



**Las Vegas Article from October 1978 when Valli and the Seasons Played the Aladdin Showroom.**

**Valli's in Top Form At Aladdin Showroom**

Frankie Valli is nothing short of fabulous. A dynamo of musical energy, this lyrical paragon who weaves excitement into each and every song is in for an exclusive one-week engagement at The Aladdin's Bagdad Showroom. Riding high again with yet another Top 10 hit, Barry Gibb's penned movie title song "Grease," the power-packed singer is knocking 'em dead.

BACKED by his new six-man rhythm band, led superbly by Musical Conductor and keyboard artist Lo Shapiro, Valli has regained a higher energy level, if possible, from past "live" performances. And, his two-girl, one-guy vocal accompaniment of Krystal Davis, Jean Graham and Jim Zimmerman is an integral ingredient to the new visual-sound image projected.

It's a mini-concert format jammed into an hour-short, 12-song set beginning with that disco-pop film theme. The funky style continues with rocker "You Can Do It," a re-emphasis of Valli's new directions and goals.

Even old hit "Our Day Will Come" is diverted into that funky-disco execution, enlivening Valli's infectious delivery and stage presence. His first big solo hit, pop-oriented ballad "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You," made popular in 1967, continues the upbeat effort featuring great bass sounds from Harvey Auger.

Reaching back to yet another Bob Gaudio — Bob Crewe 1975 hit, "Who Loves You?", again showcases Valli's unique falsetto Tenor voice. More recent hit sound, disco tune "Native New Yorker," brings us back again to the present music scene in a subtle manner.

A HIT MEDLEY, which includes such familiar tunes as "World's My Way," "Stay" and "Let's Hang On" finds Valli center stage enhanced by backup singers Davis, Graham and Zimmerman stage right clad in letter jackets with Valli's initials embroidered on them. Their actions and contributions expand the overall impact.

New song, harmonic disco effort "Needing You" again spotlights Valli's untapped appeal of today's sounds, hopefully captured on his forthcoming new album due out in about a week and a half. A love song medley is next, with such tip-of-the-tongue songs as "Sherry," "Walk Like A Man," "Big Girls Don't Cry" and "Bye Bye Baby."

And then dawn on you, as you sing along, that Frankie Valli has never really been away, with his indelible imprint of selling some 86-million plus records in his popular career as an entertainer.

Long respected and admired in the northeast, his market value and acceptance no doubt will grow now with the success of "Grease." But, proving justice does exist despite that less-than-critically acclaimed movie, Valli's back on top where he should be.

A TERNITIC quiet ballad, "Without Your Love," has all the earmarks of yet another million seller despite as does slow disco effort "Sometimes Love Makes Me Cry" again featuring a great sax solo by Jerry Viviano. The 1974 hit "Sweetest To Get" keeps alive the show's finish followed by a rickety reprise of "Grease."



**Review by James Hamilton UK Record Mirror January, 31<sup>st</sup> 1981**

**FRANKIE VALLI: 'Soul' (MCA MCAT 645).** 'Instant Replay'-style fiercely rattling and pounding 129bpm 12in pop-disco blaster would have been eagerly snapped up in '78 and could be welcomed by Wallys now.

**Manchester, UK City Life No. 75 10/07/14 — Jersey Boys movie Review**

**JERSEY BOYS (15)**

PITCHED halfway between a traditional musical and a gritty portrait of the bonds of brotherhood in New York City of the era, Clint Eastwood's impeccably crafted period piece entertains but never truly delights. Sixteen-year-old Frankie Castelluccio (John Lloyd Young) lives with his parents (Kathrine Narducci, Lou Volpe), who urge him to stay out of trouble. Best friend Tommy DeVito (Vincent Piazza) leads him astray and Frankie almost ends up in prison but escapes incarceration by virtue of his age. With encouragement from local mob boss Gyp DeCarlo (Christopher Walken), who becomes Frankie's fairy godfather (with the emphasis on godfather), the teenager pursues his musical ambitions by changing his surname to Valli and joining Tommy's band. They recruit singer-songwriter Bob Gaudio (Erich Bergen) alongside bassist Nick Massi (Michael Lomenda) and The Four Seasons are born. Talented lyricist Bob Crewe (Mike Doyle) ushers the boys onto the stardom but Tommy's mounting debts create friction and threaten to tear the band apart.

