a guard on duty, but, undaunted, she shouted out, “My name is Julia Morris and I'm from Columbus, Indiana!” At that moment the door opened and out popped Ross asking, “Who said ‘Columbus, Indiana’ “ ?

I have to explain here that Julia and Ross were in the same class at Columbus High School and had been friends for years. The rest of that evening was one of those times that can only happen once in a lifetime. We not only had seats right next to the stage for their second show; we spent the entire rest of the evening with the four of them. One of the high points, along with some serious bar hopping, was a press conference with a group of Swedish music critics at which the boys explained in detail how they achieved their unusual chord structure, climaxed by their suddenly launching into an impromptu a cappella rendition of “Tom Dooley” to illustrate their point.

The next morning we met them for coffee at their hotel because we were concerned over Bob's badly sprained ankle. He was in pain through the whole thing but managed gamely to make all the gigs without missing a beat...or a note.

This is a long background on why I want that Stockholm video, but I'm convinced that nostalgia is an important part of what makes the Four Freshmen such a terrifically important part of American popular music.

Thank you so much for making this video available. All my best from a long-time member and fan.

Attention: Brian, Bob, Curtis and Vince I APOLOGIZE!!!! Pat Tollifson (WVA)

Today is Saturday, November 2, 2002. It is early evening and I just opened my much-anticipated **Fresh News**. Guess what? You are going onstage soon at the Smoot Theatre in Parkersburg, WV, and I'm not there!

I'm the state rep for WV. I've been waiting for a chance to do my job in my state and I didn't know you were going to be here!

I'm aghast, mortified, and all those things. I would have been there with bells on and a load of friends and relatives. After all, I'm the “Groupie” who drove alone to see you in Kansas City and St. Joe. Put 2700 miles on the car. And, here I am just three hours away missing your show.

My husband is the computer nut and I'm the music nut in our family. So, I have a suggestion. I know a lot of our Society members aren't into computers either. So, how about letting the State Reps know about your gigs once a month by mail?

The **Fresh News** isn't coming as often and that doesn't help the situation. **Please** give it some thought.

It's 8:30 PM and your “Groupie” is going bananas thinking of what I'm missing. Please keep your State Reps up on what's happening.

So sorry in West Virginia.

Editor's Note: Since your husband is a “computer nut” (your words) tell him to call up **www.fourfreshmen.com** on his computer to see the Freshmen itinerary.