

# OH, WHAT A LIFE!

Now 80, with three marriages and even more hit records behind him, Frankie Valli's remarkable life is the subject of Clint Eastwood's new film *Jersey Boys*

By Neil Clark

**H**E WAS the trainee hairdresser who proved to be a cut above the rest. The man born Francesco Castelluccio to working-class Italian parents in Newark, New Jersey, 80 years ago, found fame and fortune not as a hairdresser but as one of the most successful singers in the history of popular music.

Castelluccio changed his name to Frankie Valli and he and his group The Four Seasons went on to sell more than 100 million records. A new film *Jersey Boys*, based on the West End musical of the same name, opens today and tells the remarkable rags-to-riches story of Valli and his friends.

The man whose powerful high-pitched voice was highlighted to such great effect on classic hits such as *Walk Like A Man*, *Sherry* and *Big Girls Don't Cry* has had to show enormous determination to get to the top and stay there. He has overcome problems with his hearing, family tragedies and marriage breakdowns.

He has also been the subject of negative publicity. Only this week ex-lover April Kirkwood called him "disgusting, rude and callous". Kirkwood was a fan of Valli and after she met him backstage when she was 16 and Valli was 39 the pair began a relationship. Kirkwood says Valli seduced her in his hotel room. On another occasion he told her not to have sex with anyone else.

"I thought we were going to be married,"



Pictures: REX, REDFERNS, KOBAL

she says. Kirkwood has written a book about her relationship with Valli which is due to be published in August and while her allegations might harm his reputation, it's doubtful the singer will be too concerned bearing in mind the difficulties he has already faced.

The first of those was escaping the poverty in which he grew up. "There wasn't any heat or hot water. Heat came from the kitchen stove that ran all day on coal and if you needed hot water to wash, a huge kettle was put on," he revealed in a recent interview. His parents moved into a public housing estate when he was six and although the new apartment had better facilities he still had to share a bedroom with his two brothers.

North Ward in Newark was a tough environment and it wasn't hard for young people to get involved in criminal gangs. Many of Valli's friends, including Tommy DeVito and Nick Massi, who became founder members of The Four Seasons, spent time in jail. Valli himself was arrested for breaking and entering. "There were no opportunities and entering... There were no opportunities to go to college so you didn't have many options. You got a job on an assembly line or you got mobbed up," he said in 2008.

**A**LLI set his heart on being a singer at seven when his mother took him to a Frank Sinatra concert. "It made the deepest impression. Right then and there I recalled this was what I wanted to do," he recalled. It wasn't easy to get his career off the ground. He sang in nightclubs run by the Mafia but says he never signed up. After high school he worked as a maintenance man, construction worker, florist and learned hand dressing, his father's profession. At 20 he married his first wife Mary Mandel who already had a baby daughter. "Times were hard but his musical career really took off when his friend Joe Pesci, who later found fame as a tough-guy Hollywood actor, introduced him to songwriter Bob Gaudio. Valli and Gaudio decided to share their future earnings and the deal was sealed with a handshake. "We didn't know about giving



**ON SONG:** Frankie, right, is still performing professionally just as he did with the Four Seasons in the 1960s, top. Above, with director Clint Eastwood on the set of the film



lawyers contracts," Valli said. "You gave your word to somebody and that was good enough." The Four Seasons were originally called The Four Lovers but they got their new name from the bowling alley where they had failed an audition.

In 1962 they took the music world by storm, registering three number ones in the US. Valli had made it at last. But while things were looking good on the music front his personal life was in crisis.

He and wife Mary, who had two daughters Toni and Franche, divorced after 13 years together. Professionally there were problems too as in 1967 Valli found out that he had osteoarthritis - a hardening of the bone in the middle of his ear which meant that he couldn't hear himself sing when he went on stage. It was an anxious time but after an operation the problem was rectified.

In the 1970s the hits kept coming and in 1978 came his first British number one with December '63 (Oh What A Night). Then personal tragedy struck. In the space of six months in 1980 he lost both his stepdaughter Celia and his youngest daughter Franche.

The former died in an accident, the latter from a drugs overdose. "It's not something you ever get over. It's just not supposed to be that way," he said many years later.

Although Valli would marry twice more, both would end in failure. After eight years with second wife MaryAnn Hannagan he married Randy Clohessy, 26 years his junior, in 1984. The couple had three sons but separated in 2004 amid fierce legal battles which were continuing up until last month. One point of contention was the fact that The Four Seasons frontman had taken out a life insurance policy in 2003, months before he separated from his wife, and she was listed as the owner of the policy as well as beneficiary in the event of his death.

But in May a judge ruled that the singer was entitled to half of the value of the £2.4million insurance policy. It has also been claimed that Randy was seeking increased payments from Valli to take into account earnings from the Jersey Boys musical.

