



Billboard

The International Music-Record Newsweekly



Above: Heavy promotion for Linda Scott's excellent version in Feb 1962

By 1962 The Four Seasons had been adopted as another name for the group and we all know the contrived story of the bowling alley in 'Jersey Boys' and how it was "a sign". As for its truth well... "The Four Seasons" was the name of a bowling alley in Union, NJ where the group as "The Four Lovers" had previously played in the Branch Room, which was a cocktail bar in the alley. But an article by Rex Woodard indicates that they still performed as the Four Lovers until mid 1962 so perhaps the Four Seasons was just another temporary name.

But the guys just wanted opportunities to record as a group with Bob Crewe who was "constantly looking for material, something to break the group with".

Don Charles says of these times for the Four Seasons..... "Now working with bassist Nick Massi and ex-Royal Teens keyboardist Bob Gaudio, they spent their days acting as Bob Crewe's *de facto* house band and backing vocal unit. At night, they gigged at New Jersey lounges. The group cut half-a-dozen flop sides for the Topix (late 1961 to early 1962) and Perri (early/mid 1962) labels under the names Alex Alda, The Village Voices and The Topics. Their luck changed in 1961 when Crewe leased one of their masters to George Gold-

ner's Gone Records; by then, they were calling themselves The Four Seasons." Somehow with his music industry network of friends he was able to engineer a recording session in November 1961, for George Goldner's Gone label, and the 2 sides 'Bermuda' and 'Spanish Lace' were released on Gone # 5122 by the end of the year. Our Billboard review picks these up in the 3rd February 1962 edition with an ad and a spotlight single review. The choice of material is a mystery as Linda Scott already had a pop version of 'Bermuda' ("The Bell Sisters" # 7 pop hit in 1952) out and receiving heavy publicity in Billboard. The Seasons 'doom laden' performance gave no clue as to their potential whilst 'Spanish Lace' (a song Bob Gaudio had already done in 1961 as an instrumental under the name Turner Di Senti) was more of the material that they had served up in previous years...competent if uninspiring doo-wop.



THE FOUR SEASONS
 ★★★★★ **Bermuda—GONE 5122** — Linda Scott has already revived this former hit and here's a good group version, done against a sweeping background in the Latin groove. The boys handle it well and it has a chance for coin. (Suffolk, BMI) (2:07)

★★★★★ **Spanish Lace**—Another ballad, all about the romantic spell woven by a lad of Spain. Interesting mandolin sound in the background. A catchy side. (Saturday, ASCAP) (2:20)

Billboard Review 3rd Feb 1962

Heading for Hitsville!

"BERMUDA"

THE FOUR SEASONS

Gone #5122

GONE RECORDS

1650 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Rex Woodard says in Billboard in 1981... "Massi remembers how Crewe came to record the first Four Seasons record, 'Bermuda': He did things right on the spot. One day we were fooling around in the studio and he hears us singing 'Bermuda'. He comes in and say.." Let's record it"... "Wow! I said. We're not ready; we're not even doing it right!.." He recorded it anyway and released it.

"The first success I had with The Four Seasons . . . was a record called 'Bermuda', Crewe recalled in later years. "It was a minor hit out of Philadelphia, but . . . nothing was really happening beyond PhillyRex again..." "Despite fascinating tales to the contrary, the "Four Seasons" identity came about pretty much at random for this particular record. When this flopped the name was indefinitely discarded." " The single fails to chart and they begin playing at the Martell's Sea Breeze Club in Point Pleasant Beach in New Jersey as The Four Seasons .But it is clear that by July 1962 they had decided on the name The Four Seasons .

Further pressure from the Seasons on Crewe to give them another chance on a 45 probably generated the comment in the Jersey Boys script....."bring me four

songs and I'll record you" from Crewe. None of those involved recall this and it may just be 'dramatic licence'. It is suggested that this happened in Spring 1962 they were in the studios re-recording 'Girl Of My Dreams' Perri 1007 as the Topics. But the 'Four Seasons' moniker was to re-emerge almost immediately. Crewe again..." **My mother and father lived in Ocean Beach, New Jersey, and I went to see The Seasons (perform) at this dive in Point Pleasant.**" Sitting in the audience one evening, Crewe glimpsed a side of Frankie Valli's artistry he'd never seen before. "**Frankie did a thing that night that blew me away. He put a bandana over his head, took two maracas and stuck them under his coat (for breasts), and began singing 'I Can't Give You Anything But Love' like (1940s cabaret singer) Nellie Lutcher, with that high voice.**" Crewe saw in Valli's improvised routine a gimmick he could exploit to commercial advantage. "**I said to Bob (Gaudio), 'Go write a song for Frankie with that chichi voice, and jump it an octave.'**" After several false starts, Bob Gaudio came up with an infectious number called "**Sherry**". It is suggested that this was in the spring sessions and it took until Summer for Bob Crewe to sell it. He believed in it and Bob Gaudio recalls his reaction when he played to him their demo performance on the phone.."if I don't fuck this up we've got a No 1 hit" he said.

