

Frankie Valli, A Perennial Radio Fave, Reflects On A Well-Seasoned Career

LET'S HANG ON: Radio holds a liking for **Frankie Valli**.

Since his No. 1 debut hit, "Sherry," in 1962, the enduring solo artist and front man of the **Four Seasons** has scored 40 Billboard Hot 100 top 40 hits, including five No. 1's with the group and two solo chart-toppers. So far, his musical career spans 32 years, from 1962 to 1994.

The most recent chart contender, a refashioned dance shuffle of the No. 1 1976 smash "December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)," hit No. 14 in 1994. Its second wind placed the song in the record books as the longest-running Hot 100 hit of all time, at 54 weeks. (It has since been topped by **Everything But The Girl's** "Missing" at 55 weeks and **Los Del Rio's** "Macarena" with 60 weeks.)

But even if Valli isn't counting up the hits in the latter part of this decade, he personifies a class of artists often over-

looked in light of their absence on active radio format playlists.

For one, the falsetto-laden Valli remains a staple on the live circuit, headlining ensemble concerts, shed dates, and corporate



VALLI

showcases nationwide. Last year, he belted his way through 125 dates.

But as well, Valli and the **Four Seasons** are as much a staple act for oldies radio stations as **Toni Braxton** is for top 40 and R&B.

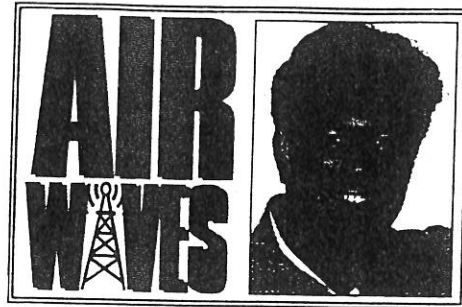
"They're one of our primary artists," acknowledges **Joe McCoy**, longtime PD of oldies WCBS-FM New York. "They've had so many hits, and Frankie Valli is a New Jersey guy, which endears him and the group to this audience. We all grew up listening to these songs, and they always bring back good memories. These songs will never die."

"I've had a wonderful career, and I'm still having a great time," says Valli, who turned 60 Saturday (3). "I've certainly accomplished a lot of variety with 'Sherry' to 'Grease' to 'My Eyes Adored You' to 'Can't Take My Eyes Off You.' I don't know how many artists can say that. I feel quite good about what I've done."

Looking back to those first career

accomplishments in the early 1960s, he admits it was tough to surmise just how successful the **Four Seasons** were to become. "I was having this wonderful dream and didn't want to wake up," Valli says. "I don't think I realized what was going on until about the third hit.

"You keep waiting for bells and whistles but don't really realize what's going on until later. Who would have ever known in a million years? So many



by *Chuck Taylor*

artists have two or three hits and then it's over."

Valli's tenacity has been etched by a couple of important breaks years after his initial whirlwind of success. In 1978, he was approached with the opportunity to reach a new generation with his music, an experience he regards as one of his best.

"**Barry Gibb** called me and said he'd written the title track to a movie called 'Grease,' and he had me in mind to sing it," Valli recalls. "He sent over the demo with just guitar and piano and the vocal, and I was blown away. I called and said, 'Absolutely.'" The record went on to spend two weeks at No. 1 on the Hot 100 in the summer of 1978.

"The nicest part about it is that it proved what I've always believed—that how long you've been around has nothing to do with having hits," he says. "That was the biggest solo record of my career."

Valli does not as warmly regard the refashioned dance version of "December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)" that marked the **Four Seasons'** return to the top 40 in 1994 for the first time since 1976.

"I'll never like it better than when it was pure," he says. "It was fine, but not something I wanted to pursue. I just stayed away from it. And it certainly wasn't something that made me want

to go to the the catalog and start redoing song after song."

Valli, in fact, admits his increasing frustration with what he views as narrow-minded programming decisions and a general chorus of homogenized voices on radio, resulting in a lack of opportunity for more established artists like himself.

"There are so many viable people out there, and yet I've never seen it so unmusical," he says. "Who is going to take the place of **Frank Sinatra** and **Tony Bennett** and **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Dinah Washington**? It used to be, you turned on the radio and knew who it was singing. Now, so many people sound alike.

