

Working My Way Back To You (2011) - Audio CD by Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons Rhino (UK)B6JXT8

After a little bit of close listening to this relatively new compilation I decided it made no sense to compare these latest issue masters against those mastered to CD before 2000. The sound is so different that there is no point. It is clear that these tracks are also in some cases not the original single versions. Close listening shows the differences. And - in almost all cases these tracks are noted in the booklet (in)correctly as "200x Remastered LP version" - they are neither "Remastered from LP" nor bear any resemblance to a certain "LP version".

Maybe this review and the detailed track notes below will aid the listening experience for fans who have once again "shelled out" on yet another compilation. You'll at least see that this is, in the main, a new listening experience. It should be read with reference to our '**Sound Evaluation Guide**' web page which can be accessed via the CD Discography 'main page' on the www.seasonally.co.uk web-site.

"2006 Remastered LP version" should mean that it's source is the 2006 **"Definitive Pop Collection" US DoCD R2 74110**, while **"2007 Remastered LP version"** means as a source the 2007 **"Jersey Beat" US box set R2 74852**. Both notes/remarks are in fact nonsense. Similar mixes are used, but almost all tracks have undergone major **"improvement"** through further sound enhancement using EQ tweaks, compressors and limiters.

Collectors among us might own both mentioned CD versions, the **"Jersey Beat" box** and the **"Definitive Pop Collection"**, so they can compare themselves. But ... there are single tracks on this DoCD here that had never appeared on CD "compilations", some only on older, pre-year 2000 LP to CD issues (e.g. UK Ace 2on1 series, US Curb Original Classics Hits Volumes, NL Disky issues). These are referenced under this review as single tracks.

Overall, when checking peaks & DR values of this set closely, this is a major improvement against the **"Jersey Beat" box** in most cases. Almost all tracks have the peak set correctly at -0.30db to avoid any "overs" and distortion when used with modern sound equipment or digital converts to ACC or MP3 formats. From my experiences, it could be that Sony's SoundForge program has been used with some kind of decent EQ/compressor /limiter combination to produce this result (sorry, my assumption was wrong, they used a Sadie DAW - check the mastering studio's web site). This is good, being the first time a sound engineer has used decent audio equipment "the right way" for correct mastering on a FV & 4 Seasons combination.

Exceptions are **"Earth Angel"** (CD 2-11) with peak at -0.10db and **"Sunny"** (CD 2-19) with a peak of -0.27db (so only slightly >>off<<).

In the track details inside the booklet are a few dates/details that are totally wrong, so let's first correct these so we all know what tracks we're talking about.
CD 1: # 9 "Working My Way Back To You" year is 1966 / # 13 "My Eyes Adored You" year is 1974 / # 16 "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do" year is 1964.

CD 2: 5 "Girl Come Running" year is 1965 / # 12 "Walk Away Renee" year is 1975 / # 13 "Fallen Angel" year is 1975 and artist is FV / # 18

"You're Ready Now" artist is FV / # 19 "Sunny" year is 1968 and artist is FV.

For comparison, the DoCD here has to be compared against the tracks on the **"Jersey Beat" box**. The result is very easily summarized - as already said, these are mastered correctly with almost all at a peak of -0.3 db. The RMS (loudness) values do reflect the re-mastering (either digital, or analogue) trying to sound like current, **"modern"** music, aimed at radio play, iPods etc. - meaning a higher than vinyl and early CD's in terms of loudness with a low RMS value between 10 and 7. This is easy to produce nowadays using modern audio studio equipment, without the risk of resulting in any clippings or overpowering any amplifier. For all stereo version we have noted the DR (Dynamic Range) values as they were on the **"Jersey Beat" box** and as they are now (many of them have changed 2 steps up, so from e.g. DR8 to DR6).