'Sherry' breaks Nationally-In With A Bullet at # 65 25th August 1962

What we are told in Jersey Boys is that Gaudio came up with 'Sherry' in a 15 minute 'revelation'. According to un-ratified sessionographies this was in April 1962. Bob Crewe was so confident in the song that he took it to a convention in Miami and sold it to Vee-Jay as Bob Crewe explains

"At that time," Crewe told interviewer Joe Smith, "I was confronted with the choice of either paying the rent or going back into the studio to make one more record with The Seasons . . . I decided to go in and make it, because I really believed in what we had." After the new single was finished, Bob traveled to a record convention in Miami and sold the master to a buyer from Vee Jay Records. The release in late July generated no immediate buzz and sales were slow, but 'Sherry' really took off after Dick Clark booked the group for an appearance on "American Bandstand."

Bob Crewe knew the importance of a TV promo and persuaded his good friend from the 50s, Dick Clark, to play the 45 on American Bandstand in early August, after its Vee-Jay release in late July. "It received a rave reception with the audience" (quote from a TV newspaper interview) and so around two weeks later the group was booked for a personal appearance on American Bandstand, on 15th August. The date is confirmed by the recently discovered contract. Rumour has it that the following day Vee-Jay received orders for 180,000 copies. It appeared in Billboard for the first time on 25th August as a 'Breakout' single.....in at # 65 with a bullet. WMCA, whose audience was building rapidly, started playing the record (listed as new Top Ten entry at # 4 on August 22nd), and soon the station's chief rival, WABC, picked it up as well (a new entry on their Top 40 at # 4 on August 21st).

"Sherry" quickly broke out of New York and rose to # 22 , then # 11 before hitting No 1 by 15th September 1962 after 4 weeks on the chart.

During the summer though the Four Seasons hadn't been idle, recording 11 songs that re-visited several songs from their Four Lovers days and from their stage act using Frankie's novelty styled falsetto voice. The last of these in August/September was strong enough for a follow up single and as 'Sherry' spent 5 weeks at No 1 'Big Girls don't Cry' was being prepared for release and a Christmas album.

SHERRY: A Billboard pick.
The 4 Seasons, a rocking teen-style group, come through with a wild performance of a rhythmic effort here, supported by a femme chorus and a pounding band beat. For the youthful set. (4th August 1962)

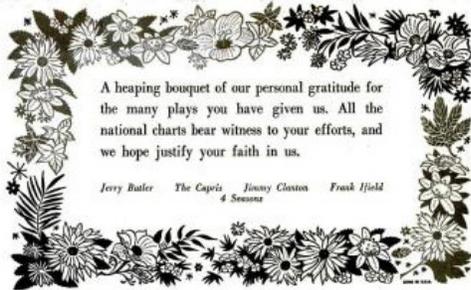
25th August 1962

SINGLES			
★ NATIONAL BREAKOUTS			
PATCHES, Dickey Lee, Smash 1758			
SHERRY, Four Seasons, Vee Jay 456			
LIE TO ME, Brook Benton, Mercury 72024			
61	---	PATCHES	1
Dickey Lee, Smash 1758			
52	79 85	SURFIN' SAFARI	3
Beach Boys, Capitol 4777			
63	77 88 89	BOYS' NIGHT OUT	4
Patti Page, Mercury 72013			
64	68 78	I LOVE YOU THE WAY YOU ARE	3
Bobby Vinton, Diamond 121			
65	---	SHERRY	1
Four Seasons, Vee Jay 456			
66	70 80	JUST TELL HER JIM SAID HELLO	3
Elvis Presley, RCA Victor 8041			

15th Sept 1962

BILLBOARD MUSIC WEEK						
★ STAR PERFORMERS—Selections registering greatest upward progress this week.						S
THIS WEEK	1 Wk. Ago	2 Wks. Ago	3 Wks. Ago	TITLE	Artist, Label & Number	Weeks on Chart
1	11	22	65	SHERRY	Four Seasons, Vee Jay 456	4
2	1	1	5	SHEILA	Tommy Roe, ABC-Paramount 18329	8
3	4	11	22	RAMBLIN' ROSE	Nat King Cole, Capitol 4804	7
4	3	2	1	LOCO-MOTION	Little Eva, Dimension 1808	12
5	22	40	48	GREEN ONIONS	Booker T & the MG's, Stax 127	6

**TO THE
DJ's OF
AMERICA**



A heaping bouquet of our personal gratitude for the many plays you have given us. All the national charts bear witness to your efforts, and we hope justify your faith in us.

Jerry Butler The Capris Jimmy Clanton Frank Field
4 Seasons

"SHERRY"



VJ-456
4 Seasons

"LIMBO"



Mr. Peake-119
The Capris

**"MAKE IT EASY
ON YOURSELF"**



VJ-451
Jerry Butler



RECORDS
1449 S. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO 5, ILL.

"VENUS IN BLUE JEANS"



ACE-9001
Jimmy Clanton

"I REMEMBER YOU"



VJ-457
Frank Field

P.S.