"Fortunately, you have **Whitney Houston** and **Anita Baker**, **Luther Vandross**, and **Mariah Carey**, but there are so many nobody's paying attention to, like **Lionel Richie**, **Neil Diamond**, **Phil Collins**, **Elton John**, and **Gladys Knight**. What are they trying to say, that there's no audience for **Billy Joel** anymore? I just think the public is being cheated out of wonderful music from people who certainly haven't lost their talent."

The core of the problem, Valli believes, lies with overly narrow music-programming decisions. "Are some of these people taking over radio being so radical because acts 15 or 20 years old are too old? Do you send them to parks to feed ducks? It used to be that radio and record companies and artists shared a camaraderie. If someone does a great song, it should be on the radio."

Valli alludes to his own recent successes, filling stadiums in Pittsburgh (57,000 people), Atlanta (41,000), and Denver (nearly 80,000). In addition, WCBS New York's 25th anniversary concert, featuring Valli, **Dion**, **Ronnie Spector**, and **Little Anthony & the Imperials** the weekend of April 25, recently sold out three shows—and 17,700 seats—at Radio City Music Hall.

"Somebody cares about that music," Valli says. Meanwhile, the artist is working independently on an album of new songs, which he hopes to have completed by the end of the summer. He is collaborating with **Kenny Nolan**, whose songwriting credits include "My Eyes Adored You," "Lady Marmalade," and his own "I Like Dreamin'." The album will be produced on digital, 48-track equipment.

'Happy Days' Finally Here For Burlington Songwriter

By PAULA SCHNORBUS

Staff Writer

BORDENTOWN — Songwriting is not the most lucrative career to go into when you're 35 years old, but a Bordentown man who is that age began to seriously compose songs a year ago.

Within three months, he sold some of his material to a Nashville music publishing company.

John E. Rosina has been composing songs for 16 years. "I was always playing around and wrote things — but never professionally," said Rosina. "A year and a half ago, I thought I'd do something with them."

The guitar-playing General Motors employee called his friend, Don Ciccone, 37, who was in The Critters singing group before he was drafted into the service for four years. Afterward, he was with The Four Seasons for nine years. The two friends met in 1966 while in the Air Force.

Since he was "seduced away by the world of performing to the world of writing,"

"We have an attitude about music... the belief that we can do it, but also a lot of belief in teamwork," said Ciccone. "We've made a lot of headway in a short period of time. I'm thankful and proud that he's asked me to come aboard."

"We would enjoy doing it even if it doesn't mean a million dollars," added Rosina.

"Don has literally worked for peanuts," said Rosina, noting that Ciccone does studio work for about \$100 an hour, but insisted that he take only \$200 from his friend for 40 hours of work.

RECORD WORLD JULY 8, 1972

We are still convinced that the Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons album on Mowest is a gem. It is selling in the Boston area. Here again we must celebrate in this column the initiative of secondary programmers such as Vic Hines of WTVR Richmond. Vic agrees with me and with Paul Drew that the best song is "The Night." He is also playing another powerhouse cut "Touch The Rainchild."

