

Beebe, Arkansas Hosts Four Freshmen Concert

by Ann Smith, TX State Coordinator

The Freshmen appeared at the Owen Center on the campus of Arkansas State University on September 12. Beebe lies nestled in the piney woods about 30 miles northeast of Little Rock. This event was sponsored by the ASU-Beebe Cultural Enrichment Programs, which hosts a wide variety of performances, including classical and popular music (both instrumental and vocal), opera and light opera, folk dance, children's theater, comedy and novelty programs.

The Freshmen opened with a rousing version of their classic "Day In, Day Out". Next followed their beautiful rendition of "Invitation". There was a hush over the room as they held the audience spellbound. An upbeat version of "Young and Foolish" was followed by a gorgeous arrangement of "When Your Lover Has Gone". Brian treated us to a vocal solo on "If I Only Had A Brain", which included Vince whistling an interlude. The next song, "Rain", also featured Vince doing solo whistling. Bob explained that Vince was raised by a family of chickens, whereupon Vince corrected him – by whistling his reply. Curtis corrected the remark by saying that Vince was raised by a family of chickadees. Vince continued to make remarks in "whistle talk", while Curtis translated for him. The audience had a lot of fun with this light-hearted bit.

"Indian Summer" was next on the fare and featured a beautiful vocal solo by Bob. "All Around the World" was highlighted by a scattin' & pickin' solo by Vince – his vocal scatting accompanied by his bass improvisation. Next "I Remember You" drew a spontaneous round of applause, as the audience recognized an old Freshmen favorite from way back when. "I Concentrate On You" featured a one-liner vocal solo by Curtis: "to prove that even wise men can be wrong". Curtis has a pleasing voice and it's great to get a sampling of the newest new guy's vocal abilities. His trumpet and flugelhorn solos are fabulous and were featured on many of the songs included in this concert. The first time I ever heard a vocal solo by Greg Stegeman was almost two years after he left the Freshmen – on the latest CD, "Four Freshmen Live In The New Millennium". On it Greg sings an upbeat, really fun novelty tune called "Can't Take You Nowhere". Never having heard him sing it live, I sure wish Greg would consider doing it for us at the Thursday night jam session during next year's convention. How about it, Greg?

Spontaneous applause of recognition showed the audience's appreciation of "Walkin' My Baby Back Home". The next offering was one of the prettiest songs the Freshmen have ever done: "I Fall In Love Too Easily". The first half of the program closed out with "Every Time We Say Goodby", drawing a round of applause for Curtis' flugelhorn solo.

The second half of the evening opened with a lively version of the Freshmen classic, "Route 66". It definitely brought spontaneous applause of recognition from the delighted fans. On this one, I could hear a number of muted voices singing along, as

people delighted at one of the biggest favorites the Freshmen have done. A lush version of "It Could Happen To You" was followed by a fun novelty song, "Gonna' Go Fishin'", featuring Brian on vocal solo.

"In This Whole Wide World" once again brought rousing applause as the audience recognized another of the great standards from the Freshmen. It was followed by "There Will Never Be Another You" and then Bob's beautiful vocal solo rendition of "Love Dance". This was the first time I've heard the current group perform the next song, "You Stepped Out Of A Dream". It was good to hear another one of our Freshmen favorites done by the new generation of Freshmen.

Next on the program was "Love Is the Saddest Thing (When It Goes Away)" a beautiful song, hauntingly done by the Freshmen. It was followed by a rousing version of "Somebody Loves Me", once again drawing spontaneous applause of recognition. Next came three of the all time most popular and recognizable Freshmen hits: "Graduation Day", "Blue World" and "Day by Day". The closing song was a beautiful arrangement by Bill Comstock: "Early Autumn".

For an encore, the Freshmen treated us to the National Anthem, a wonderful arrangement by Brian. And on this one we did sing along. This is the absolute best I've ever heard the Freshmen sound. I say that after every performance. But guess what: it's the truth.

From Tom Purvis:

The photo is the current site of the famed 113 Club in Ft. Wayne IN where the Freshmen got their start. This is the side wall of a hotel convention center. Bit of nonsense memorabilia...I am told that the entrance to the club was approximately where the gas meter is located!