**UK Melody Maker Magazine by Simon Frith 30/09/78**

**FRANKIE VALLI: "Frankie Valli Is The Word" (Warner Bros K56549)**

THE Bee Gees were quite right to get Frankie Valli to sing "Grease," the promo single for Stigwood's latest multi-media package, though not because Valli is an old groaner who's been around since the mid-Fifties. That's not the point of the single at all. "Grease" has no hint of Fifties teenagers or rock 'n' roll and I have no idea what it's got to do with the movie except that it's given Valli a nice summer

salary and he deserves it — it was he who pioneered the Seventies pop path that the Bee Gees subsequently trod.

Frankie Valli (along with Paul Anka) put a drum machine and electric piano behind falsetto harmonies, adolescent melodrama and male self-pity and the result, eventually, was Bee Gee music, though Valli and Bob Gaudio (producer/writer/fellow Four Season) were making great disco singles ("Let's Hang On," "You're Ready Now") when the Bee Gees were still warbling ballads in the bath.

Mind you, Frankie Valli doesn't do disco nearly as well as the Bee Gees. He hasn't got as good songs: the Bee Gees are the masters of the disco hook and "Grease" is the only instant tune on Valli's album. He hasn't got as good ideas: the Bee Gees set off their nasal whine against a military two-step to give their gloom a satisfying strut. Valli's self-pity, in contrast, is never not taken seriously: he is as sincere as you'd expect from an ageing Italian. He's preferable to the others like him — less pretentious than Neil Diamond or Billy Joel, less soppy than Barry Manilow, less camp than Neil Sedaka. But Valli's music, this album, is Las Vegas disco all the same.

The Four Seasons began their career by adapting r&b group sounds for the white pop market and the results were lively and funny. Valli is still borrowing from black music, but smoothly now. He makes music for expensive dining: modern, of course, but nothing lively enough to spill the wine or curdle the *creme brulee*. I don't blame him at all. In ten years' time Frankie Valli will be making whatever is then the right music for us to dance to and if this limp album is what we're getting now it must be what we want. **★★★**

By Henry  
Fitzherbert



Jersey Boys Movie Review Article from The Daily Express Sunday June 22nd, 2014

Review

# Beginning and the end of the Seasons

**W**HO KNEW there was so much dissent, struggle and headache behind a bunch of cheery pop tunes?

That's the incongruous fascination of *Jersey Boys*, a tub-thumping musical, adapted from the hit stage show about the transformation of four scrappy boys from New Jersey into chart-topping pin-ups *The Four Seasons*.

Directed by Clint Eastwood, the picture is a rambunctious celebration of their hard fought, and hard fought over, success and a clear-eyed examination of the price they paid for success: epic bust-ups, betrayals, financial disaster and family tragedy.

Not a trace of such disharmony found its way into their upbeat songs like Sherry, Big Girls Don't Cry and Bye Bye Baby but then they were penned by the most well balanced of the group, Bob Gaudio (Erich Bergen), a fresh-faced youngster from a more stable, straight-arrow background.

The others were products of the Mob-influenced streets of Jersey and might have ended up "dead or in jail" were it not for their musical ambitions, to quote the concerned mother of the young Frankie Valli, the group's famously falsetto-voiced lead singer. Lively early scenes show Valli, then 16, brushing up against the law under the influence of combustible pal Tommy DeVito, the group's founder, while fourth future band member Nick Massi

actually spends time in the clink for some petty crime. How to make something of themselves?"

As Valli tells us (in a device lifted successfully from the stage show the characters confide in the audience directly) the only options were "the army, the Mob or get famous".

Valli's extraordinary voice is their ticket out of town but hard graft, persistence, luck, chance encounters, teamwork and encouragement in unlikely quarters all prove crucial.

The picture's early stages are a little slow as we follow their efforts to establish themselves but they are an engaging, humorous team of underdogs whose pluck, determination and self-belief are admirable, especially in a community where singing was not considered the most manly of pursuits.