Valli admits that his focus on his career might not have helped his marriages. "Success requires your work must come first," he

once said. Now his former mistress has come forward to tell her story. "I loved Frankie Valli but I don't think he ever realised what love was," April Kirkwood says. She claims that one night after having sex with her in a five-star hotel room Valli casually informed her he was marrying his girlfriend.

"I was abused. He took advantage of a good thing. A young virgin who loved him and he was an opportunist," Kirkwood claims that Valli is a "diva" and paints an unattractive picture of the star yet even she admits that she still regards him as a "god". Others talk of a man who despite his success is down-to-earth and a kind and loving father. Valli has never forgotten his roots. "I'll have you know that I am an Italian-American and I'm proud of it," he says.

It's been a long, tough road for the Jersey Boy yet in a 2010 interview he said he had no regrets. "I couldn't be prouder of all that I have done. I wouldn't change a thing even if I could."

**SEE OUR FILM REVIEW OF JERSEY BOYS ON PAGE 39**

**Out Soon**

**Jersey Boys [DVD]**

Christopher Moltisanti/Actor, Primary Contributor), & 2 more  
To Be Announced | Format: DVD

5 customer reviews

Rated:

Price: £13.00 & FREE Delivery in the UK. Details  
Pre-order Price Guarantee. Learn more.

This title has not yet been released

As I posted before this was totals at the beginning of August. Basically it has stopped playing in the US.

So in two weeks of overseas viewing things are not going up much. But with a Production Budget of about \$40

**Total Lifetime Grosses as of 31 July 2014**

**Domestic:** \$45,937,765 79.0%  
**+ Foreign:** \$12,200,000 21.0%

**= Worldwide: \$58,137,765**

**Total Lifetime Grosses as of August 14th**

million, it at least has paid it's cost  
back and made the Partnership  
a little money.

**Domestic:** \$46,560,008 79.2%  
**+ Foreign:** \$12,200,000 20.8%

**= Worldwide: \$58,760,008**

Sales Figures for the Jersey Boys Movie Up to August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Supplied by our USA Fan Paul Urhahns from Kentucky

## BEST SELLERS ON AMAZON

Philip Elms on 24 July told us: "I just checked Amazon's Teen Pop Top 100 sales rankings. Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons currently occupy #1, #2, #3 and #16 (Very Best Of, Greatest Hits Vol 1, Definitive Pop Collection and Jersey's Best. Amazing"! The Rhino compilation Working My Way Back To You notched up a 33rd appearance in the UK Top 200 album chart for Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons up seven places to #91. Current sales are no doubt a reaction to the movie, Jersey Boys. The Jersey's Best compilation spent two weeks at #1 in New Zealand a couple of years ago".

Paul Urbahns (Radcliff, Ky) added that Amazon has numerous Best Seller charts (updated hourly) based on category. The different categories have different albums that compete, but the Four Seasons releases show up on the following charts:

### SOUNDTRACK Category:

#2 Jersey Boys Soundtrack [Bracketed on both sides #1 and #3 by two different editions of the Frozen soundtrack]

#13 Jersey Boys Broadway Cast [2005 release]

### Focusing on just MUSICALS - Soundtracks & Scores

#1 Jersey Boys Soundtrack

#8 Jersey Boys Broadway Cast

### Best Sellers in TEEN POP:

#1 Very Best of The Four Seasons

#2 Four Seasons Greatest Hits Vol 1

#3 Four Seasons - Definitive Pop Collection

#8 Four Seasons - Jerseys Best

### Best Sellers in POP OLDIES:

#1 Very best of Four Seasons

#5 Four Seasons Greatest Hits Vol 1

#7 Four Seasons Definitive Pop Collection

#10 Four Seasons Greatest Hits Vol 2



Charles Alexander (NY) adds: "In the new Billboard 200 album chart out today, 4 July, the Jersey Boys soundtrack debuts at No. 15 and the Very Best of FV4S moves up from No. 41 to No. 35. Let's look at the recent performance of "Very Best" in a historical perspective. To find another Frankie Valli album that high on the chart you have to go all the way back to 1967 and his first Frankie Valli Solo album, which peaked at No. 34. Very Best has now exceeded the Who Loves You album, which peaked at No. 38, Edizione D'Oro (No. 37) and New Gold Hits (No. 37). To find an album higher than Very Best's current position, you have to go back to 1966 and the 2nd Vault of Golden Hits, which hit No. 22. And if you count the Jersey Boys soundtrack as a FV4S album (and it does contain quite a few FV4S original recordings), to find an album higher than JB soundtrack's current position, you have to go back to 1965 and the Gold Vault of Hits, which reached No. 10. The all-time FV4S top albums, by the way, are the Sherry and Dawn albums, which both hit No. 6. Rag Doll is third at No. 7".





