

church activities, so we were strictly interested in church singing. My own interest in pop music didn't develop until somewhere around 1957."

By Joseph's comment, religious music, or Gospel was the environment when living in Mississippi. It also became the initial means by which the Brothers, when they arrived in Los Angeles, made some of their earliest money performing. Blues was the thing they did at first, admits the Brothers, but later on it was the Gospel. Tunes like "People Get Ready" and "Midnight Hour" show off some of the Gospel coloring they employ, although Willie when asked if it is the same coloring as, say, Aretha Franklin, puts in this way. "It's the same, just a different expression."

With the trend toward protest material, and the Brothers playing before audiences who acknowledge more of the protest material than any other kind of an audience, the question was put to Willie.

"No, we don't believe in protest ... I don't! Progress is where it's at."

Joseph interjects a thought on the same subject.

"We protest in a different way. We don't protest outright." Willie, however, bounced back with some additional comments on Vietnam, civil rights, and an additional comment on protest music.

"We protest against protest. Black people are crying because we're never in history. And the history that's there is untrue. The way the movements are going about getting history, it's going to be a bad scene ... it's gonna be more bad for us than good. To make history for a race, we should be into creating something .. build something, not tear down. Our kids, years from now,

are going to be reading about the destructive things to others. I'm for civil rights and I think every man should be able to do his thing, but each individual, regardless of what color he is, controls his own freedom, and you can be as you think."

To hear Brian talk about his being part of the Brothers, you readily see that Willie, and all the other Brothers, controls their own freedom. Most assuredly, Brian has found this to be true as he makes a remark about what he has gotten out of being with the Brothers.

"Freedom ... a lot of freedom. Total freedom. That's the thing with being with the Brothers, it's freedom in everything, every minutes of the day. And when I'm playing most of all, they let me do my thing and it's free ... 'cause their thing is free too."

It is the same when they collectively compose a tune (they all write, however). Lester explains it this way.

"We just sit down and start playing, and whatever suggestions the other person has that will make it better, we say 'Okay, let's do it!'"

And they certainly do it with a freedom that generates a special brand of enthusiasm out of their audience. However, one of the accusations often made at the Brothers is that they play white music.

"We're constantly accused of that," Lester flatly admitted. "All I can say is the black people are too proud to get up and see what other black people are doing, if they're doing anything. They would rather sit at home and criticize without seeing for themselves. They think because we play to white audiences that we play white music. We play to whoever come to hear us."

Willie drops a thought that might bear thinking about if you're one of the blacks who are turned off by the Brothers' music.

"Black people are going to be first behind the music ideas because they are not really digging up on it."

It would seem that it really doesn't matter who is out there in the audience accepting the exciting and enjoyable pandemonium emanating from the Brothers. Lester's comment about what goes through his mind when he is on stage performing indicates an approach by the Brothers made for everyone.

"Nothing goes on in my mind except what I'm doing. They (the audience) put you in all sorts of moods. They change you as often as they want to."

"You see, when you're performing the whole section in the front of the auditorium might be sitting stiff, but look in the back and there is one person that's really turned on ... feeling the way you are. Then you begin to respond to that one person. And then the next thing you know, you have that person, then another person, and so on doing the whole thing."

The Chambers Brothers are a whole thing when it comes to the entertainment field. They are, as they say, without a bag, non-categorical, just swinging, creating a lot of exciting music and causing their audiences to reduce their inhibitions and let it all hand out.

The Brothers have found they can be happy doing their thing ... playing their music. They are a warm, sincere, happy and serious quintet that would like to sing forever ... their whole life is music.

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Joseph Pach

Andrew Benac



James Pataki

Ifan Williams

In 1950 Mr. Benac graduated from the University of Toronto Senior School of Music with the R.C.A.D. (Royal Conservatory Artist's Diploma). He immediately began work with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the CBC Symphony Orchestra. Two years later he became a member of a third group, the Hart House Orchestra. This thirteen piece string group was based at Hart House at U of T, and made several tours. In each of their two tours of the Maritimes they played everywhere in the Maritimes except Fredericton, because there was no one here to organize a concert.

At about this time he met his wife, Joan, who sang with the Leslie Bell Singers. Andrew Benac played the performances he and his

wife "made eyes at each other." The Leslie Bell Singers was one of the first television programs in Canada when CBC television began in 1952.

By 1958 Mr. Benac found the Toronto Symphony was taking too much time and quit. "I pictured myself more in the CBC commercial work at that time", he says of his leaving the TSO.

But in 1964 the CBC Symphony disbanded. Since its conception, the CBC had been using live music for all programs, but in 1964 they decided to follow the practice of CTV and do "canned" programming that could be resold.

Another reason suggested by Mr. Benac is, "in the high echelon of the administration at CBC there is no one to push culture. They have

sort of a token gesture - 'Look we do have a few culture shows.'"

Since the disbandment of the symphony, Mr. Benac has been working with the Hart House Orchestra and doing commercial work. But of commercial work, he says, "It's not the same as coming to grips with a real work of art."

Last September Andrew Benac moved to Fredericton with his wife and their four children: Paul, 15; Cathy, 12; Andrew, 8; and Stephen, 5.

He enjoys working in the String Quartet with the aim of "making chamber music part of everyday life in the Maritimes".