

- Don Ciccone: Well, as it turned out, my hits occurred after I was already in the service. You see, "Younger Girl" and "Mr. Dyingly Sad" had been recorded before I went into the service and it was quite a surprise to find they were hits - especially when you're living on an Air Force base.
- Spectrum: We know that you wrote the big hit "Mr. Dyingly Sad" for the Critters. Did you also write songs that other artists recorded?
- Don Ciccone: I wrote a song called "There's Got To Be A World" that got recorded on Kama Sutra by a studio group called the Innocence. It did quite well across the country and even hit the Top 30 nationally. They recorded two other songs of mine as well on their album. The Trade Winds and Vic Dana were among some of the other artists who recorded some of my songs.
- Spectrum: Having sung lead on the first two major hits for the Critters, how did you continue your vocal career?
- Don Ciccone: Well, Kama Sutra/Buddah signed me as a solo artist and recorded an extremely elaborate solo album with me, but never released it. I cut it while I was still in the service and wrote some of the songs while I was stationed in Germany. I also had a single out on Metromedia entitled "Bicycle Ride" under the name of Don Marley just about a year before I joined The Seasons.
- Spectrum: Are you writing songs now with the Seasons in mind?
- Don Ciccone: As a matter of fact, the group's success has inspired many new songs, several of which were written specifically with Frankie in mind. Lee and I are in the process of finishing up some demonstration tapes on these tunes and hope they'll be finding their way into future releases.
- Spectrum: You're also into many other things other than music related projects. Can you discuss what they are?
- Don Ciccone: One interest that is very rapidly developing is my game creations. I've always enjoyed the sciences and it's been quite a challenge to create new games. One such game is four way chess which I've demonstrated on a few talk shows. In fact, sometimes I wonder if I'm creating more games now than writing new songs!

Lee Shapiro (Arranger, Conductor, Keyboards). Lee was born and raised in New Jersey. He started playing the piano when he was eight years old and by the time he was 13 had formed his own band. For four years he and his group played local club and school dates. Lee started writing and arranging music and he went on to the Manhattan School of Music to study classical composition and piano. Frankie Valli, who had heard about Lee through a mutual friend, approached Lee and asked him to join The Four Seasons. Lee accepted and has been performing with the group for three years. In addition to playing keyboards, Lee conducts, writes and arranges music for Frankie and for The Four Seasons.

- Spectrum: How did you happen to get involved with The Four Seasons?
- Lee Shapiro: I was doing the arranging for an 18 piece big band on Monday nights; a mutual friend an arranger knew that Frankie was looking for a person to handle all the keyboard and arranging work for the group on stage. Frankie contacted me and I joined the group shortly thereafter. In fact, it was at that time when the group officially became known as Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons.
- Spectrum: You arranged all the medleys that are performed on stage and even some dynamite instrumentals like "The Warsaw Concerto". Have these instrumentals ever been recorded and, if so, will they be released?
- Lee Shapiro: "Brian's Song" got recorded, but never got released. "The Warsaw Concerto" was going to be recorded and come out under a new group name, somewhat along the lines of what was done during the mid-sixties with The Seasons, but because of some legalities, it never saw the light of day.
- Spectrum: Aside from your fine arranging abilities you are showing great promise in becoming a successful composer. What are your plans in that direction?
- Lee Shapiro: Well, Don Ciccone and I have written several songs together that have been getting some very good response; "Carrie (I Would Marry You)" was, of course, recorded by Frankie and we have a couple more that we think would be right for him. I've also written with other people and have started a publishing and production firm. Don and I both together and individually, want to get into more record production. Maybe the new songs might find themselves on a future Season album.

Somewhere in the middle of all of this, as he has been planted firmly in the middle of the road for years is Frankie Valli. Valli, apart from being a seminal influence on rock stars and a well remembered memory of our youth, is also selling records like a mother. He is currently working on his third and fourth gold records of this part of his career. Like Nelson, he appeals to two generations of fans. Unlike Nelson, he's firmly convinced he has always kept his fans because he's always been exactly what they wanted him to be.

Valli and Nelson, unlike many of the 60's stars have never completely retired. They'd always be appearing somewhere and Valli accomplished a feat of mind-blowing proportions—he sold out Madison Square Garden without a hit record. In fact, without a hit record for years. Those late-night movie ads for 2 album Four Seasons's Greatest Hits have sold enough to be platinum records, if they were counted and Valli in the second decade of his career has recently released four record albums. Asked whether this does not constitute something of an overkill, Valli replies, "No, it's good. My partner Bob Gaudio, one of the original Four Seasons, and I own all the masters outright. We bought out the other two guys and now it's ours. The album coming out on Motown is the really odd one. Berry Gordy, (president of Motown) is the biggest Four Seasons freak ever, and really wanted us on that label. He got busy being a movie director and that was the end of his interest in the record. I knew we had a hit on that record. For a while, I played in Vegas in one of the lounges and that wasn't too long ago, and each time I'd sing one song the people would scream. I'd call Motown, beg them to do something with that song, and nothing. Finally, I tried to buy the master of that record. They wanted too much money, all I could buy was the master to that one song. It was *My Eyes Adored You*.

