

Friday, August 9, 2002 - Black Tie Optional

by Ann Smith (TX)

Bedecked and bedazzled fans thrilled to the performance by the current Freshmen - themselves decked out in black tuxes and ties. The program started with the presentation of colors and a recording of the current Freshmen singing the national anthem - a beautiful arrangement.

The performance started with the perennial Freshmen favorites "Route 66" and "Poinciana," both of which drew spontaneous applause of recognition, as did many other Freshmen classic tunes throughout the evening. It was mentioned that in last year's Jerry Lewis telethon, the Four Freshmen helped raise \$1 million by singing "Route 66" and one other song (in the wee small hours of the telethon).

Next came "You Stepped Out Of A Dream," with some of Vince's scat singing accompanied by his bass solo, which always brings a round of spontaneous applause. This was followed by the lush ballads "It Could Happen To You" and "Everytime We Say Goodbye." An even more lush ballad followed, featuring Bob Ferreira's gorgeous solo voice on "Love Dance." It was pointed out that this is Bob's tenth year as a Freshmen. Bob's comment was "Where's my pin?"

The following song, "In This Whole Wide World" was finished in a rather unique fashion. The guys quipped about how they hate to have someone start applauding when there's a pause right before the final chord. So they sang the finishing line, with all its drama - "in this whole, wide...", when someone jumped the gun and started applauding. (Ray Brown had been put up to this.) The Freshmen stopped, took a deep breath (like they were going to do the finishing chord) and then started into the next song, without finishing the one they were on. The room was all abuzz, but we've learned to play along with the fun nonsense the Freshmen do to entertain us. After finishing "I'm Gonna Go Fishin'," a vocal solo by Brian Eichenberger, as the applause started to die down, they finished the last line of the previous song - "in this whole...wide...world." It brought the house down.

"Graduation Day" was next up - the song the current Freshmen say made them rich and famous before they were born. Next came two more Four Freshmen classics, in which the current Freshmen were joined by the five Freshmen alumni attending the convention - Bob Flanigan, Ross Barbour, Bill Comstock, Ray Brown and Greg Stegeman. They sang "Day by Day" and "It's A Blue World Without You."

A lovely ballad with a bossa nova beat followed - "Once I Loved" (love is the saddest thing when it goes away). It was written by Jobim and arranged by recently retired Freshmen, Greg Stegeman. The closing song was a really fast version of "After You've Gone," with some amazingly fast scat singing and bass strumming by Vince Johnson. The Freshmen say it's the fastest song they know. We were granted one encore for the evening - "Early Autumn," - which we had heard demonstrated as a "work in progress" during "Fresh Talk," and which was arranged by Freshmen alumnus, Bill Comstock. Thank goodness we still had the Saturday night concert upcoming, because the Freshmen definitely left us wanting more - as they always have through all these years.



Delaware "Blue Hens" Reunited



Jane Bishop

Don Boland

Tom Gallaway



Jerry Richardson, Greg Stegeman, Colin Bishop