Amusingly they have an unlikely champion in the local Mob boss, played with twinkly eyed charm by Christopher Walken (the only famous face in the cast). "The world's got to hear your voice," he tells Valli.

More fairy godmother than Godfather he is reduced to tears by Valli's singing and provides crucial support, notably when DeVito's troubles catch up with him and threaten to bring them all down at the peak of their fame.

It's one thing getting out of Jersey but can the "Jersey Boys" shake Jersey out of themselves? That's the question at the heart of the picture and it is



**VALLI BOYS:** Young, Bergon, Piazza and Lomeda are the Jersey Boys in this tale of the 1960s band's rise and dramatic fall as they tried to escape from their violent, Mob-based upbringing

when it comes into focus after the group hit the big time that the story really starts to absorb, played out principally in the relationship between Valli and the wayward DeVito.

**I**KE many a tragedy the seeds of their success contain the seeds of their downfall and Eastwood stages some gripping confrontations, well served by the largely unknown cast. Instead of going for star names Eastwood has stuck with three of the stage show's performers: John Lloyd Young, who makes for an intense, furiously driven Valli, Michael

Lomeda as the gootily endearing Nick and the brilliant Erich Bergen as Bob, a beguiling combination of innocent chump and shrewd business operator.

However, it is charismatic newcomer Vincent Piazza who in many ways makes the biggest impression as DeVito, fizzing with energy, indignation and his own self-destructive impulses.

The group's manager, he refuses to relinquish control and is indulged by the others, especially the loyal Valli, with devastating consequences.

There's a lovely performance too from Mike Doyle as bouncy record producer Bob Crewe, who launches them, a man constantly delighted by his own brilliance. "I'm a genius!" he

chirrup after his eureka moment – the decision to "double" Valli's voice, making it sound even more distinctive.

It is Valli's story and it is hard to warm to the man as his family suffer, but that's a measure of Eastwood's even-handed approach.

He celebrates the group's talents while exposing their flaws, all the while revelling in their music.

The result is a buoyant, entertaining picture, albeit overlong at 134 minutes, that leaves you pondering, what price immortality?



*From singing on streetcorners to filling Madison Square Garden, Frankie Valli hasn't really changed...*

## **"You've Only Got To Look At Me To Know My Background!"**

By Anita Summer

In the hope that someone would discover him and make him a star, Frankie Valli did what so many other poor kids in poor neighborhoods did before him—at 13, he started by singing on street corners in Newark, New Jersey. The difference was he didn't do it for hand-outs. Along with the song on his lips there was a prayer in his heart that on the opposite street corner a Very Important Talent Scout would be watching and listening.

Frankie Valli's success didn't come about that way, of course. His was no modern boy-Cinderella fable. No fairy godmother waved her wand and made him famous. His was the more familiar "I-did-it-all-myself-the-hard-way" story.

"Mom and Dad knew what I was doing, and they didn't object as long as I stayed out of trouble and followed the iron rule of my father's house—to get in at ten o'clock during the week and at midnight on weekends," said Frankie, who sang for the amusement of passersby and for experience. If anyone tossed him coins, he accepted them, but he never begged. His main income as a teenager stemmed from working in a bowling alley as a pin-setter. His par-

ents decided he could keep what he earned, so Frankie used that money for necessities, not luxuries.

Frankie didn't have too long to wait for his first meaningful break. "When I was about 16, someone in the business heard me sing, thought I had a spark of talent, took me to New York, introduced me to the music world—and I signed my first recording contract." But that contract didn't produce instant success; all Frankie learned from that was how to sign a contract. His next step was to become deeply involved with every aspect of music. He formed groups and dissolved them. He sang locally, worked with music publishers and did background vocals at recording sessions. "I covered just about every facet of the business as I could, except for writing. I never got involved with that because I didn't have the time."

Valli claims he had his first real taste of success in 1956. That's when he was recording as a soloist for RCA and had two chart records. He did "The Ed Sullivan Show," which gave him professional status and personal confidence, and this activity generated a flurry of publicity. Valli rode on the momentum of all that for a couple of years, all the while continuing to struggle,

make demos, work and sing wherever and whatever he could until 1962, when he got his second—and more permanent—break.