But the counter point to this is, it doesn't sound in any way original anymore. It is simply not as the original producer (either Bob Crewe or Bob Gaudio) intended. So you will clearly hear that voices might be buried from background instruments that are audible now and were never meant that way when the original producer / band finished the final mix for record pressing. Also, the gap between quiet and loud parts is much lower now after being fed thru a compressor - meaning that almost everything might end up at the same level of loudness. So don't expect any **"original sound"** from any of the tracks here - these are artificially created new **"modern day" versions** and are meant this way. We all have to accept this as the aim of the re-issue producer, and there's no way we (as fans) can criticise this unless we say the CD compilation here is bad or "useless". Of course depending on your expectations and requirements this is also a valid, acceptable opinion.

Let's start to compare these masters against the **"Jersey Beat" box** (abbreviation used from now on: JBB) set or/and the Collectors' Choice 2on1 CDs (referenced as: CCM). Also used for compare: **The Definitive Pop Collection [DoCD Rhino R2 74110, USA 2006]** (used as "DPC") and **Jersey's Best [DoCD Rhino UK 79937, 2008]** (used as "JSB"). The set reviews here is "WMW"[BTY]. Mono is mentioned when used, otherwise Stereo.

As a summary, I've preceded each title with a "+" for good tracks and a "-" for bad tracks. A track with nothing in front means okay with other good versions prob. also existing elsewhere.

- DISC 1 -

+1) Sherry

Totally different mono master as on JBB: better mastered, more balanced, less noise, a revelation, even with a RMS of -9.5db and a DR8. But, a little high treble noise floor. Mono. Similar also to JSB, but the lead voice is more prominent on JSB.

+2) Dawn

Similar to JBB. Mono. DR6 shows high compression. Better lead voice than any of the others (JBB, JSB, DPC).

+3) Silence Is Golden

Similar to JBB and JSB - better peak here. Mono (stereo on DPC). Still background noise, audible at beginning. More compressed than other versions.

+4) Rag Doll

Similar to JBB (better DR here). Mono. Still a bit of background noise (less than on JBB version), which is okay if it's that little. JSB has a little too much bass, the DPC version is sounding "thin" when compared.

+5) Let's Hang On

Better DR as on JBB. Mono (stereo on JBB). There are two mixes currently used, one is on JBB and JSP (stereo, louder beginning), the other one used here and on DPC.

-6) Walk Like A Man

Here I would have preferred the JBB version which has a better DR value. Sound wise, the handclapping is also better on the JBB one. Mono. Too compressed when compared against the JBB track. Stereo on DPC. The JSB one is also a little different, with prob. a little more bass, but less prominent vocals.

+7) Big Girls Don't Cry

Much compression used, I would have lived with a little less. So it's sounding like a huge step forward (?) against the "tiny" JBB + JSB versions (which are sounding "meaningless". Mono (stereo on DPC). Improvement? Decide for yourself.

+8) Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby Goodbye)

Stereo! (Mono on JBB and JSB). More compressed, but retaining strong voices. Compared against DPC, I would say: nice!

+9) Working My Way Back To You DR8->DR6

High pitched overlay noise at start, should be eliminated (is on all stereo versions!) Best vocals of all 4 versions (mono on JSB). Nice mix, compared against track on DPC: you can hear the improvement.

+10) Opus 17 DR8->DR6

Most prominent of all stereo versions (compressor used?), in sequence: DSP (DR10), JBB (okay, DR8), JSB (little more bass, DR8), WMW (DR6). Best version here ? – It is difficult to say....

+11) December, 1963. DR9->DR9

This is the 3:31 version (the 3:20 version is on DPC). Very similar to JBB (JSP has a little bass added, not found here). Okay, but I'm not too happy with the vocals, for some reason I can't define.

12) Candy Girl

Mono (stereo on DPC). I would be happy with the JSB version, the compressor tried here to make the sound more prominent and upfront.

+13) My Eyes Adored You DR8->DR7

Same approach again: DPC has the less-mixed-up version, while JBB has already been the ultimate mix (for me). On JSB with too much bass. The upgrade used here on WMW only produces a little more prominent noise floor, with cymbals etc. getting a major "boost-up".

