

Four Tops Spin Musical Memories at the Forum

By Karen L. Peiffer

The Four Tops with all its original members will go down in Harrisburg's entertainment history book as giving a nearly sold-out audience a show they will never forget.

The Forum in Harrisburg was transformed into a musical trip down memory lane on the evening of Jan. 26.

The Motown-inspired audience jumped to its feet on numerous occasions, applauded furiously, sang the lyrics word-for-word, and danced wherever room could be found.

Formed in Detroit in 1954 the Four Tops could only be appreciated by local nightclub patrons during their first ten years together. It was not until 1964 when Berry Gordy signed them to Motown that their popularity soared, and they enjoyed 29 chart hits in only eight years.

Today the Four Tops are basking in the success of their 1988 album entitled *Indestructible* which gave them the honor of a 1988 Olympic Games theme song known by the same title.

It also gave them a renewed interest in touring and performing, and Harrisburg fans were treated to a spectacular as well as energetic show.

The crowd roared as the Four Tops, dressed to the nines in deep purple shirts and complimentary gray suits with satin pinstripes, strode purposely across the stage to take their respective places behind the microphones.

Red, blue, green, and yellow spotlights danced across the stage, and dry ice effects poured from behind the Four Tops Orchestra and the locally-hired Buzz Jones horn section encompassing both in a dreamy cloud of color.

The electricity that hovered over the packed house burst into a wildfire of energy as the Four Tops opened the show with "Baby I Need Your Loving". Lead vocalist Levi Stubbs delighted everyone with his flawless, powerful voice.

Sounding every bit as they did during the highpoint of their Motown careers from 1965 to 1968 Abdul "Duke" Fakir, Lawrence Payton, and Renaldo "Obie" Benson joined Stubbs in unsurpassed harmonic excellence.

During the opening song the Four Tops handed a microphone to the front row and watched with amusement as it was passed from one aspiring vocalist to another.



Left to right: Lawrence Payton, Abdul "Duke" Fakir, Levi Stubbs, and Renaldo "Obie" Benson.

In a call-and-response with the audience Stubbs bellowed out, "Get it on!", and to loosen up a crowd who did not need any encouragement he immediately followed it with, "Take it off!"

Throughout the evening the Four Tops, masters of excitement, continuously addressed the audience as, "Hey, Harrisburg!" This personal salutation had its intended effect. The crowd's applause grew to a deafening decibel, and thrilled fans shouted out requests.

The Four Tops obliged with one special request. As the house lights dimmed to a romantic level of blues, Stubbs, Fakir, Payton, and Benson in beautiful harmony sang "Ask The Lonely". The tranquil, melancholy song had a calming effect on the audience, but it was only temporary.

The crowd became unglued when the Four Tops began the first few bars of "My Girl," and Benson's sultry bass voice elicited shrieks from certain female members of the audience. The frenzied momentum continued during the performance of such chart-smashing hits as "Bernadette," "It's The Same Old Song," "Reach Out I'll Be There," and, their first million-seller, "I Can't

Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)".

The excitement in the air throughout the show was immeasurable, but the Four Tops left the audience begging for more at the end of the performance.

Returning for only one encore after a one hour concert resulted in wide-eyed looks of disbelief on the faces of fans expecting more.

What a few disgruntled fans perhaps did not realize was the incredible fortune they had in seeing the Four Tops perform at all.

On Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1988, all four members of this legendary soul group missed their U.S.-bound plane taking off from London's Heathrow Airport. It was the ill-fated Pan American Flight 103 which crashed in Scotland, killing all aboard.

When the Four Tops returned on Thursday, Dec. 22, to Detroit's Metro Airport "the group's members shook hands with anyone who came near and kept repeating, 'Merry Christmas, everybody,'" according to a report in *The Detroit Free Press*.

Vocalist Payton was quick to agree: it certainly gives a whole new meaning to their 1988 album *Indestructible*.

By Diane Edwards and Laurie Whitehaus

In the Gallery Lounge on Jan. 24, Xiau-Quing Zhu told a gathering of the Penn State Harrisburg community about China.

The Chinese celebrate the New Year on February 5, she said. This celebration lasts four to five days with the emphasis on the consumption of delectable dumplings with one's family.

This year is the year of the Small Dragon, she said. The animal changes every 12 years.

Xiau-Quing Zhu's hometown, Beijing, is known as the center of history because it is the capital of China, and it is home to approximately 9 million people.

One of the main attractions, for aesthetic buffs, is the Cultural Center where there are several art galleries and museums, she said.

To get to the Cultural Center, or anywhere else in Beijing, residents and visitors may take the major form of transportation--the bicycle. It is advisable to pay the modest two to five cents to have someone watch the bike when it is not in use.

At the end of her presentation, Zhu commented on the lack of anti-American prejudice among residents of her country, saying the Chinese people are so intrigued with English they stop foreigners on the street to try to learn the language.

Photographer Displays Work in Lancaster

Photographer Leon Supraner, known for his photographic essays on senior citizens and the aged, will exhibit his work in the North Museum in Lancaster through March 26.

The show, entitled *Street Poems & After-Images*, concerns human and architectural images.

Street Poems depicts the isolation, despair and frustration in contemporary society.

After-Images are architectural photographs, abstract and linear, concerned with design elements.

"They arouse our vision and our intellect, send us, craning our necks, out onto the street, learning, again, to see."

Supraner whose work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of the City of New York and the New York Historical Society has shown his work at the South Street Seaport Museum, Parrish Art Museum, and the Heckscher Museum.

For more information on the exhibit contact the North Museum, Franklin & Marshall College, P.O. Box 3003, Lancaster, PA., 17604-3003.

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