Meanwhile, Mary and Anthony Castelluccio (Frankie's parents) watched their son sweat it out and sadly shook their heads. "Dad always wanted me to get a real job. Anything that would offer chances of progress and security, yet further my education at the same time," recalled Frankie, whose manager had suggested he change his name to Valli because Castelluccio wasn't catchy enough. "I was young, impressionable and ill-advised, so I agreed. No way would I do that today. My manager thought Valli slid off the tongue easily, with a musical sound, yet still retaining my Italian identity. I don't know why he was so concerned about the ethnic bit," added Frankie. "You've only to glance at me to know my background."

Frankie's parents weren't more vociferous in their desire for him to take up a "respectable" trade because Mr. Castelluccio knew perfectly well what it was like to slog away at something one despised. "Dad had two jobs which he hated—barbering and working in a factory. He never regarded making music as a means of making a living. 'It's no kind of life,' he'd remind me time and time again. 'All that those crazy people do is run around from one hotel to another and smoke funny cigarettes.' Throughout my entire 'struggling' period, Dad always hinted I should give it up and go back to school. The only family support I got was from an uncle, who understood me. He was a definite plus in my life."

As he looks back over all that has happened to him since he first took up his position on that street corner, other than lament about abandoning his family name, Valli has no real regrets. "I've been extremely fortunate, for the simple reason I had a crack at success twice—in 1956, and then again in 1962 with the Four Seasons."

Fashioned by Valli and Bob Gaudio, his friend and partner to this day, the group described themselves as "four guys from the poor side of town, trying to make it big in showbusiness as the Four Seasons." Lee Shapiro (arranger and keyboard player), Don Ciccone (baritone-guitarist), Gerry Polci (tenor-percussionist), and Joe Long (bass singer and bass player) make up the team who still retain the distinctive Four Seasons "sound" during changes in personnel. "Sherry" was the group's

first big hit record, and the Four Seasons continued with such evergreens as "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Walk Like A Man," "Dawn," "Rag Doll," "Let's Hang On," "Ronnie," "Working My Way Back to You," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Candy Girl," "C'mon Marianne" and many, many more.

Whether nostalgia is responsible for their continuing success cannot be determined, but what cannot be disputed is that three-and-a-half-octave vocal range that Frankie Valli is gifted with. He has re-emerged as a top figure on the record scene, although he and the Four Seasons haven't been too active making discs for the past few years. The group has been busy as road entertainers. Their concerts and club appearances always wind up as SROs. Frankie's bookings—with and without the Four Seasons—up to July created box-office business in excess of \$2 million. (In nine sell-out performances at New York's Madison Square Garden, receipts totaled \$1.2 million.)

"I'm not making a comeback," Frankie insists in surprise, "because I've never been away. I've always been around." In spite of the fact that he's been occupied with personal appearances in recent years, this recording phenomenon has sold 80 million discs on his own and as the lead singer with the Four Seasons. His latest hits are "My Eyes Adored You," that zoomed to No. 1 a few months ago, and "Swearin' To God," which is getting up there, too. These are doubtless the main reasons for a recent mail-order sale of almost half a million of a four-record Frankie Valli album set, selling at \$9.98.

Frankie, however, is not content to sit on his hands and look back over his shoulder with smug content. "Reminiscing and basking in past achievements is not the answer. Looking ahead and trying to make new gains in life is what it's all about. What I want to do is try other facets of the business."

Frankie, who admits only to having been born "a long time ago," was raised in strict Italian fashion in Newark, where he went to elementary and high school. "It was a completely different way of life then, when all kids lived and behaved the way their folks wanted them to. Today there's a lack of respect for elders, which never happened when I was a kid."

He stated, with pride, that although he is divorced from his first wife, the mother of his two daughters, his girls are being brought up in a way that does not conflict with his old-fashioned ideas. His one hope is that Antonia, 17, and Francine, 15, will complete their educations before they decide on careers. "If they do pick on showbusiness, I'd want them to finish school first—the way I desperately wanted to, but couldn't."

