

We Get Letters -

from Allan Bula, E. Sussex, England

I was delighted to read that George Shearing had been given FFS honorary membership in memory of his road tour with the Freshmen in 1962. His tour in Britain that year was with pianist Junior Mance, as far as I can remember. Like Ann Smith, I still play George Shearing's "most challenging" compositions and arrangements, dating from the late 1940s onwards - or, rather, I try to play them! They give me the freshness of a beginner who stays a beginner....

Regarding Father Peter Gillquist's "Songs I Wish the Four Freshmen Would Record," I'd suggest the ten Frank Sinatra recorded in London, also in 1962:

The Very Thought of You
We'll Gather Lilacs
If I Had You
Now Is the Hour
The Gypsy
A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square
A Garden in the Rain
London by Night
We'll Meet Again
I'll Follow My Secret Heart

Robert Farnon, 85 this year, arranged and conducted all those for Sinatra. Farnon would have been a great arranger for the Freshmen, who also, so far as I know, never performed with the wonderful Netherlands Metropole Orchestra, host to many a top jazz guest.

But, of course, there's time yet!

All good wishes - Allan Bula

Freshmen Return to open Arkansas State University - Beebe Concert Series

by Jack Astrachan, Kennett, Missouri

Over 500 people packed the Owen Center Theatre for the return engagement of the Four Freshmen. Starting with "Day In-Day Out" to murderous applause the guys were on a roll. Followed a beautiful "Invitation," "Rain" and "Indian Summer." The Freshmen with new member, Curt Calderon, had that haunting Freshmen Sound down pat. Curt added some tremendous trumpet solos throughout the sets. This was my 3rd review in recent years of Freshmen Concerts and this one featured one of the best song lists ever. It was all there - *Route 66, I Concentrate On You, Blue World, I Remember You, Early Autumn*, and many more favorites.

When the magic ended there was a loud standing ovation with shouts of "more." The boys encored with a beautiful, emotional a cappella version of the "Star Spangled Banner"! What a Great Evening!!!



Jack and Friends

The Amazing Four Freshmen - Through The Years by Bob Jackson (CA)

A recent posting on the "Yahoo" board stated - "It amazes me what ranges many of the FF have. The thought of moving from second voice to first, as recently was done, gives me heart failure."

It amazes me, too. Bill Comstock sang 2nd voice, then switched with Ken Albers at the low part. Then Ken went from the 2nd part to the 3rd part, so he sang all the parts except Bob's part. Dick Reynolds wrote many of the charts for the FF and he wrote LOW parts. He also wrote high 2nd voice parts. Many former FF singers had trouble singing the 2nd part because it was a little too high. Ken could switch from singing the low D's in the bass to the high parts of the 2nd part with no trouble. It wasn't that the arrangements had a couple of high notes in them, but the part hangs high, forcing the singer to sing several notes in a row in the upper register. The 2nd voice singer should really be a top tenor. Ken amazed me with his range.

Ken also had close to perfect pitch, although he denied to me that he had it - he was close. Flanigan is the lead singer that all other groups tried to copy. He had a tendency to sing flat occasionally, however. Time after time I have heard the group start to go flat following Bob's lead, and Ken would bring them all right back into pitch. You can hear this on "Their Hearts Were Full Of Spring" and "Tom Dooley."

Ray Brown was really a bass that was forced to sing the 2nd part, and he did a terrific job. Then there is Greg who sang ALL FOUR parts and Mike Beisner who has sung three of the parts. How about Rod Henley, who sang bass with the group and then sings such a wonderful lead tenor in the Faux Freshmen. I am in awe.