

LYNN'S PAGE

And That Reminds Me ...USA Trippin' ... October 2008

Ray and his wife, Avril, like me had a fantastic time at the convention in Raleigh - we wouldn't have missed it for the world!

What an absolute honour it was to meet Joe Long and Demetri Callas and of course everyone else. Our hosts, Johnny Hornsby, Russ McClelland and Charles Alexander could not have done any better – everything was perfect so many thanks for all the hard work put into making the event such a great success. Thanks also to Frank Rovello who has done a magnificent job on his web site covering the convention with not only photographs but audio footage as well. You can access this by entering his web site <http://gilgweb.com>



Ray, Avril and I went to Hooters on the first night looking for Russ – Ray was certainly impressed with this place although Avril and I had to tell him that not everything was on the menu! Ray enjoyed his pint of Blue Moon there and was also quite pleased that The Holiday Inn where we were staying also sold Newcastle Brown Ale which made him feel right at home! Visits were also made over the next couple of days to Bojangles and my favourite Cracker Barrel where we tried our first grits!

It was great to meet everyone and to hear lots of stories like when Joe Long was best man at Toni and Mike's Seldin's wedding and to see the lovely photo of Toni, Mike and Joe at the ceremony - Joe's son, Joey, was only 4 at the time and thought the orange and champagne fountain was orange juice! Whoops!

Ray at Hooters!

I also found out that on The Reunited Live album the live version of Passion For Paris was taken off and Heaven Must Have Sent You (studio version) put on as it was their single at the time of the album release.

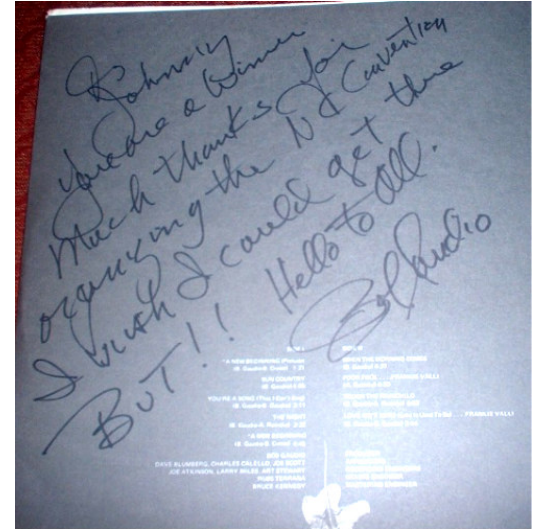
At the start of the convention Charles Alexander opened up a large box of 'Jersey Boys Fruit' – apples and pears for everyone courtesy of Frankie Valli and Bob Gaudio! Charles read out a message from Bob and Frankie to everyone present:

“Hi Gang, both Frankie and I are overwhelmed by your support through the many years of harsh winters, warm summers, and the spring and fall of our careers. Quite a ride and seemingly just beginning again. We especially want to thank Joe and Demetri for travelling that road with us and contributing much music and memorable moments to say the least. Yes, Joe and Demetri did add some highlights. Like Demetri walking through a major airport wearing Hot Pink short shorts in the dead of winter. And Joe engaging in an after-hour sport with Tommy Devito presiding as judge. Now that one I will leave to your imagination and Joe to deal with for the rest of the night ... All and all, “Guys and Dolls”, this has been a real thrill for everyone who has ever cared about our music. And as someone from the fan club said, “Jersey Boys has Valli-dated Frankie Valli and The 4 Seasons and everyone who loved them” ... We are humbled ... Bob Gaudio and Frankie Valli.”

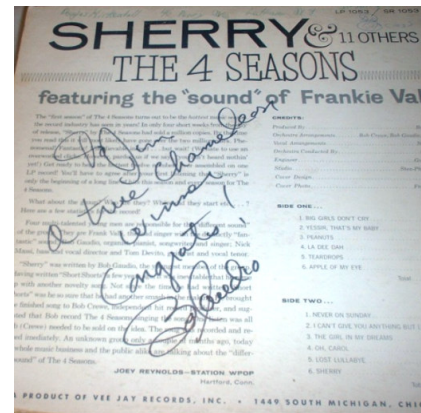


Four of the seven Chameleon Cup winners were at the convention, who each got an album personally autographed by Bob Gaudio.

Ron Gardner, John Cotrofeld, Charles Alexander (Unpaid Publicist), Jim Huggard (an Irishman who came all the way from Germany) and Johnny Hornsby



What an honour it was to spend time with Smiling Joe Long and Cheeky Demetri Callas (who outdressed us all!) and to hear just some of the many wonderful stories they must had to tell - like the time the 4 Seasons were in the UK and their hotel bar was closed early – Joe was sitting in the lobby and Demetri got into the elevator – he said he was bored so he when up to the next floor and then pressed the button to come back downstairs again, the doors opened and he pushed the button to go back up again and he continued to do this a few times and added “each trip I removed one item of clothing!” Joe recalled that he got down to the final item!