+14) I've Got You Under My Skin DR9->DR7

Similar to the JBB version (not much differences to DPC and JSB). Boost-up for the voices here. It's okay, I can live with it. DR7 now instead of DR9 on JBB

+15) The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine (Anymore) DR10->DR7

Similar in improvement (?) as to 14). I would be happy with the lower DR10 of JBB and JSB, too.

+16) Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

The only recent CD transfer appeared on a budget CD (by Rhino) in 2001, entitled "**Big Girls Don't Cry & Other Hits**" (R2 76761). So, it's DR9 on that CD, and DR7 now here. A little too much improvement, IMHO. DR8 would have been more okay. Major tweaking brings us the lead and backing voices more prominent upfront (EQ tweaked), and the 2001 version loses a bit against the new master. No other newer CD version to compare to, unfortunately. Originally

on the "**Dawn**" album, so also found on the **Ace 2on1 CD ("Dawn"+"Rag Doll")** from 1994 and the **Curb CD "Dawn - Original Classic Hits - Volume 4"** from 1995 (sounding really flat here).

+17) Will You Love Me Tomorrow DR9->DR7

Stereo, bass drum beats at the beginning right. Similar to JBB version, but tweaked again. Also, vocals more prominent as on JBB (JSP as on JBB with a little more bass). DR7 means this is really too "loud".

+18) Grease DR7->DR7

Another DR7 track, but not changed much from JBB. Strange that they have changed the peak to -0.90db here, while it was almost 0db on JBB. Okay this way, nothing to complain about.

+19) Can't Take My Eyes Off You DR9->DR8

EQ'd and improved re. vocals and handclapping. Fine sound. All others (JBB, JSB, DPC) are sounding "thinner" against this one. Noise floor more prominent thru re.amstering, sorry to say so.

20) Ronnie DR7->DR6

Already DR6 on the JSB track, which I prefer. Okay otherwise, but a few instruments too prominent now here on the WMW track.

- DISC 2 -

1) Who Loves You DR8->DR8

Similar to JBB, which fades a little earlier (4:03 to 4:08). Only DPC has the same length. All four versions very similar.

2) Once Inside A Woman's Heart DR14->DR10

A track from the "**Streetfighter**" album never found on a compilation before. Same master as on CCM CD, but louder. Loudness reveals background noise not audible before. Same flaws audible at 6,5 sec. Compressor + limiter used, visible in waveform. I would stay with the CCM master, but with a DR14 it wouldn't fit into this WMW comp here.

+3) Marlina DR8->DR8

Stereo here, with much tweaking. Voices much more upfront than on JB and DPC. (Mono on JSB). Three version where you can very easy hear the progress in mastering: DR10 on DPC, DR8 on JBB RMS -10,5), and also DR8 (RMS -9,5) here - but now sounding miles away compared to the other ones. An improvement ? It's up to you.

+4) Expression Of Love DR9->DR8

From the FV "**Timeless**" album, originally. Current CD master found on CCM CD. I prefer the master here (sounding more "musical"), because the CCM version has too much treble. But the noise floor is more audible now.

-5) Girl Come Running DR9->DR8

The same story again. Original master from DPC, a little tweaked for JBB, with more bass on JSB, and improved again here on WMW. Do I like it? No. The final vinyl master already had a lot of compression added, so the enhancement doesn't work here, it only buries the lead voice. I prefer the JBB version.

-6) Just The Way You Make Love [To Me] DR11->DR8

From the "**Hope + Glory**" CD, the group's last one (1992). Compressor / limiter has done too much here. Something somewhere in the middle would have been nicer.

-7) Beggin' DR10->DR7

Four different mixes on 4 CD comps, and the version here on WMW is more enhanced as the "Pilooski" edit. The question is..."Who like it?": I don't know - Not me. The JBB one is a little different, notable at the beginning and with the handclaps (JSB is similar to the JBB version, with just a little more bass). A

version similar to this is on DPC (DR11). Watch your speakers & amplifier when playing this version here! It's really too loud.