Johnny Vincent
Art Records

Bob Crease
Producer of "Sherry"

Roland Ronie
E.M.I.

Larry Udal
Mr. Peake Records

Alcor
Vee Jay

We too would like to add our personal thanks to you

**THE NATION'S TOP TUNES
HONOR ROLL OF HITS**
TRADE MARK REG.

FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 15

The Honor Roll of Hits comprises the nation's top tunes according to record sales and disk jockey performances as determined by Billboard Music Week's weekly nationwide surveys.

This Week	Last Week	Tune	Composer-Publisher	Weeks on Chart
1	15	SHERRY	By B. Gaudio—Published by Bobob (ASCAP)	3
2	1	SHEILA	By Tommy Roe—Published by Egar/Unimac (BMI)	6
3	2	LOCO-MOTION	By Galtin-Kap—Published by Alton (BMI)	9
4	5	RAMBLIN' ROSE	By Joe Sherman-Noel Sherman—Published by Conest (ASCAP)	4
5	6	SHE'S NOT YOU	By Poppy Stone-Lieber—Published by Finley (BMI)	6

RECORDINGS AVAILABLE

(Best Selling Record Listed in Bold Face)

- 1. SHERRY—The Four Seasons, Vee Jay 456; Janis Joplin, Telsa Hite 2022.**
- 2. SHEILA—Tommy Roe, ABC-Paramount 19329.**
- 3. LOCO-MOTION—Little Eva, Dimension 1990.**
- 4. RAMBLIN' ROSE—Neil King Cole, Capitol 484; Ray Garnet, Telsa Hite 2021.**
- 5. SHE'S NOT YOU—The Power**

Vee-Jay had piled in on 8th September with a full page ad for their stable of stars which now included The Four Seasons with their exciting new sound which would sit proudly at the No 1 spot for 5 weeks before losing the top spot on 20th October to 'Monster Mash' by Boris Picket and the Crypt Kickers.

The big test was to come and the questions for the group where, "Was it a one-off?" and "Could they reproduce that incredible sound live?" Billboard didn't review 'Big Girls..') but rumours of its issue were stirring in the industry by 13th October...and on 20th Billboard's Page One mentioned it (as "National Breakout" and "New On The Hot 100" entering at # 66). The same week 'Sherry and 11 Others' was a Spotlight album release and the next a hot seller.

20th October 1962

SINGLES

★ NATIONAL BREAKOUTS

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY, Four Seasons, Vee Jay 465

RETURN TO SENDER, Elvis Presley, RCA Victor 8100

63 42 29 22 **A WONDERFUL DREAM** 10
Majors, Imperial 5855

64 66 87 — **I'M GOING BACK TO SCHOOL** 3
Dee Clark, Vee Jay 462

65 74 95 — **LEAH** 3
Roy Orbison, Monument 467

66 — — — **BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY** 1
Four Seasons, Vee Jay 465

SHERRY AND 11 OTHERS
Four Seasons, Vee Jay LP 1053 (M); SR 1053 (S)—The unique sound of the Four Seasons is most attractively packaged here. Besides the big current hit, the boys sing a wide variety of material, all done in their own distinctive style. "Oh Carol" could be the next winner, and there's much entertainment in a Rose Murphy type "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," and wild versions of "Never on Sunday," and "Yessir, That's My Baby." Potent teen package.

The singles record market was enlivened last week by a battle between three versions of the tune "Mama Sang a Song," plus some smash new singles that were bringing teens and adults into stores and rack operations. The three way battle over "Mama" was between the Stan Kenton version on Capitol, the Walter Brennan waxing on Liberty and the Bill Anderson single on Decca. The Anderson version, the original, is a smash in the country field, where it has been out for three months, and is now moving pop.

The Kenton version, which broke the tune pop, has turned into a strong seller in a number of markets, and the Walter Brennan release, issued a week after Kenton, has made a solid showing in a number of other areas. This week the Kenton disk moved up to the No. 74 slot on BMW's "Hot 100" chart, and the Brennan version jumped into the chart in the No. 90 position. The Bill Anderson waxing is No. 2 on the country and western singles chart.

The new records that were turning into smashes were the Four Season's single "Big Girls Don't Cry," a follow-up to their big hit "Sherry," and Elvis Presley's recording of "Return to Sender." David Thorne's vocal version of "The Alley Cat Song" was also grabbing big sales. And new releases by the Duprees, Dee Dee Sharp, Trade Martin, Marcie Blane, and the Everly Brothers, were other traffic builders.

Meanwhile, on the album front, where business was good, a number of new albums were starting to assume smash proportions according to dealers checked. These included the new Joan Baez album called "Joan Baez in Concert," the new Johnny Mathis album, "Rapture," and the Smothers Brothers LP called "The Two Sides of the Smothers Brothers." A novelty album by Allen Sherman called "My Son the Folk Singer" was breaking out in Chicago and Los Angeles. In areas where the English shows "Oliver" or "On the Fringe" had played or were playing, the cast albums of the shows were also selling well.