Valli, who married very young, divorced Mary 13 years later. "A very important part of marriage is that two people who plan to spend the rest of their lives together must grow together. We grew apart. It's probably happened to thousands of people when they find that what starts off as a small gap between them grows into a chasm. Mary and I separated for a year before the divorce came through. It was during that year that I met Mary Ann Hannagan. We were married June 29, 1974—two years after my divorce."

Mary Ann's husband describes her as "a very exuberant person, with a lot of energy and an incredible head on her shoulders. We communicate beautifully. She's very bright and a major force in my new success. She's always around when I need her and when it's important. She gave up her modeling career because she insists on traveling with me. She's involved in every phase of my business, has fantastic insight, and I never make any decisions without discussing matters with her first." The Vallis live in an apartment in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Valli relishes his home and his private life. "I'm not a socializer. I like privacy. I like being alone or with my wife and girls. Hollywood and all it has to offer never attracted me. I'm not turned on by the bright lights. If I have any spare time, I spend it outdoors playing tennis or indoors helping Mary Ann."

He confessed that he's not always as amiable, polite and kind as he seems: "There's another side of me, which comes out under adverse conditions. I have a temper. I can scream and yell and it's easy to see that I haven't changed much from that kid from a rough neighborhood—except grow up. That's where my roots are."

Although he's unhappy about the way some areas of entertainment have changed, Valli says, "Audiences are just the same. That is, they will like you if you give a good performance, whether it was in the early days of Sinatra—when the kids screamed and fainted in the aisles—or now with Tom Jones, Bob Dylan and the Beatles. They're exactly alike. The only difference is the hair and the clothes. There's always a new generation of kids looking for a new idol—and they'll always find one."

"Why? Because music is the best means of communication. Musical groups can travel all over the world and be understood. There's no language barrier. You don't get those results with a theatrical troupe—that's when help is needed; the help of an interpreter. Music doesn't require interpretation. Its language is universal." □

## FRANKIE'S TRAGEDY

It must be hard to be a singer who's slowly going deaf, especially for someone as talented and successful as Frankie Valli. But Frankie is soldiering on bravely.

"When I first heard the bad news," Frankie admitted, "I thought it was the end of the world and I just didn't want to go on living."

But I carried on and back to my left



ear is OK now, though my right ear isn't yet. But there's still hope for the future.

"Of course it's been difficult being in the job I'm in. I have to have my headphones turned up so loud, that people can't believe I can listen to things at that volume. But to me it still seems soft."

"And whenever we play a tape back everybody else has to leave the studio because of how loud it is! It does have its advantages though. If I hear something I don't want to hear I can just ignore it and pretend I couldn't quite catch what was being said!"

Poor Frankie! But it hasn't lessened the quality of his records, has it?

# GREASE

Words and Music by BARRY GIBB

Sheet Music  
USA

Recorded by FRANKIE VALLI on RSO Records

## **Frankie Valli Remembers Home – From the Wall Street Journal**

The Four Seasons singer looks back at his childhood apartment in a Newark, N.J., housing project, and why he stayed just a little bit longer

Frankie Valli has been recording since 1953, when he was discovered by a country singer. In 1960, he and his friends formed the famous group, named for a local bowling alley. Brad Trent for The Wall Street Journal

*Frankie Valli, 80, lives in New York and Los Angeles. His appearance with the Four Seasons on July 4 in Washington, D.C., will be televised live on PBS's "A Capitol Fourth." The movie adaptation of the Broadway show "Jersey Boys," directed by Clint Eastwood, opens Friday. He spoke with reporter Marc Myers.*

If I close my eyes, I can remember the first apartment where I lived with my family in Newark, N.J., in the late 1930s. The rooms were lined up like train cars—you had to go through one to get to another—and 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 for a bath or to wash, a huge kettle was put up. Fortunately, when I was 6, my family moved to Stephen Crane Village, Newark's first low-income housing project. I thought we were rich.

We were among the first families in 1940 to be accepted into Stephen Crane. The apartment project wasn't anything like the anonymous building complexes that would follow in the '50s. The buildings at Stephen Crane were long, two-story structures that held several apartments. Each unit was self-contained, like a garden apartment. We had an entrance in the front and one in the back, where the kitchen was. In the front, you entered into the living room, and upstairs were two bedrooms—one for my parents and one for the three of us. By then I had two younger brothers. I slept on a twin bed while my brothers shared the full. There was only one bathroom, but the apartment had real hardwood floors, steam heat, and hot and cold running water. I couldn't believe it.