Demetri was with the 4 Seasons for 3 years, replacing Tommy DeVito and proved to be “an act all by himself” playing the guitar behind his head. Demetri used to be a member of the group Flavor and Sony have recently released a CD on the Collectables label “Sally Had A Party”. He joined the group in early 1970 following a call from an agent who told him the Four Seasons were interested in him becoming a guitar player – he said he was really excited about this as the Four Seasons “were a legendary act” although at that time he did not realise he was to be Tommy’s replacement. Demetri thought about the offer for a week and then said “Yes”. He said he was then “beckoned to Joe’s House in New Jersey” and it was Joe’s job “to break me in” – it was his job to teach Demetri all parts of all the songs in 3 days which he did. Not only that but they then switched parts and Joe sang Tommy’s parts and Demetri sang Joe’s!



Joe, Lynn, Demetri and Ray



Joe was with the Seasons for 10 years and was their MC on stage and their interface with the fans. Joe's other bands were LaBracio and Jersey Bounce. Joe explained how he joined the Seasons, "my favourite group", following Nicky leaving abruptly. He met with Tommy, Frankie and Bob and played his first gig in West Virginia without ever going to a rehearsal! He said "Bob told me to do the best you can!"

The first recording Demetri sang on was "My Eyes Adored You" which they recorded for Motown in 1971 or early 1972. Motown weren't interested in the song and it sat on the shelf for a long time. Frankie and Bob, of course, a few years later took the song to Larry Uttal at Private Stock and it was then a big hit. Demetri and Joe sang on all the Chameleon stuff, some of my all time favourites, and they said that the Seasons "never sounded tighter or more in tune" than at that time. Demetri left because in his own words "I am not proud of this but I must have been the most irresponsible erratic character in the group" and he got wind that he might possibly be dismissed. Bob Gaudio indicated that some of his antics off stage were not appreciated and so he left. Demetri said that he loved every minute of the times he shared with Joe and everyone else in the group and that due to his time with the group he learned so much in a short time – they were all such gentlemen and had great business acumen.

Another very interesting story told by Demetri was about "I Wonder Why". Having too much time on their hands whilst on tour in Southern Marilyn, Virginia, he, Joe, Gerry Polci and Lee Shapiro composed a song with the 4 Seasons in mind called "I Wonder Why". They all got together and put the words and the music together and took a cassette of the track and played it to Frankie who said "that's not bad at all". They asked Frankie if he would put his vocals to it after the show that night which he agreed to do. They drove to the studio after the show, arriving around 2 a.m. and by 4 am it was done and Frankie called up Bob Gaudio and played it to him. "Our biggest disappointment" said Demetri "was we took the only master tape of that recording to Motown/Mowest and left the tape with them - they said they would like to release it - and we went back to New York ; soon after the group was no longer with Mowest!" Joe fortunately requested a copy of the song on cassette – a board mix - which he said was kind of distorted. I was so pleased to tell them that a stereo remix of this track was actually on Lost & Found Vol 2 which was handed out to Joe and Demetri and everyone else at the Convention that day.

I did ask Joe and Demetri who spoke the introduction of Life and Breath "If you believe in love enough then love will never die" but they didn't know – apparently Joe said a lot of the stuff on that collection were cuts done by Bob Gaudio in the studio while they were on the road and session musicians were used around that time.

Other highlights of the convention were the playing of Floppy Eared Mule and Demetri's impersonation of Frankie Valli to howls of laughter from the audience (walking into the room on his knees see photo on Frank's web site!) and the meal at The Steak House on the Saturday evening with everyone.



Charles, Russ, Demetri and Frank



It has been suggested that the next convention is held in Las Vegas – this would be a good venue as Joe, Demetri and Bill DeLoach live there (bet they could tell some stories between them!) and as it is only around 300 miles from California Frankie might also be able to attend ... and Larry Lingle who also now lives in Oxnard ... which would guarantee Tina (aka Gypsy Woman) being there too! Obviously London would also be a good future venue as Joe and Demetri also said that they would love to visit the UK again. (I would be more than happy to arrange a get together in London/UK at any time).

I was lucky enough to extend my stay with four nights in New York City - what a great place. Thanks to Charles for looking after me in NY and for taking me to Patsy's - a wonderful Italian restaurant just round the corner from my hotel - apparently Frankie eats at this restaurant when he is in NYC but unfortunately I did not bump into him while I was there! I also went to see Jersey Boys at the August Wilson which was brilliant - Jarrod Spector was excellent as Frankie Valli and has a great voice but I have to say the UK boys at the Prince Edward are still my favourites! I also managed to pick up a pack of what will be my "Seasons Greetings" Christmas Cards from the theatre and a Jersey Boys poster signed by the whole cast - I was also given a copy of the CD Jersey Boys Cast Recording! After the show I went for a drink at the Marriott Marquis 48 floors up in New York's only revolving bar/restaurant - a real must for anyone visiting NYC - the views are just out of this world.



Oh, what a wonderful time we all had ... and I can't wait to do it all over again! Thank you to everyone who attended and for making this event so special.

Poster at JFK Airport