

LIVE FROM HOLLYWOOD

By Robert Friedman

The Kingston Trio just finished a two night, made for public television performance at the Hollywood Avalon in Hollywood, California. The Avalon was an interesting and historical choice of venues because the theater is located in the shadow of the Capitol Records building directly across the street, where The Kingston Trio and legendary producer Voyle Gilmore created so many of the Trio's earliest recordings.

This event was the brainchild of public television producer Terrell Cass and film director Chip Miller. Both Cass and Miller are well known award winning filmmakers and devoted Kingston Trio fans, and they are producing a two-hour historical documentary of the Kingston Trio.

The all star concert celebration of the group at the Avalon Theater June 21st & 22nd, 2015 will provide a lot of the footage for their documentary and public television special. In their documentary, Cass and Miller want to honor The Kingston Trio – the group that put folk music on the map in the late 50's and early 60's.

Surrounded by a sharply designed set that displayed guitars and various pictures of past and present Trio members, the Trio kicked off the show dressed in traditional striped shirts singing their high energy song RIDER. They immediately followed up with TIJUANA

JAIL, the song that could have been the 1959 Spring Break anthem. Bill Zorn eloquently explained that before the Trio became a trio, they were a quartet with the added voice of female vocalist Barbara Gannon.

Just to keep history in proper perspective, and to give the audience an audio taste of what the Trio might have sounded like with that extra feminine voice, they introduced lovely Sana Christian to sing John Phillip's and John Stewart's beautiful CHILLY WINDS along with the Trio.

The Kingston Trio has had a long association with other folk groups. The Limelickers, who were in attendance to pay homage and be a part of the fun, sang the old folk standard LONESOME TRAVELER and then joined Sana Christian and The Kingston Trio to sing the Trio's major recording hit THE REVEREND MR. BLACK.

Once again, the Trio took center stage and sang NEW FRONTIER and THEY CALL THE WIND MARIA. Rick Dougherty, the only Trio member to ever speak fluent French, beautifully sang RASPBERRIES STRAWBERRIES.

Beach Boy Al Jardine, a long time Kingston Trio fan and friend, joined the celebration. Jardine teased that while SLOOP JOHN B might have originally been a Trio song, it was the Beach Boys who made it a hit. Then everybody, including the audience, joyfully sang the song Beach Boy style.

It seems an endless list of celebrity friends and folk singers continued to drop in. Barry McGuire, formerly of the New Christy Minstrels, stopped by to sing GREENBACK DOLLAR.

McGuire explained that although he had been a writer on the song, he, unfortunately, never received credit from his other two collaborators for his contribution. It seems all is forgiven because it didn't stop this dynamo from giving a rousing rendition of another Trio hit.

Producer Terrell Cass warm-heartedly warned the audience that because this was a television taping, there would be starts and stops and occasionally a few songs throughout the concert would require a retake. Actually the retakes were a welcomed bonus for the audience who were able to hear some of their favorite songs more than once.

The best retake of the session was a lovely rendition of SCARLETT RIBBONS by Timothy B. Schmit (of The Eagles), Al Jardine (of The Beach Boys) and Kingston Trio founder Bob Shane. Schmit, a perfectionist, and Shane, the good natured, fun loving entertainer that he is, worked through the retakes and the three of them gave a beautiful, crowd pleasing performance.

Although the Kingston Trio is well known for a series of early hits, they included two new songs, A MUCH BETTER VIEW OF THE MOON and the title track BORN

AT THE RIGHT TIME from their most recently recorded CD.

Trini Lopez came by to sing LA BAMBBA with the Trio. He told the audience that his version of La Bamba was inspired by the Kingston Trio's early version of the song. Still going strong, Trini gets a big kick out of entertaining and was enthusiastically received by the crowd.

To the audience's delight, Bob Shane sang the Kingston Trio classics SCOTCH & SODA and TOM DOOLEY to thunderous applause and standing ovations. There's no doubting the love fans have for THE iconic voice of folk music.

Nick Reynolds's son, Josh - who the Trio joked was "the winner of the Nick Reynolds's look alike contest" - sang his dad's most famous song, MTA, and his performance was made even more special because it happened to be Father's Day. Bass player Paul Gabrielson used his musical skills on the bass to create some extra humor and laughter that was roundly approved by the audience during the MTA introduction.

Deering Banjos graciously supplied George Grove with their specially designed "Zombie Killer Banjo" to play while Bill Zorn and Rick Dougherty exuberantly sang ZOMBIE JAMBOREE.

There were many other Kingston Trio songs, sung over the course of the two nights, including WORRIED MAN,

GENNY GLENN, REUBEN JAMES, LONG BLACK VEIL
and OH SAIL AWAY.

What would a folk music event be without singing Pete Seeger's WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE? Easily the most recognizable song in folk, it was sung by the Kingston Trio and their entire music ensemble plus one final special guest: Henry Diltz, famous rock photographer extraordinaire and lifetime fan and friend.

The two-day taping ended with a wrap party and family, friends and fans were able to meet and greet the entertainers and celebrate. The two night concert event was a hugely successful effort on behalf of everyone who participated and the producers are anxious to share this extraordinary documentary and concert event through a public television pledge drive that should air sometime in 2016.