Who Loves You? is the first song written by Gaudio in this new phase of the Four Seasons. Bob Gaudio wrote every one of those old gold records. Frankie now has a new young, Four Seasons band: Lee Shapiro, Don Ciccone, John Paiza, and Gerry Polce. Ciccone is an old Critter and the author of Mr. Dyeingly Sad. The new group are all fine musicians and Valli is dreaming of the days when this group of Four Seasons will be recording on their own. Says Valli, "I'm beginning to think in other directions. I've always had a problem with my ears and this month they're going

to do some operations on them, so I'll have to sit around for a while and think about where I'm going. I'm going to take some acting classes, it's something I've always wanted to do, and this new bunch of Four Seasons is really a thing I should work with. They are so good, and they have so much to contribute, maybe this enforced idleness will work for me."

The only time Valli has ever stepped out of character was a protest album recorded in 1968. It didn't sell five copies, and Valli sincerely believes that just isn't his thing. "I've been around the record business since I was 15. Do you think I know all about the record business? How can I possibly protest things I don't know as much about as I do records? I would take too long to learn about things to protest." Valli firmly believes he's been around this long because he can duplicate his records in person and he's never



done anything he thought his audience wouldn't accept. Valli, now 41, still listens to all the new record releases, loves Alice Cooper and is having the Elton John catalog sent to him to see what can be adapted for the Seasons. Not deliberately trying to do a disco song, he had a gigantic hit with Swearin' To God in the discos, and he's focusing just a little differently on *Our Day Will Come*, a romantic disco record, not a raw sexual one.

All this is symptomatic of a phase the music business is going through (and not only in the States) that many see as part of the on-going cyclic nature of the industry.

## Two gig gaff

OK ALL you budding Watergate type investigators at **Record Mirror**, I think I have a cover up for you. I am one of the unfortunate number who bought tickets for Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons at the Liverpool Empire (for either the 5th or 6th of May — the date is uncertain as it was advertised for Friday the 5th of May, which was actually the 6th). It came as a major disappointment to discover on Thursday 5th of May that the show was no more.

Why was it cancelled? Leafing through my copy of RM that night I found some clues. The ad for the group on page nine makes no mention of the Empire as a venue; on the 5th they were at the Blackpool Opera House and on the 6th, in Sheffield. The group

appeared to be, by some miracle (is Frankie Valli God?) playing in Liverpool and Blackpool at the same time on the 5th. Whoever organised this tour couldn't be trusted to take an old ladies' outing to the seaside. Can RM please confirm the concert took place in Sheffield?  
**Stephen Qualtrough, Portstable Lane, Liverpool.**

● Move over Washington Post, we got all the answers. It seems there was a blunder in the ad. Blackpool was dropped out of the itinerary in February and someone forgot to take it off the ad. The group should have played Liverpool on the 5th, but Frankie Valli came down with a bad throat and they had to pull out of the gig. The rest of the tour went ahead as planned. OK?

UK Record Mirror 21/5/77



FRANKIE VALLI: Who are you calling Deep Throat?

Entered the BEC charts at number 53 on 20.11.76 reached highest position of 34 for two consecutive weeks (4.12.76 and 11.12.76) and dropped out of the Top 50 on 25.1.77. On Radio Luxembourg the single reached 23 on their Top 30 and on the Commercial radio station: Piccadilly (Manchester) number 5 and Pennine Radio (Bradford) no. 19. Here is what Warner Brothers (UK) put out in the way of a promotional sheet when it was released last November:-

"The Four Seasons originally started life in the mid-fifties as the Four Lovers inspired by the success of close harmony vocal groups. The first six years of the group's existence, 1956-1962, saw minor successes. But it wasn't until producer Bob Crewe took over and added Bob Gaudio in the one-up, that their ascent began. Now known as the Four Seasons they recorded Gaudio's song titled "Sherry". It held the No. 1 US Chart position for five straight weeks and in October 1962 it stayed in the British charts at No. 8. This brought them their first gold disc. They followed this with numerous hits, including, "Walk Like A Man", "Rag Doll", "Dawn", "Ronnie", "Working My Way Back To You", "Let's Hang On", "Big Girls Don't Cry" and more recently "My Eyes Adored You", "Who Loves You" and "December '63" the group's first UK No. 1.

