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The Four Seasons UK Appreciation Society
Newsletter

The Four Seasons —
Helicon (Warner Bros.)

In contrast, here is a band who have decided to change their old sound — with disastrous results.

Since 1962 and *Sherry*, the Four Seasons have been noted for the breezy appeal of their melodies and harmonies, led by the vocal versatility of Frankie Valli.

The style, adapted and refined slightly over the years, stood the test of time well. It seemed recently that the Seasons had perfected their art.

Now, they've renounced all those qualities that were outstanding in an apparent attempt to bring out the musicianship.

With a new emphasis on instrumentation, the melodies and vocals have accordingly suffered so that the set is without even one

strong song.

All of the material is highly percussive — in a way that becomes boring before long — and is embroidered with a great deal of keyboard work.

The obsession with sound and arrangement reaches a peak on *Rhapsody* (featuring Gregg Allman on organ), which is bathed with strings, synthesiser and all kinds of lavish backing.

The basic idea for the song is full of potential — but how much better it would sound speeded up a bit and stripped of some of the extravagance. The hook, when it came, could then be made to sound more dramatic.

The Seasons would have been well-advised to take a lesson from Todd Rundgren's *Hiroshima* in how to treat this type of song.



Established in 1971 and run by the same dedicated people for the over 30 years since, we are committed to help collectors everywhere who are interested in their music.

THE 4
SEASONS

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& some from 1977:

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Rest of '77 articles
and 1978 to 1980

1981- 86 releases



A marked change of style for the Four Seasons

Classic Albums Box [Box Set]
Frankie Valli & Four Seasons (Artist)

Released 01/07/14

FRANKIE VALLI
and THE FOUR SEASONS

the CLASSIC ALBUMS box



USA Rhino
Releases

THE FOUR SEASONS

Selected Solo Works [Box Set]

Released 01/07/14



Releases

USA Rhino
Releases

FRANKIE VALLI

Jersey Boys Music From The Motion
Picture And Broadway Show

Released 24/06/14



Four Seasons in the sun!

NO objective study of American pop of the '60s can avoid mentioning the importance of The Four Seasons.

The '70s seemed as though they were passing The Four Seasons by, they found themselves with label and recording problems, and their records didn't sell

Their lead singer, Franki Valli had some solo success with Private Stock records and the single My Eyes Adored You.

Admittedly, artists from the '70s paid

by **TONY JASPER**

them respect by recording some of their songs. The Bay City Rollers waxed Bye Bye Baby and The Osmonds recorded The Proud One.

Adrian Baker made a copy version of Sherry.

In the end, what matters is making your own hits however. This they did with a new, revitalised, and happier Four Seasons, back in 1975.

They scored once more with disco favourites like Who Loves You Baby, December '63 and any time now, it will be Down The Hall from their 1977, Helicon album.

No-one writing the history of 70's pop can ignore them, although they have yet to equal their amazing charting of the 60's.

Their current lyricist and music man is Bob Gaudio helped out by a lady called Judy Parker with some words.

Gaudio, as Four Season addicts know, was once in the band, in the golden days, from the moment they ceased as The Four Lovers, way back in the early 60's.

Bob has been holidaying in Britain and he talked with me at his London hotel. The conversation ranged through so many events and so many hits, that I would need pages galore to tell the group's story.



The Four Seasons

The Four Seasons — success story!

THE FOUR SEASONS remain one of the most consistently best-selling groups in the field of popular music. If the Beach Boys summed up what West Coast pop was all about, then the Four Seasons did the same for the East Coast.

Under producer Bob Crewe, they developed a new, fresh style based on group member Bob Gaudio's songwriting talents and lead singer Frankie Valli's unique vocal range, with special emphasis on high falsetto.

Between 1962 and 1970 alone, they scored 29 hit singles and sold an estimated 50 million singles worldwide.

All the original group members were born and raised in the New York — New Jersey area. They started performing with friends and moved into the music field as professionals in the mid-fifties, calling themselves the Four Lovers, inspired by the success of close-harmony vocal groups like the Four Freshmen and the Four Aces.

The group, led by Frankie — who was born in Newark, New Jersey, on May 3, 1937 — stayed together from 1956 to 1962, but achieved no major breakthroughs. They sang in small clubs and performed on the college circuit.

Occasionally they were signed to appear in more prestigious surroundings, but seemed to be going nowhere in particular, when record producer Bob Crewe took an interest in them. He felt they had great potential but needed a change in style and material. To achieve this, he helped bring Bob Gaudio in as a group member.

Gaudio — born in the Bronx on November 17, 1942 — was a talented songwriter, and had appeared with a number of rock groups, including the Royal Teens.

Crewe also suggested a name change, which resulted

in them becoming the Four Seasons. Soon after the reshuffle, Gaudio provided the group with an original composition titled "Sherry." The song was recorded for Vee-Jay Records, with Valli singing lead and Gaudio adding his tenor voice and keyboard talent as part of the back-up.

The single reached Number one on the American Hot 100, staying there for five weeks. It entered the British charts in October 1962, and reached number eight, helping the group with their first gold disc.

The Seasons followed up with another million-seller, "Big Girls Don't Cry," co-written by Gaudio and Crewe. The single entered the British charts in January 1963 and reached number 13.

Their third million-seller was yet another Gaudio/Crewe composition, "Walk Like a Man," which topped the US charts for three weeks. It hit the British charts in April, 1963, and reached number 12.

In 1964 the group moved to a new record label, Philips, and continued their winning ways with Gaudio/Crewe's "Rag Doll," another million-seller which remained at number one in the States for two weeks. It entered the British charts in September 1964, and reached number two. In the same year came another massive American hit "Dawn."