Right across South Franklin Avenue was Branch Brook Park. It had lawns and baseball fields, like the suburbs I saw in magazine ads. My dad, Anthony, was happy, too. He had been a barber, but by the 1940s he was working for Lionel Trains. He started as an assembly-line worker in their plant in Hillside, N.J., but he soon became responsible for designing model-train displays in store windows. He was a creative guy. My mom, Mary, was remarkable. There wasn't any Italian dish she couldn't tackle on that small stove. She was the second of nine children and had come to this country from Italy with her parents. She was taken out of school early and taught to be a mom, which meant cooking and housekeeping. When I was older, I could go to her apartment at 3 a.m. after gigs with friends, and in 10 minutes she'd set a table with food as if it had been waiting for us. She knew how to stretch a buck.

*The singer at the Stephen Crane Village apartment project in Newark, N.J., on Easter Sunday 1961 with his three daughters, from left, Celia, Francine and Toni Valli.*

When I was a kid, I used to listen to my Emerson radio late at night under the covers. I started by listening to jazz in the late 1940s and then vocal harmony groups like the Four Freshmen, the Modernaires and the Hi-Lo's. I loved Stan Kenton's big band—with those dark chords and musicians who could swing cool with individual sounds. I also saw every major act at the Adams Theatre nearby. I didn't have a formal music education, so listening to singers and musicians was the only way to learn songs and phrasing. Eventually, I started listening to R&B stations on my radio and heard singers like Little Jimmy Scott and Dinah Washington, and harmony groups like the Ravens and the Clovers. They all were inspirations.

Starting in my teens, I was always standing on the corner near our apartment singing harmony with friends. We'd also go to the park and sing under the bridge near the lake for the echo. When it was cold out, we'd stand in the little heated lobby in the project's administration building, where my mom paid the rent each month. Stephen Crane was ethnically mixed—Italians, Filipinos, Hispanics, you name it—so I picked up on all their music, too. Believe me when I tell you that everyone was for everybody else in my neighborhood. That's the way it was. I went to Central High School about a mile away and usually walked. At school, I'd sing in groups in the locker room or in the bathroom, which was like an echo chamber. The problem is I didn't know how to get started singing professionally. The pool hall was my Facebook. I'd hang out there to keep up with what was going on and to let people know where I could be reached if singing jobs came up. One day, when I was still living at home, a friend told "Texas" Jean Valli about me. She was originally from Syracuse, N.Y., and lived in New Jersey but sang country. One night she had me come up on stage where she was performing. I sang "My Mother's Eyes," and she was knocked out.



Jean took me into Manhattan to see Paul Kapp, a big music publisher, and introduced me as her brother. After I sang for him, he wanted to sign me to a record contract, but I was too young, which meant my parents had to come in from Newark to co-sign the papers. That's when Kapp realized I wasn't Jean's brother, that I was Frankie Castelluccio. Kapp said my last name was too ethnic, so we went with Jean's last name—Valli—which was fine with me since it sounded Italian anyway. I was married a short time later, when I was 20. I wasn't making much money, so my wife and I moved into an apartment in Stephen Crane near my mom. During the day I worked as a maintenance repairman, a painter, a construction worker and a florist. At night I'd sing in small clubs all over New Jersey. Eventually I met Bob Gaudio in nearby Bergenfield, and after he joined my group we became the Four Seasons, in 1960. The name came from a local bowling alley where we had failed an audition.

Stephen Crane was a safe haven for me, and I didn't move out until 1964—two years after "Sherry" became our first No. 1 hit. I was always afraid my success could disappear overnight and I wouldn't have a place to live. Even when I bought my first home in Nutley, N.J., in 1964, I chose a two-family house. I figured if the Four Seasons didn't make it beyond a handful of hits, I could always take in a tenant to help pay the mortgage.

*The above article can be found online here: <http://online.wsj.com/articles/frankie-valli-recalls-a-boyhood-home-1403119946>*