+8) Easily DR11->DR7

Louder and more prominent as the album version from the CCM CD. Works well, and is okay, because the original has a lot of space that could be filled, soundwise. This has always been a quiet track with Valli's "whispy" vocals.

9) The Night DR9->DR8

Never on DPC. Not much to note about it, similar to JBB, but more prominent noise thru enhancements here. JSB has the JBB version with a little bass extra. I say stay with the "dry" JBB version.

+10) Lady Put The Light Out DR9->DR8

Same notes as to 8). Works okay. The song itself: a little un-inspiring.

+11) Earth Angel DR11->DR9

The only CD comp this track is featured on is the 1999 "**Rock & Roll Collection**" on Time Warner OPCD 3528. Similar version, not much improved here. Voices a little EQ'd. Sounds fine.

Originally on the "**Dawn**" album, so also found on the **Ace 2on1 CD ("Dawn"+"Rag Doll")** from 1994 and the **Curb CD "Dawn - Original Classic Hits - Volume 4"** from 1995 (worse there).

+12) Walk Away Renee DR11->DR9

Notes as to 8)+10). Okay.

-13) Fallen Angel DR10->DR8

In the UK originally also on the "Fallen Angel" LP. Nice example why a lower DR value (DR8) doesn't automatically mean a better sound. The JBB mix is already very dense, and now here it's overpowering. You breath for air when you're finished with this track ... Not on the Collectors' Choice 2on1 FV CDs, where it would have fitted nicely.

+14) My Prayer DR9->DR8

Compressor / EQ works good here, great version.

-15) By The Time I Get To Phoenix DR8->DR9 (yes!)

The CCM master is definitely better: the voice is more upfront. Why they didn't take that one and lowered the DR value, I don't know. Both have a little background noise at start and over the whole track - but nothing to complain about.

+16) In My Eyes DR9->DR8

Similar, not much difference sound wise.

+17) Anyone Who Had A Heart

Originally from the "Sing Big Hits by ..." album. Never been on any comp before. For CD masters, you either have to go to the old Rhino "**Sing Big Hits by ...**" CD (R2 70248) or the **Ace 2on1 ("Sing Big Hits by..."+"New Gold Hits")** CD from 1996. Tweak of the old Rhino / Ace version. Not much difference, but works fine.

18) You're Ready Now DR11->DR8

Improvement? We will see ... The original JBB master already has a few flaws (distortion, strange mix). Tweaking these results in a "hopping" lead voice, upfront, but often distorted again by the brass. This master definitely needs a good, new transfer, if there's any better original. Which one I prefer? - I don't know - neither ...

19) Sunny DR9->DR8

Same mix as on **CCM "Timeless" CD**. Works okay, a little noise now audible.

+20) This Time DR10->DR9

Not one of the greatest tracks musically. A little tweaked here (EQ'd). Sounds nicer (& fuller) now, compared to the CCM version, so well done.

So here comes the final verdict:

40 tracks total, 27 x "+" against 6 x "-", a clear choice. Very good, but not flawless.

In the end, I would like to see many CD compilations mastered this way, but prob. a little more careful on some tracks.

Master transfer quality: 1 to 2 (mostly without problems, but with some problems that are on some tracks since ages that nobody eliminated).

The Sound Stage: 1 (nothing to complain)

Frequency content: An improvement compared against earlier version, so a "1" is okay, even with a few exceptions.

2/1/1 = GREEN

Review by
Eliot Ness

So, finally, here are the credits repeated as given in the CD booklet so you know who did this mastering job.

**Project Managed by Gary Lancaster
A&R Consultancy by Bill Holland**

Artwork designed by Johnathan Elliott © Mental Block

**Mastered by Nick Watson & Tim Debney
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THANKS:

**Dean Egnater, Kevin Gore, Dan Chalmers, Hik Sasaki, Olly Walsh,
Greg Giles, James Anderson, James Meadows, Matt Lambert,
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