

The 4 Seasons: A Great Creative as well as Financial Asset to MRC



By Irwin H. Steinberg
Executive V.P.
Mercury Record Corp.

It isn't necessary for me to dwell on the great asset the 4 Seasons have been to Mercury Record Corp. in the business—the financial—sense. We here at Mercury know it and appreciate it. The great cooperative spirit between the corporation generally, and the Philips label on which they appear, has been beneficial to both the performers and to our firm.

But more than all this, the Seasons have been beneficial to Mercury in a sense far greater than any mere financial one.

I'd like to concentrate on those other senses here if I might. The first—and probably most important—sense in which we here have come to truly appreciate the 4 Seasons is, quite naturally, the creative one. There is no group on the popular music scene today that can match the longevity already attained by the 4 Seasons, both on a popularity level and from a selling standpoint. And the primary reason for their long-term success is

the continuing vitality; the ever-expanding creative horizons the group has demonstrated, both as individuals and as a unit.

Steady Determination

Few performing groups can match the steady determination the Seasons have shown in their constant attempt to gear their material to changing tastes; to a changing audience. That they have succeeded in doing so is seen by their continuing acceptance in a time span that has seen many other groups fall by the musical waysides.

Similarly, the 4 Seasons have always been aware of their commitment both to the public and to their recording company. Just as they have never ceased to put their all into live performances and recordings and to stay in close personal contact with their thousands upon thousands of fans, they also have been willing to place 100 percent cooperation behind any project Philips has undertaken on their behalf.

Because of this awareness on the part of all the Seasons, the group has become widely known for its dedication as performers and for the mature and responsible manner in which each individual member has met the demands of the consumer. The 4 Seasons invariably have always placed the considerations of its audience above any individual considerations of its four members. This concern reflects an attitude that is found only among the entertainment industry's "greats."

Finally, I must say that because of their personal attitudes, as well as their musical creativity, the group has been—and continues to be—ambassadors in the very best sense of the word for the Mercury family of labels of which they are so very much a viable part.

The articles on this page and on the next 3 pages are taken exclusively from USA Cashbox magazine Jan 25th, 1969. All deal with aspects of the release of the Genuine Imitation Life Gazette album!

The Cooperative, Sincere Seasons



by John Doumanian
Nat'l Promo Director
Philips Records

I have been in this business for a number of years and have had the privilege of working with scores of recording artists. Never, though, have I found four such talented men who I can honestly say have been as delightful, cooperative and sincere as the 4 Seasons.

The Seasons are a true tribute to the recording industry. I've talked to many DJ's, dealers and fans after the

Promotional Videotape for Seasons' "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette"

Philips Records is employing a unique promotional device in its drive to acquaint the public with the 4 Seasons' most ambitious project to date, the "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette" album.

The label is distributing to teen-oriented bandstand type shows around the country a special full-color videotape of the act that runs for 20 minutes. The tape, one of the most distinctive productions ever done on any recording act, features three songs from the LP—"American Crucifixion Resurrection," "Genuine Imitation Life" and "Wall Street Village Day."

"Through use of this tape, the local show can feature a complete '4 Seasons Special' if so desired," explained Philips Publicity Director Ron Oberman. "And, on the other hand, if the program does not have the time to run the entire production, the tape is set up so that individual numbers may be shown."

Seasons have appeared in their respective areas, and I've heard nothing but praise on their behalf. They are warm, congenial and, most of all, honest—both with themselves and the people they meet.

The strange part of this is that they are four unique personalities. I can't think of a group that has been together for as long as they have who really "groove together" as they do. My personal contact with them has been two or three times a week for the past two years. We've had discussions about records, radio stations and marketing, and they have always been on top of those areas. They understand the problems of the record industry as well as those at radio stations and in the marketplace. Our conversations have always been a meeting of the minds and an understanding of the situation.

Special presentations, cocktail parties and after-concert get-togethers with people in the industry are always a part of the 4 Seasons' positive attitude toward the business. In fact, they are currently on a cross-country promotional tour on behalf of their newest, and finest, LP, "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette." They're making this album a personal thing.

It is my privilege and honor to be associated with the 4 Seasons. It sure makes a national man's job easier!



