

FIVE BY DESIGN BIOGRAPHY

While these friends were singing and studying together in college, they had no idea their love for harmony and the music of the big band/swing era would develop into a full-time career. Brothers Kurt and Terrence Niska, childhood friend Michael Swedberg and Lorie Carpenter-Niska (Kurt's wife) joined forces while at the University of Wisconsin/Eau Claire in the mid 1980's. One by one, the four became involved with vocal ensemble "Hot Jazz," and what originally started out as a quartet expanded to take full advantage of the incredible harmonies of the big band era.

Under the guidance of Alton Accola, the group's founder and manager, "Radio Days," was conceived in the late 1980's as a vehicle to launch the quintet into show business. A patriotic musical retrospective celebrating the golden age of radio, "Radio Days" was well received as the country observed the 50th anniversaries of the events of World War II. Five By Design made their debut in the symphony pops world in 1994 with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and went on to make their first recording, selections from "Radio Days," (currently out of print) with the Utah Symphony Orchestra in 1997. By the time Catherine Farr-Scott joined the quintet that fall, the company had grown to a full-time venture and has since averaged close to 200 days on the road and 60 performances per season.

Due to the popularity of "Radio Days," and their Christmas concert "A Winter's Evening," presenters were eager for the quintet to expand their repertoire. Commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony, Five By Design added "Club Swing" to its roster in the spring of 2000. "Club Swing" follows the rise and fall of the big band era, 1937 - 1955, at the fictional Club Swing in the Hotel Crosby, "where the music's hot, the drinks are cool and the dance floor is always open." Five By Design recorded selections from CLUB SWING with a big band headed by Willis Delony, director of Jazz Studies at Louisiana State University, and will release the recording in the fall of 2001.

Five By Design has the great fortune of working with several outstanding orchestrators: Lovell Ives, Professor Emeritus of Jazz Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay; Willis Delony, who frequently serves as pianist/conductor; and Maury Laws the noted film orchestrator whom many will remember for the Rankin-Bass animated television specials which included "Frosty, the Snowman" and "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Five By Design writes their own vocal arrangements, and the orchestrators bring those arrangements to life with unparalleled expertise.

Minneapolis-based Five By Design has toured extensively throughout the continental U.S. and Canada and made an appearance at the "Bosphorus International Music Festival" in Istanbul, Turkey. The ensemble is gaining national exposure with their appearance on syndicated media broadcasts including National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition—Sunday" and "Swingin' Down the Lane" and have been featured in Symphony magazine.

The additional members of the Five By Design family include Phil Henrickson, who has been the Sound Engineer since 1987 and Dean Kolze, who has been the Technical Director since 1994. The recent addition of Stacey Nellen-Kolze (Dean's wife), Wardrobe/Hair Supervisor has completed the team to this point. For further information on Five By Design's itinerary and activities, visit the ensemble's website at <http://www.fivebydesign.com>