## NEWEST VALLI, SEASONS, JERSEY BOYS AND BOB GAUDIO CD ALBUM RELEASES

### *Selected Solo Works (Box Set) – Frankie Valli USA Rhino R2-542581 (Released 01/07/14)*

This 8 x Frankie Valli albums boxed set comprises all tracks on selected Philips, Private Stock, Curb and MCA albums: Solo (1967)/Timeless (1968)/Close Up (1975)/Our Day Will Come (1975)/Valli (1976)/Lady Put The Light Out (1977)/Valli is the Word (1978) and Heaven Above Me (1980).

### *Classic Albums Box (Box Set) – Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons USA Rhino R2-542582 (01/07/14)*

This 18 x 4 Season's album boxed set features all tracks on selected albums from Vee-Jay, Philips, Curb and MCA: Sherry & 11 Others (1962)/Big Girls Don't Cry and 12 Others (1963)/Ain't That a Shame and 11 Others (1963)/Folk-Nanny (1964)/On Stage with the Four Seasons (1965)/Dawn (Go Away) and 11 Other Great Songs(1964)/Born to Wander (1964)/Rag Doll (1964)/Entertain You (1965)/Sing Big Hits by Bacharach, David and Dylan (1965)/Working My way Back To You (1966)/New Gold Hits (1967)/Genuine Imitation Life Gazette (1969)/Half & Half (1970)/Who Loves You (1975)/Helicon (1977)/Streetfighter (1985) and Hope & Glory (1992).



### *Jersey Boys Music From the Motion Picture and Broadway Musical US Rhino R2-544039 (24/06/14)*

Tracks from the movie similar to the stage show but does show variations In some cases, Valli and the 4 Seasons sing original tracks and in other instances their vocals phase in with the Jersey Boys! Whatever happened to "Rag Doll" I wonder!

Prelude

December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)\* – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons

My Mother's Eyes\* – Frankie Valli

I Can't Give You Anything But Love\* – John Lloyd Young

A Sunday Kind Of Love\* – John Lloyd Young, Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons

Moody's Mood For Love\* – John Lloyd Young

Cry For Me\* – Erich Bergen

Sherry\* – John Lloyd Young

Big Girls Don't Cry\* – John Lloyd Young

"Walk Like A Man" – John Lloyd Young

"My Boyfriend's Back" – Kyll Rae

"My Eyes Adored You" – John Lloyd Young

"Dawn (Go Away)" – John Lloyd Young

"Big Man In Town" – John Lloyd Young

"Beggin" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, John Lloyd Young, Ryan Malloy

Medley – John Lloyd Young

Stay\*

Let's Hang On (To What We've Got)\*

Opus 17 (Don't You Worry 'Bout Me)\*

Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby, Goodbye)\*

"C'mon Marianne" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, John Lloyd Young

"Can't Take My Eyes Off You" – John Lloyd Young

"Working My Way Back To You" – John Lloyd Young

"Fallen Angel" – Frankie Valli

"Who Loves You" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, John Lloyd Young

Closing Credits: "Sherry"/"December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)" – John Lloyd Young, Erich Bergen, Mich

"Sherry" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons

"Dawn (Go Away)" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons

"Rag Doll" – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons

### *Audio With a G: Sounds of a Jersey Boy, the Music of Bob Gaudio US Rhino R2-543966 (01/07/14)*

A selection of interesting songs written/co-written by Gaudio for the 4 Seasons and other well known artists.

#### **Disc: 1**

1. SHORT SHORTS Royal Teens
2. SHERRY Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
3. BIG GIRLS DON T CRY Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
4. WALK LIKE A MAN Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
5. WHATEVER YOU WANT Jerry Butler
6. ANOTHER DAY Chuck Jackson
7. DAWN (GO AWAY) Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
8. RAG DOLL Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
9. BYE, BYE, BABY (BABY, GOODBYE) Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
10. BYE, BYE, BABY (BABY, GOODBYE) Bay City Rollers

11. SILENCE IS GOLDEN The Tremeloes
12. THE SUN AIN T GONNA SHINE (ANYMORE) The Walker Brothers
13. THE SUN AIN T GONNA SHINE (ANYMORE) Cher
14. CAN T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU Frankie Valli
15. CAN T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU Nancy Wilson
16. SATURDAY S FATHER Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
17. WALL STREET VILLAGE DAY Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
18. ELIZABETH Frank Sinatra
19. I WOULD BE IN LOVE (ANYWAY) Frank Sinatra
20. FOR A WHILE Nina Simone