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THE SEASONS' STAYING POWER



By Irving B. Green
President, Mercury Record Corp.

In all the years that I have been involved in the recording industry and Mercury-Record Corporation, there are few performers I've ever known

who have been able to match the staying power and continuous success that the Philips label's 4 Seasons have attained.

The 4 Seasons, like nearly all groups that have reached heights of stardom, had an initial success that acted as a springboard in getting them off the ground. But what's gone on since that "first" success is the difference between the Seasons and many other groups. The 4 Seasons' amazing musical abilities — both on record and in person — as well as their always-present indebtedness to their fans, have sustained their incredible popularity for seven years now.

The 4 Seasons are an example of a group that has built up an amazing career in the entertainment industry through great efforts and direction by the individual members of the act as well as by the organizations with which they work.

Like all the big show business entities — like all the truly great entertainers — the Seasons have always had the tenacity, the persistence and the respect for audiences that has to be present with artists if real continuing, meaningful careers are to be built.

I'm proud to say that such characteristics have always been in evidence in my relationship with the 4 Seasons over the years. They are — I think — true professionals in every good sense of the word. It's always a welcome commodity with an artist in this business. Many times you don't find it, but when you do it is very much appreciated. I appreciate it in the 4 Seasons and I personally wish them continued success and good health in the years to come.

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Making A Single — 4 Seasons Style

The 4 Seasons are always being queried about their numerous hit singles. How did "Dawn" come about, they are asked. Or, just what went into "I've Got You Under My Skin" to make it a hit? In the case of most of the Seasons' hit records, an incredible amount of planning and actual working hours were the ingredients. But, on a rare occasion, just as in the case of any real successful, hard-working act, things don't always work out so smoothly and on a programmed basis.

Such is the case surrounding the makings of one of the 4 Seasons' biggest hits.

Dawn Of "Rag Doll" →

The time was the summer of 1964. Season Bob Gaudio, who has had a hand in writing nearly all the group's numerous hits, was looking for a piece of single material for the act's next release.

"At the time, we had planned on releasing another song, 'Hugging My Pillow,' which was in one of our albums," Gaudio recalls. "I liked it but I didn't love it."

"I had the idea for a title floating around in my head because of an incident that had happened to me. I had a melody, too, but not quite the finished lyrics."

Bob Crewe & 4 Seasons: Teamwork



Bob Crewe

On November 15, 1967, there appeared a 15-page tenth anniversary salute to Bob Crewe. One of those pages featured an ad from the Four Seasons, and they expressed their opinion of Crewe this way:

"Once upon a time there were Four Seasons. They were able to sing very well but nobody seemed to care. So they went on their way feeling very sad. They kept on singing all kinds of songs, pretty songs, sad songs, happy songs. Then a strange thing happened to them. A man overheard them.

"Now over 47 million people are happier because they own round magic things that make the Four Seasons sing warm and groovy! Now the Four Seasons take great pride and pleasure in thanking the man that overheard them — BOB CREWE — The Fifth Season."

Crewe, "The Fifth Season", has produced every record ever made by The Four Seasons, from "Sherry" to the current "Electric Stories"

Actually three-quarters of the lyrics were done, and Gaudio was just a hair away from having a completed song in his possession. He felt that the song would be a smash, so he phoned Seasons' producer Bob Crewe, who invited Gaudio over to his apartment to finish up the lyrics.

The two completed the lyrics, and from that point on it seemed that nothing would go right. They attempted to book studio time, but found none were available. Finally, they located a small studio they had never worked in before, the only one with any recording time. Next it came time

Crewe's New Role

The international success of the Four Seasons' recordings is one of the longest-running examples of teamwork and cordiality between a star recording act and an independent producer in the history of the music business. Crewe, an extremely sensitive producer, has watched the Four Seasons mature as talents and personalities. He has seen them develop poise, polish and confidence. Crewe's role today is much more supervisory and advisory as the Seasons continue to grow as personalities and creative individuals. He shares the control booth now with Season Bob Gaudio — an extension of their whoppingly successful collaboration as writers for the group.