"Let's Hang On" was the group's fifth million-seller. Written by Denny Randell, Sandy Linzer and Bob Crewe, it made number one in the States, entering the British

charts in December, 1965 and reaching number four.

The Seasons also became one of Philips' most successful LP properties, with each of their releases during the sixties selling 100,000 copies or better and several albums achieving gold record levels.

In 1968, the group devoted much of its energy into the Philips album "Genuine Imitation Life Gazette," which sported a complex packaging arrangement with an eight page newspaper insert. Shortly after the group split with Bob Crewe and quit recording for two years.

Nevertheless they continued to tour, gradually updating their sound and in 1972 signed to Motown's new Mowest pop subsidiary and cut "Chameleon" under the name Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons.

In September, 1975, the Four Seasons re-emerged on Warner Brothers with Bob Gaudio/Judy Parker's "Who Loves You?" performed with a contemporary disco feel and featuring Valli on lead vocals and Gaudio on vocals and keyboards.

That same album spawned three hit singles — "December 1963," "Who Loves You" and "Silver Star." In April last year the Seasons made a tremendously successful UK tour winning new fans and delighting old friends. Their tour this year has been just as successful.

The Four Seasons comprise Frankie Valli (lead vocals), Gerry Polci (vocals and drums), Don Ciccone (vocals and bass), Lee Shapiro (vocals and keyboards) and John Paiva (vocals and guitar).

A New USA Bob Crewe Album At Last - By member Tony Guyett

Bob Crewe, the man who co-wrote and produced most of the group's 1960's successes and their "Hickory" and "My Eyes Adored You" singles has put out a new album of the Bob Crewe Generation on Elektra 7E-1083 entitled "Street Talk". The tracks on the album are: "Cherry Boy"; "Menage A Trois"; "Street Talk"; "Back Alley Boogie"; "Welcome To My Life"; "Free" (medley - "I Am/Free/Keep On Walkin'/Ah Men/Time For You and Me".)

The LP, like the single "Street Talk/Street Talk (Var.III)" is issued earlier last year on Twentieth Century BTC 2271, is very discoish in style. The album is a Bob Crewe produced concern and similar to Disco Tex and the Sex-o-Letts! Amongst the back ground vocals are Patti Austin, Cindy Bullens, and Carolyn Willis, all of whom have done back ground vocals on recent Valli LPs such as "VALLI" and "OUR DAY WILL COME".

SIDE ONE

If We Should Lose Our Love. Once named as a likely single, a Four Seasons up-tempo number featuring Gerry and Don on lead. Not my favourite, but the title line is an unusually haunting melody. Apart from that, maybe a little indistinct.

Let's Get It Right. They did get it right. A superb track both vocally and instrumentally. Strangely, Lee Shapiro doesn't seem to be featured on this one. Could be a good single - it's Frankie's choice and also Roger Day of Radio Piccadilly (Manchester) likes this one.

Long Ago. A very mellow Gerry Polci singing an incredible song. Could be a big success for those dreamy summer nights... A very subdued production - don't know how Bob Gaudio restrained himself! Like it.

Rhapsody. If you combined the lush arrangement of "I've Got You Under My Skin" with the disco feel of "December '63" you might end up with something very like "Rhapsody". That's a compliment - it really is an incredible sound. I could be tempted to describe this as the best thing the group have done for years, but that might be a little unfair. But it certainly has made its impact immediately on me - especially the version done on stage, which was really strong and powerful. Should be a massive hit as a single in this country.

SIDE TWO

Helicon. The name of the mountain in ancient Greece where the Muses gathered to create music and poetry. The track has a heavy beat and an interesting tune, although the vocals sound a little distant to me. The guitar sounds interesting, and the whole thing has a nice relaxed feel to it. The Arp solo from Lee Shapiro is very pretty.

Down The Hall. This is the single in Holland and Germany, and a very good choice too. It's a very catchy tune right from the start and would have been a big success over here I think. Gerry sings commendably on lead and the back-up harmonies are just excellent. I think this was cut separately from the rest of the album as an intended single. It just goes to show that Bob Gaudio's writing isn't always melancholy in outlook!

Put A Little Away. Good as the Four Seasons are, it's surprising how Frankie Valli's little bit in this song lifts it into another class. Frankie has a really good voice, not just a distinctive one, and the class shows even when he takes a back seat as here.

New York Street Song (No Easy Way). The only track featuring percussionist Richard Gajate, a man who proved to be a very good friend to us all on the recent tour. Apart from that, I could mention that superb arrangement, the outstanding vocals, the ethereal harmonies. But I won't. I'll just say that I like this one very much indeed. The piano reminds me of "American Crucifixion & Resurrection" from "Life Gazette".

I Believe In You. And we believe in you, Frankie, totally out of context with the feel of the album, a pretty Frankie Valli song. It sounds just great - so nice to hear Frankie singing lead and backed by male voices. It seems to sound better than when he's backed by girls on solo work.

Conclusions: An excellent album. Personally, I would like to have heard a little more of Frankie Valli, but I realise that he is stepping back and out of The Four Seasons, and if this material is anything to go by, then they are certainly ready now for a career and a direction of their own.

ALL THIS AND WORLD WAR II Double Album

This reached number 23 on the BBC charts three weeks after its release last November and remained in the charts for two more weeks and then dropped out again. However, on January 15 it came in again at number 40 and then vanished again! In Melody Makers Top 30 it remained for two weeks only reaching a position of 26!

Free!

Rainorama

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SEE PHOTO & STORY pages 6 and 7