Their new single is a version of the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out" which is taken from the 20th Century film "All This and World War II". The single was produced by Bob Gaudio, and featuring the London Symphony Orchestra produced by Lou Reizner and arranged by Wil Malone.

Line Up: Frankie Valli (lead vocals), Gerry Polci (vocals, drums), Don Ciccone (vocals, guitar), Lee Shapiro (vocals, keyboards) and John Pavia (vocals, guitar). Bob Gaudio still records with them but doesn't tour due to producing and songwriting commitments.

VALLI LP (UK Private Stock FVLP 10/USA PS 2017) Review by John Riley:-

Side One

1. Easily (Billy & Bobby Alessi)

A super-smooth ballad from Frankie, with a swirling, breathtaking orchestration provided by Bob Gaudio and Lee Shapiro. As on most of the tracks the Seasons are playing, and the whole thing sounds very "together". Frankie's new single in the USA, maybe not very direct in its appeal, but superb music.

2. We're All Alone (Boz Scaggs)

A flop as a single, but a beautiful sustained performance. Should have been a massive hit if there were any justice in the pop world. This type of material shows Frankie's voice off at its very best, smooth as ever and soaring to a riveting climax.

3. Can't Get You Off My Mind (Koster/Pike/Randazzo)

This one very nearly became a single but was shelved in favour of "Easily". An up-tempo song of very much more direct appeal, but to me at least the actual song seems rather ordinary. The performance is something else. Frankie is in super form, and the mood of the whole thing is lifted to special heights by a superb piece of drumming from Gerry Polci. Nice.

4. So She Says (Billy & Bobby Alessi)

Frankie how I like to hear him - moody and deep in feeling. The arrangement is out of this world, intricate and fascinating. Turn this one up on the Hi-Fi and just feel the guts of the orchestration! A real stand-out track.

5. Lucia (Cocciante/Juberti/Rouby)

Very symphonic, certainly well performed, but I'm afraid not one of my favourites. The repetition does tend to put me off, and the presence of the London Symphony Orchestra doesn't really make up for it. But a very pretty tune, and I'm sure lots of people will love it.





# Over 5,000 Fans Crowd Music Hall for Frankie Valli Performance

By VIRGINIA ALDERMAN

WHEELING — If you weren't one of the 5,100 fans who overflowed the Capitol Music Hall Thursday night for the stupendous Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons show, then you missed one of the most sensational stage shows Wheeling has seen in quite a while.

This super-talented artist, his Four Seasons and his musicians brought a youthful crowd of screaming, adoring fans right to their feet mid-way through their two-hour performance (on both shows, yet) and as one veteran theatre employe noted, "First time in this theatre an artist has ever got a standing ovation in the middle of a show."

So, quite obviously, this dark-haired, swarthy, sexy singer has a lot going for him. And what he has going is one whale of a voice with unbelievable range and volume, a personality that reaches all the way to the back row, an ability to communicate with his fans that few performers can equal and the polish and charisma that are the hallmark of a footlight veteran who is every inch a star. I'll be real honest; I was super-impressed with the entire production and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons can now add another real fan to the millions they already have.

IN 11 years, since 1962, the Four Seasons have sold over 53 million records and their big hits "Sherry", "My Eyes Adored You", "Rag Doll", "Big Girls Don't Cry", the list is

endless, are world-wide favorites. Their fast-paced, tightly programmed production, their unique sound, their music, "...took long time to get," Valli said, "and we've worked hard to get it this way." Their love for their music, their work and their fans is easy to see. "I feel you should be proud of what you're doing. I'm more concerned with what the audience wants and it's these people I want to please. I don't gear my show to please other musicians or some critic. And I don't believe in doing a show

just for the money, either. The Audience is what counts."

The off-stage Frankie Valli is easy to talk to, a very kind and thoughtful person. Sincere and unpretentious as a star, he exudes confidence and a thorough knowledge of his craft which he has honed and polished to perfection.

**RANDOM COMMENTS** from giggly, ecstatic, blushing young females were, "He's so sexy!" "He's tough!" "Such a great singer." "Cool." "Cute." "He makes me all shivery when I listen to him," and similar such bubbly phrases.

The two-hour Frankie Valli-Four Seasons show reaches a

Pittsburgh, hard on the heels of shows in Philadelphia, and Wilkes-Barre. "I get awfully tired of traveling", Valli remarked. "We do over 100,000 miles each year. But I love performing so I guess there's no way out of it."