As a writing team, Crewe and Gaudio penned such smashes as "Big Girls Don't Cry", "Walk Like A Man", "Save It For Me", "Ronnie", "Rag Doll", "Bye Bye Baby", "Connie-O", "Girl Come Running" for the Four Seasons, "Can't Take My Eyes Off You", "I Make A Fool Of Myself" and "To Give" for Frankie Valli. "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore", "Silence Is Golden" and "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" have become standard hits for many other artists.

Crewe's attitude towards the Seasons is drawn from his friendship with many theatrical personalities. "I've seen Broadway directors work very closely with fledgling actors or actors who aren't entirely sure of themselves. That's natural. But it's also natural to give a confident talent the freedom he needs — which good Broadway directors also do. A good director — and a good record producer — must know how to apply the light touch. The Four Seasons are confident talents. We treat each other as equals."

So the teamwork between Crewe and the Four Seasons continues to make millions of people happy because they own "round magic things" on which the Four Seasons "sing groovy!"

to get an engineer, and there were none available. So Gaudio availed on a friend who, although not a professional engineer, had helped build another recording studio and had a working knowledge of recording equipment. Now to come up with an arranger. Once again, zero. So it had to be a case of head arrangements.

"We finally got into the studio and it was like total chaos," Gaudio recalls. "No one knew what was going on. But little by little it got put together and we finally finished it."

The tune — "Rag Doll," one of the 4 Seasons' biggest all-time hits.

MEMO

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Five Futures for the Four Seasons



BOB GAUDIO

Of the top 50 pop groups in the country today, how many will still be performers even five years from now? How many of the members of the act will remain in the business to contribute the knowledge and experience gained through years of performing and recording? The facts of the music business show quite clearly that almost none of these people will keep an active role in music and of those that do go on few will succeed. However this only once more points out a rather special feature of the 4 Seasons.

Elsewhere the contributions of each Season have been noted and expanded upon as it effects the group today. But each of the Seasons, Valli, Gaudio, Long and DeVito plan to be around the music business on a permanent basis.

There is no reason, in the opinion of Frankie Valli for the 4 Seasons to ever stop recording so long as there is an audience for their music. In this each of the others concur. However they do feel that there will come a time, though no one knows just when, when the act will give a collective sigh and decide that 8 or 9 months on the road is just too much to keep up and there are other things that must be done. And so some day the innumerable fans that they entertain live today will have to be satisfied with an occasional TV spot and fond memories.

However it is not only the grind of touring that will eventually take its toll of the group but each of the foursome has and is involved in interests outside being a Season and at some point these interests will demand the large amounts of time they need to be carried forward.

Frankie Valli

Frankie is the Season that you will see as an artist for the longest time.



FRANKIE VALLI

He is all performer. Aside from his huge success as the key to the Season's "sound" Franki has had a tremendous reception as a single record artist and will undoubtedly continue to perform in clubs, concerts, on TV and other places after the Seasons touring days are over. But singing doesn't look like it will be a full time thing because Valli has got his sights set on the movies. Roles and scripts are continuously being submitted to him and only the overpowering time commitment demanded by the recording and performing schedule of the group has kept him from accepting spots in the past. However the near future should see a change in this as Frankie is set on launching his film career.

What will you see Valli do in the movies? Well you won't see him doing cameo singing spots in club scenes or riding a surfboard into the Hawaiian sunset. Valli's idea as to potential roles is that they should be meaningful and say something. This is much in line with the Season's current direction in music and really sums up Valli's attitude toward the duty of the entertainment media, a combination of sometimes mild tranquilizer and otherwise meaningful form of communication.

The search for important songs and roles with which to communicate his honest feelings to the public will take a major portion of the time of the future, Frankie Valli.

Bob Gaudio

The single most aggravating thing to Bob Gaudio is all the talent he has had to pass up producing over the last several years because of an overwhelming lack of time. Bob perhaps more than other Seasons spends more time in his efforts for the group. As the group's key songwriter, who either solely or in combination with



JOE LONG

Bob Crewe, Jake Holmes or others has been most responsible for the quartet's huge string of hits, he must spend untold hours at the piano writing in addition to the hours in rehearsal, studios and on stage.

Gaudio's successful career as a performer and writer goes all the way back to "Short, Shorts," a Gaudio composition, (his first) with which he came into national prominence with the Royal Teens.