Disc: 2

1. THE NIGHT Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
2. I HEARD A LOVE SONG (BUT YOU NEVER MADE A SOUND) Diana Ross
3. STONE LIBERTY Diana Ross
4. DEEPER THAN LOVE The Temptations
5. WHO LOVES YOU Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
6. DECEMBER, 1963 (OH, WHAT A NIGHT) Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
7. DOWN THE HALL Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
8. THE NIGHT Lene Lovich

9. CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU Boys Town Gang
10. BEGGIN (Piliboski Re-Edit) Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
11. WHEN SOMEONE TEARS YOUR HEART IN TWO Roberta Flack
12. THIS TIME AROUND Ruthie Henshall
13. TWO KINDS OF FIRE Ruthie Henshall & Tim Howar
14. CES SOIRÉES-LA Jersey Boys Original Broadway Cast
15. SHERRY Jersey Boys Original Broadway Cast
16. WHO LOVES YOU Jersey Boys Original Broadway Cast

**Frankie and the Four Seasons Karaoke CD Songlist October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007**



1. Working My Way Back To You - The Four Seasons
2. Dawn (Go Away) - The Four Seasons
3. Big Girls Don't Cry - The Four Seasons
4. Sherry - The Four Seasons
5. Walk Like A Man - The Four Seasons
6. Candy Girl - The Four Seasons
7. Save It For Me - The Four Seasons
8. Bye, Bye Baby (Baby Goodbye) - The Four Seasons
9. Don't Think Twice - The Four Seasons
10. Big Man In Town - The Four Seasons
11. Lets Hang On - The Four Seasons
12. Rag Doll - The Four Seasons
13. Ronnie - The Four Seasons
14. Swearin' To God - Frankie Valli
15. Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You - Frankie Valli
16. My Eyes Adored You - Frankie Valli
17. Grease - Frankie Valli

**The True Story of the Jersey Boys: The Story Behind Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons (Paperback) Book Documenting**



the true Jersey Boys. All about the life story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform: 13/05/14 U.K. 92 pages.

**USA Article From Garden State Arts Centre Program, Holmdel, New Jersey, September, 1978**

**Frankie Valli**

Frankie Valli is a man whose accomplishments in music make him one of the most outstanding members of the industry. He has enjoyed over 14 years of success with The Four Seasons, and also managed to establish himself as a popular solo artist.

Frankie Castellucio was born in Newark, N.J., in a poor neighborhood in which street gangs and fights were commonplace. He was determined to succeed as a singer and is proud of the years he spent struggling for his just recognition. Much of the enjoyment of his success stems from the fact that he knows how much work went into building his career.

At first, Frankie appeared locally at cocktail lounges and night clubs. A performer long before he became a recording artist, Frankie credits his popularity in part to the fact that he learned early in his career that one of the most important aspects of being a singer is to entertain your audience.

Late in the 1950's Frankie recorded his first solo record, "My Mother's Eyes." The single enjoyed local success but did not move on to national best-selling charts.

In the early 1960's, Valli's solo efforts were temporarily put aside and he became known primarily as the The Four Seasons' lead singer on such hits as "Sherry," "Dawn" and "Rag Doll."

Although he enjoyed his work with the group, Frankie still wanted to pursue his solo career. In the mid-60's he recorded "You're Going To Hurt Yourself" and had his first national hit as a solo artist. That success was followed with "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You," "To Give," "I Make A Fool of Myself" and "The Girl I'll Never Know." Every song hit the

charts and Frankie enjoyed double success as The Four Seasons' lead singer and as a solo recording artist.

Although Frankie did not have chart successes in the United States for a few years, his appeal as a solo artist continued to grow. In 1971, a song Frankie had recorded in the mid-1960's, "You're Ready

Now," hit the charts in Britain and Frankie was presented with a rhythm and blues award in England for his single.

In the early 1970's, Frankie signed with Motown. He recorded the single, "My Eyes Adored You," for the label but they never released the song.

When Valli signed with Private Stock, his first release on that label was "My Eyes Adored You." The song was an immediate success and certified gold by the RIAA. He followed that hit with another, "Swearin' To God." Valli's solo album releases on Private Stock include "Gold," "Our Day Will Come" and "Closeup."

In concert, Frankie performs alone as well as with The Four Seasons. Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons are now firmly established as two separate but closely related entities.

A man who loves working, Frankie believes that few people can succeed alone. He gives credit to his wife, Mary Ann, who helps select much of his material, and to songwriter, Bob Guadio, his partner.

Although he has already spent 14 years fulfilling a difficult and demanding schedule, Frankie Valli's current commitments are greater than ever. He works with The Four Seasons on their records,

he records material for his own albums and he keeps up with an active performing schedule. Frankie Valli has no intention of slowing his pace and judging from his

past, he will continue to be a leading figure in the music industry for a long time to come.