With only two hours sleep



GIVING one whale of a performance and greeting fans at the Capitol Music Hall in Wheeling Thursday night were Frankie

adoring fans right to their feet mid-way through their two-hour performance at the theatre.

"Honesty in performance is very important. It reflects to an audience and they can tell. I enjoy the fact they're there and like to include them as part of my performance. That eye to eye contact, that ability to reach out and touch, it's so important and for me, it's the way I work best."

His astounding ability to bridge the age gap, his appeal to all ages, is a quality he terms "fortunate." While the majority of the night's fans were a twenties group, there was a noticeable sprinkling of over thirties and a generous helping of sub-teens as well.

feverish screaming climax when Valli steps off stage onto the runway to reach out and shake hands with the pulsating

throng that appears about to devour him. Adoration and love are scrawled across the every youthful face. Their emotion is explosive, the mere touch of his hand enough to send them soaring on wings of ecstasy. "I'll never wash it," said one starry-eyed fan when Valli autographed her hand after the show.

The group will be appearing Sunday at Syria Mosque in

since flying from Los Angeles to New York, then to Wheeling, Valli appeared tired when he arrived, but his dazzling per-

formance belied the weariness he obviously shrugged off before going onstage.

Frankie Valli has endured many seasons of success, with no fading autumn anywhere near in sight. After sitting through two successive blockbuster shows, I get the positive feeling they're in the season of perpetual spring and their flowers of achievement are now blossoming more beautifully than ever before.

NEW ALBUM REVIEW

Frankie Valli: Lady Put The Light Out (Private Stock PS 7002, New York)

Reviewed by John Riley

Producer: Charles Calello. Executive Producer: Frankie Valli.

Arranger: Charles Calello.

Introduction This review is being written after about three days of very concentrated listening. I've played the whole album about a dozen times, and each time the enjoyment of it has increased. This is gratifying, because my first impression was one of mild disappointment. The arrangements and production do not seem as subtle as "Valli", and some of the vocals seemed a bit "off" in some ways. But there are plenty of good points, so now I'll examine each song in more detail.

I Need You (Eric Carmen) So very typically Frankie Valli, from the arrangement to the falsetto ending, this could have been recorded any time in the last ten years. It has plenty of guts, and all round is one of the strongest on the album.

Second Thoughts (Paul Anka) Not a success as a single, but a strong and interesting song. Familiar to us all and well worth hearing again.

I Could Have Loved You (Albert Hammond/Carol Bayer-Sager) This is a gentle love song, beautifully done, with Frankie's voice sounding very smooth. It's simple, and very effective.

With You (Ken Ascher/Carol Bayer-Sager) And this, to me, is a little bit of where the rot sets in. Frankie uses his falsetto and tenor in a strange mixture here, which takes some getting used to. The song is similar in feeling to the last one, but I don't think it works nearly so well. Don't like the 'la da da da' bits. But on the whole I still can't say that I don't enjoy the track.

Native New Yorker (Randell/Linzer) With reservations, I can say that this is an outstanding effort. Very much in the style of "Swearin' To God" or "Our Day Will Come" - instrumentally excellent, and also vocally excellent except for the rather prolonged ending. As an edited single it would be great. But that ending is awful.

Lady Put The Light Out (Guy Fletcher/Doug Flett) Written by the same team that gave us "Fallen Angel", this is totally different and not in the same league. That is, not a classic. But still an excellent song, and performed very well indeed. Took a while to grow on me, but now I like it very much. It's a moody ballad, and quite unusual.

Boats Against The Current (Eric Carmen) A powerful ballad sung with style - excellent. At first I thought that the vocal at the end got to be a little too fancy and overdone, but after a few hearings it sounds just right.

Rainstorm (Chris Andrews) The Chris Andrews I know wrote all of Sandie Shaw's hits - I wonder if this is the same writer? An up-tempo song, with appropriate thunder-claps. I love it all except for the falsetto bit in the middle and the insipid guitar solo that follows it. But then it soon picks up again and energetically fades away. Could be a nice single.

I'm Gonna Love You (Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil) Already used as a B-side, a pleasant track reminiscent more of Motown than Private Stock!

There's Always a Goodbye (Randy Richards) A dramatic finish to the album. Frankie sounds a bit hoarse on this track, rather the way he did during the last tour here. Perhaps this one was recorded soon afterwards.

Conclusions I still think that Frankie Valli is the greatest vocalist we have today, and if I sound critical in parts of this review then it's only because I expect a lot from such a man. "Valli" featured The Four Seasons, and was very together and skilful. The only person we know on this album is Richard Gajate on percussion, apart from some session musicians who were on the "Our Day Will Come" album. This one is closer in feel to that LP than to "Valli". More straightforward. less symphonic. but still very, very good.