Since the Season days, approximately 3,100 of them, he has accounted for more chart records than he can remember off hand and has spent over the years increasing amounts of time on the arranging and producing end of the music to the point where the Seasons' latest LP "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette" is a Bob Gaudio production and arrangement tour de force.

When the touring stops and his time is again somewhat more his own, Gaudio will spend much of it writing, producing and managing his many business interests that arise from this.

In the immediate future, another 4 Seasons LP this year. Further recordings with Franki Valli and a major undertaking both for Bob and the others in incorporating much of their new material into their live act.

Joe Long

Since joining the 4 Seasons some three years ago Joe Long's horizons have broadened from his always excellent bass playing and singing into the studio end of the music world and you will find him more and more involved in devising arrangements and pacing the control room floor during setting up takes and mixing sessions.

Joe, like Bob Gaudio will devote his future days to helping produce hits for others. As a matter of fact, Long and Gaudio will often be found on mutual projects according to current plans and the entire enterprise



TOMMY DE VITO

will revolve around the creative side of record production.

Undoubtedly Joe Long in the studio will make some act of the future very happy to show up for a session because all those years of experience, going back to the local clubs and encompassing the years of Season's recording and work, will be invaluable in shaping the future for others.

"The music business is all I know," says Long, "its my life and I love it. I would never leave the music business for anything."

Dedication to creating the best in music and in returning to the well some of the water drawn forth is a marked trait of the Seasons. The many years of 40 on and 20 off, 6 times a night have branded Joe Long as a music man for life. Too bad there aren't a thousand more like him.

Tommy DeVito

Every Season has a talent behind his obvious talent; Tommy DeVito is no exception.

You can't fault his singing or guitar but someone has to make sure that everything is done and on time. Everyone is where he should be, futures are kept watch over and smooth progress is the order of the day.

Tommy DeVito is only half jokingly called the businessman. Behind every well oiled, well drilled unit there is someone who keeps the wheels turning. Not by election or selection but by natural force of character the 4 Seasons wheel spinner is Tommy DeVito.

Contracts, bookings, arrivals, departures all kept in order. And somehow he still has time to record and even makes it on stage for performances. It is really sometimes amazing just how many things a person can accom-

plish with success all around.

Tommy's talent is made full use of with an act as busy as the Seasons always are and in the DeVito future is more of the same as he plans to continue in the business in the management end when he gets a couple of hours off from his current schedule.

Tommy, much like Joe Long is devoted to the music business and is determined to share his experience and knowledge with others. "I want to help others get the breaks that I was fortunate to get myself" says DeVito. "I'm interested in helping guide the careers of musicians and ease some of the rough spots for them, some of those spots that we have taken bumps on."

Hopefully in the not too distant future through the doors of T. DeVito, Management will pass an act that will sell the untold millions of records that the 4 Seasons have accounted for and carry with them the spark of dedication that their manager will surely plant in them.

An Envious Track Record

There is no vocal group in the record industry today that can boast of the incredible track record claimed by Philips Records' 4 Seasons. For seven years now, this remarkable quartet of New Jerseyites has turned out nothing but hits, hits and more hits. Over this span of time, the Seasons' collectively have come up with nearly 40 hit singles, while an additional 4 Top 100 records have been added to the count by Seasons' lead singer Frankie Valli working as a solo artist. In addition, the Seasons boast 20 consecutive chart LPs (two featuring the solo sound of Valli). All told, the group has accounted for the sale of more than 50-million discs.

Act For All Ages
The 4 Seasons have graduated from the small smoke-filled clubs that dot the industrial cities of New Jersey to rooms such as the Coconut Grove in Los Angeles and the Empire Room at New York's Waldorf Astoria. They are one of the most sought-after groups on the college concert circuit, and by the same token the demand for them from major teen organizations has never been stronger. The 4 Seasons are an act for all ages, and people of all ages have enjoyed their talents on virtually every network TV show.

The 4 Seasons have been tastemakers for seven years. From "Sherry" in 1962 through "Opus 17" in 1966 to their latest, and most ambitious, effort, "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette," Frankie Valli, Bob Gaudio, Joe Long and Tommy DeVito have reflected and often anticipated the tempo of the times. The group is truly unique in that they have appealed to so many different types of people so successfully for so long a time.

