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THE BEAT

FRANKIE VALLI "WE STILL LIGHT CANDLES"

Tony LeFay

Longevity in the entertainment world is a fleeting dream for most performers. A handful out of all the acts brought forth are able to sustain their following for more than a few years. One group that has managed to stay consistently on the top of their profession is the 4 Seasons. With hit after hit, they have proven their ability to entertain. Just recently, Frankie Valli, lead singer for the 4 Seasons, has ventured off into solo performances, with *To Give Climbing the charts*, it is almost certain that he will have as big a hit as the million seller "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You."

"Many people ask me the question am I planning on leaving the group. No, I am not planning on leaving the group ever, because the group is really what gave birth to all the things that are beginning to happen — all the extra things — and there's a very soft spot in my heart for the group and all the members in it," explained Valli, in Los Angeles to promote his new single on the Joey Bishop show.

"I guess to a certain extent I will solo on television, but as far as concerts go, we will keep the group intact. While I'm doing these single records, the rest of the group keeps itself occupied by

"Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?"

Although most people assume that "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You" was Valli's first venture into the solo field, this is not quite true. "I had a couple of records out before that. One record being out six months before my record was cut was "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" — the Walker Bros. had a hit recording of it. I'm very sorry that we didn't have the hit recording of it, but they did do it exactly as we had done it. And I had one previous to that which was a regional hit, in about four markets called "You're Gonna Hurt Yourself."

"The reason I decided to do some solo recording is first of all it offered me a challenge and it gave me the opportunity to do some things that I had always wanted to do that I would not be able to do with the group."

Challenge

"Even when we started I think we had that in mind, for me to do some solo work. But at that particular time, it was more important for a 4 Seasons success and then go on to other things."

"Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You" was written for me. "Your Gonna Hurt Yourself" was written for the group but in a different concept than anything we had ever done. After we started running it

ever I got out and do TV shows. Bobby also takes care of the musical end of it, contracting the musicians. Bob does the writing and arranging and assists Joe in many ways. Tommy is basically the businessman of the group, he's in the background."

Although Valli is aware of their popularity throughout the years, he has no ready explanations for their success. "I think we still all light candles. Say prayers and we all have very large families. But I can remember the very early days when we had decided we wanted to go into the record business. The very first 4 Seasons record was a bomb called "Bermuda" — it sold three records. We all bought one, except Tommy who didn't like it."

The 4 Seasons concert performances are always sold out. People seem to enjoy hearing their hits and their new interpretations of old standards. But although many groups complain of having to sing their old songs, the 4 Seasons readily comply. "I can't understand how somebody could not want to do something that gave them their start. I don't know if they're ashamed of it or whatever. But if you do make a record that sells a million copies you should be thrilled to do it."

"We do hits and melodies and

hear that.

"I think in our part one of the reasons that we've achieved the longevity we've had is that we have a feeling for our audience there are many groups that are carried away after a few get to the point where care less what the audience thinks. I think this is wrong. I do owe an obligation to the people who buy your records to see you. Once you're there that you're done."

Gimmicks aren't a scheme for long life in business although groups seem to be relying on just that.

"These groups will especially they're just don't know, if they're putting anybody on. But if they're not, they're trying to spoof the audience it's an insult. To any audience to listen to it, the life of me understand one could get any enjoyment of destruction. Artists thing, but that's something. But on a whole, I think is getting better. There are many kids today in music. I also find that more orchestration on