The Summer of 1960
For historical purposes, the beginning of 4 Seasons can be traced back to the summer of 1960. Frankie Valli, Tommy DeVito and original Season Nick Massi were three-quarters of the Four Lovers and Bob Gaudio was

doing his own thing with the Royal Teens of "Short Shorts" fame. After Gaudio left the Royal Teens to pursue other musical interests, he was invited to join Valli, DeVito and Massi, whom he had known for many years, in a revamping of the Four Lovers. Gaudio joined the act as a performer, and brought with him his unique talents as an already established songwriter, an attribute that has accounted for so much of the outstanding material the 4 Seasons have had available to record over the years.

For several months, Valli, Gaudio, DeVito and Massi traveled under the name of the Four Lovers. As the act developed through club dates and extensive studio background work and with the prospect of their own recordings on the horizon, they decided to adopt a new name. One evening while performing at a nightclub in New Jersey, the neon sign advertising the place caught their eye, and they've been the 4 Seasons ever since.

But it was in 1962 that the ball really got rolling for the 4 Seasons. They went into the studio with producer Bob Crewe and chose a Bob Gaudio composed song for the session. That song was "Sherry." Looking back now at that moment, Gaudio recalls that he and the rest of the group members had given their all to the recording and that if it didn't make it, "we would all be in trouble." But that was not the case, as everyone knows, "Sherry" went on to become the group's first million selling, Gold single and one of the biggest records, not only of 1962, but of all time.

While much of the credit for the success of "Sherry" was due to the excellent songwriting job of Gaudio, the key to the popular acceptance of the tune was the unique vocal styling of Frankie Valli woven into the spread harmony of the 4 Seasons. Valli had been using a falsetto voice in comedy routines at club appearances by the

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THE FOUR SEASONS IN ACTION IN THEIR NEW JERSEY HOME STATE

quartet. But with "Sherry" came the first serious use of this styling. It has been an integral part of the 4 Seasons' sound ever since.

They Go National

With their first huge triumph secured, the Seasons were finally able to perform before national audiences and meet with the same degree of success they had been enjoying while playing before local audiences for so many years. And, too, that first hit gave them the confidence as well as impetus to continue creating within the unique style that is recognized throughout the world as the "4 Seasons Sound."

"Sherry" led to "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Walk Like a Man," "Rag Doll," "Dawn," "Let's Hang On," and numerous others during the first three years of their success. Then in 1965 Nick Massi exited the act to pursue other interests and Charlie Callolo took up the bass-playing chores during the interim until two months later when Joe Long

became the permanent fourth Season. Long had come from the same musical background as the other Seasons, having learned his trade in lounges and clubs in New Jersey. And the hits kept rolling on "Opus 17," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Working My Way Back To You," "Tell It To The Rain," "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," and most currently, "Electric Stories," among many others.

Enter Wonder Who

In the midst of all this success, the Seasons, in order to prove to themselves that it was the "sound" and not the name "4 Seasons" that brought success, recorded under a different name, "The Wonder Who." The tune was called "Don't Think Twice" and it, too, clicked with the record buying public. This was followed by other hits by the Wonder Who, such as "Lonesome Road."

And just as the "sound" of the 4 Seasons lent itself to recordings under

any name, the "sound" of Frankie Valli was so unique that it demanded recording. "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" and "To Give" are proof of the potential that was seen in Frankie's distinct vocalizing.

Throughout this incredible string of single successes, on the part of the 4 Seasons, the Wonder Who and Frankie Valli, the group also established itself as one of the hottest album selling acts in history. Their albums were far ranging in musical content, from gentle folk melodies to the profound music of Bacharach and Dylan to other original compositions of their own and others. Many of their LPs abounded

with their single hits and their "Golden Vault" albums have become classics. Most recently Philips honored the career of the Seasons with "Edizione d'Oro," a deluxe, gold embossed two record set featuring 29 of their all-time hits. The album has already become a runaway bestseller.

The 4 Seasons' newest project is their long-awaited album, "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette," which has just been released. The LP is the Seasons' first concept album and represents their commentary on the world today. A year in the making, it is the product of hundreds of hours of collective thought and effort by the group. It represents the 4 Seasons as they are today, as unique a group as they were when "Sherry" topped the charts but seven years older in the ways of the world.

FRANKIE VALLI

4 SEASONS: An Int'l Success Story

In the continuing and developing success story of the 4 Seasons, few U.S.-based recording artists and performers can match their truly international appeal.

On the international level, the Seasons have even knocked over from time to time such giants as Elvis Presley and the Beatles. The group can point to a period when they out-sold Elvis overseas and at one time outpolled the Beatles in a major pop poll in Britain.

Multi-Lingual

To cap their international appeal, the Seasons once recorded one of their hit songs in four different languages for massive international distribution through Philips Records' worldwide affiliate set-up.

But the international appeal of the Seasons' unique sound was early charted in other countries. For instance, the New Jersey quartet baffled numerous British music commentators when they rolled up three consecutive hits in Britain early in their career as a top recording act. The hits were, of course, "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry" and "Walk Like a Man." Even more remarkable was the fact that the Seasons racked up this string of hits in Britain (as well as in the U.S.) at the exact time when most American recording artists were reeling under the impact of the "British group invasion."

With British groups packing auditoriums all over the United States, the 4 Seasons became a rarity—the American group making a successful tour of

the British Isles.

By 1964, the Seasons scored with another smash in Britain—"Rag Doll." With that recording, numerous British music commentators labelled the American Seasons as "best vocal group."

This followed an earlier poll—conducted by the British pop music magazine *Melody Maker*—in which the 4 Seasons were named "the world's most popular vocal group," a rating in which they outpolled such big names as the Beatles.

By 1965—with the advent of their recording "Girl Come Running"—the Seasons undertook the innovative process of recording the upcoming single release in four languages—German, French, English and Italian—for international simultaneous release. Few, if any, pop groups could match that scope in a single release.

Over the past years, the Seasons have maintained their huge popularity abroad, spreading even more their appeal from the European countries to such continents as Asia and Australia.

In the months ahead, the 4 Seasons—Frankie Valli, Bob Gaudio, Tommy De Vito and Joe Long—will again be moving along international horizons. Their latest and most ambitious LP to date, "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette," is likely to have far greater appeal than any previous album releases, and the group is planning an extensive international tour that will take them again to Europe as well as to other nations throughout the world.



PROTEST: ONE SLICE OF LIFE COVERED IN "GENUINE IMITATION LIFE GAZETTE"

Fans' Reaction to "Gutsie" LP

What is the reaction of a years' long fan of the 4 Seasons to an album like "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette?"

"Confusion," answer the Seasons in perfect unison.

It takes a certain kind of courage on the part of an act, no matter how successful, to walk away from the bag that keeps paying their bills and to go into something as new as tomorrow. And, too, it takes a certain amount of courage on the part of the record company to invest \$100,000 in backing something as untried as "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette," particularly when you know in front that you're going to "confuse" a certain number of consumers.

Just One Look

The Seasons' Bob Gaudio feels that although the consumer might very well become confused, just one look at the package of the LP will hasten his buying if it for nothing else than to find out just what's going on.

A fan may not understand what's happening both on the record and in the package on first look and listen. It's an album that needs perhaps at least five listens and a week of reading. But, believes Season Joe Long, the impact of it is so great that once the individual begins to get into it,

he will become extremely pleased with what he sees and hears.

Adds Philips Records Product Manager Lou Simon: "Certainly a number of consumers will be somewhat 'confused' initially. But we have no doubt that "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette" will be one of the top selling contemporary albums of 1969 and, for that matter, of all time."

Of course "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette" is not without its hooks. There still is the identifiable vocal "sound" of the Seasons, although it is a "sound" that brings all the Seasons into focus as has never been done before. There are several tunes that will take no more than one listen to realize that they will become standards of the future. There is a package so unique that it will command your attention for hours.

++Genuine Imitation Life Gazette" is different. It defies seven years of conditioning caused by hit after hit after hit. It is a statement of fact, value and reality. It is a strong and honest comment on life and at the same time it is entertaining and unusually fascinating. This will be the biggest album in the history of the 4 Seasons. It's as fresh as tomorrow no matter what today is.