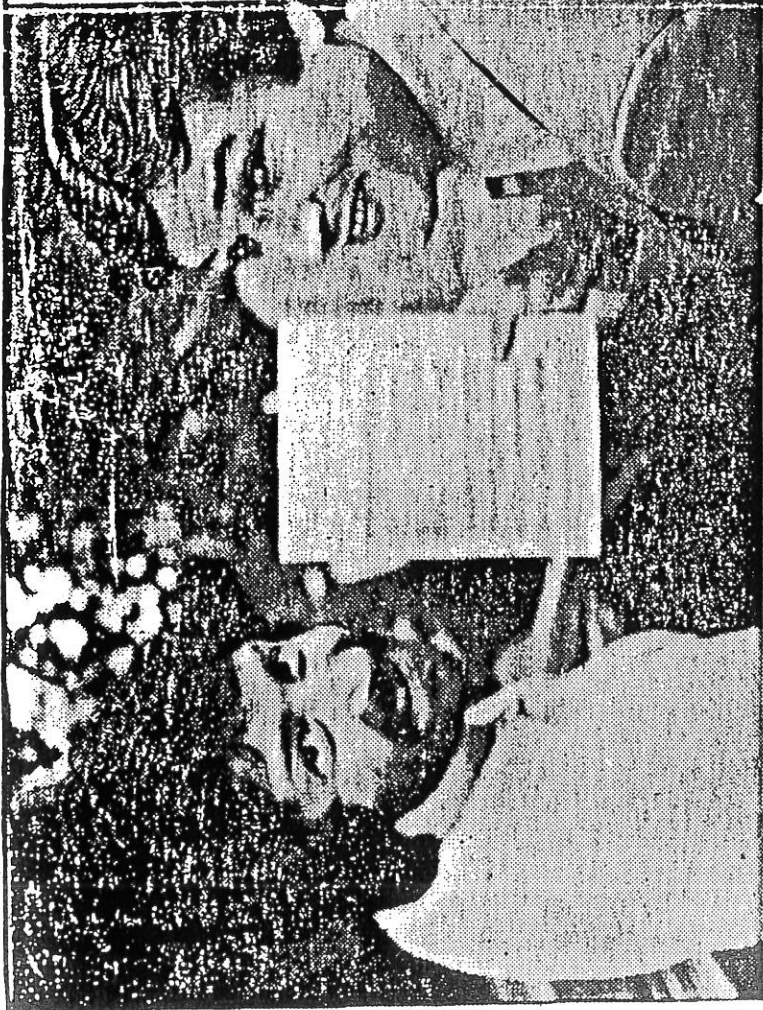


Photo by BILL POLK/STAFF

SHARING NOTES — Don Ciccone (left), a former member of The Four Seasons, and Bordentown's John Rosina go over one of their new songs. The two became friends in the Air Force and recently began writing music together.

Lovers" at midnight and completed it in about five hours, a fortnight before Rosina began the weary job of selling their tunes. "Family Man" was written by Rosina about himself, his father and father-in-law.

Rosina pointed out that another publishing company was interested in "Family Man" for Johnny Cash, but the promoter "didn't think it was quite right for him."

Ciccone wrote "Forever Begins Today," which was sold to Charter Records. He called "the most commercial title" and said one

RECORD MIRROR, Week Ending April 29th, 1967 new albums reviewed

PHILIPS New albums include a vintage 4 Seasons

originally recorded several years back for the Vee Jay label — now defunct. Philips must have bought up the original masters and this is a most acceptable album. The Seasons' style has developed from this kind of material — weepies, plaintive falsetto, and all part of the most gimmicky kind of rock 'n' roll ever recorded. But somehow this material has an enchantment of its own — some of these songs have passed into the classic pop stage.

LIKE the title implies, this is all old material — it was

Ciccone has been writing jingles for radio and television commercials. The North Jersey resident won the Telly Award for television excellence for his jingle for Foodtown stores and also has won a Most Valuable Promotions Award for his work for H.T. McDoogal's restaurants.

Ciccone said he is sent demo tapes often, and initially was afraid to listen to his friend's music, commenting that if he hears a tape with one out of 10 songs that he likes, "that's a good ratio."

"But it turns out, I strongly recommended four of the songs (for publishing)," said Ciccone.

That was last December. By March 13, Rosina was peddling one of his own compositions, one by Ciccone and one co-written by the twosome. He leased the rights to two of the songs to the third largest music publishing company in Nashville, Cedarwood, and one to Charter Records.

The team began writing "Truckin'" is for

Rosina also received help from Tim Tapley, who helped him with the recording, and Drew Annucci, who did the guitar work for the demo tapes.

The team will be working for Stargem Records in Nashville, writing a song for Eddie Thompson "who's climbing the charts" in the country and western circuit.

"I could die happy now," said Rosina, beaming about his success. "(Writing) is something I've done for years, and I have gotten fulfillment."

BOB CREWE
and his 90-O-Lettes were
the creation of former Motown
producer Bob Crewe and writing
partner Kenney Nolan.

AMWFST

The Top 30 Songs of

FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

(2007) *1995 positions



- 01 **DECEMBER, 1963 (OH, WHAT A NIGHT)**
The Four Seasons Warner/Curb 76
- 02 **BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 62
- 03 **SHERRY**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 62
- 04 **GREASE**
Frankie Valli RSO 78
- 05 **WALK LIKE A MAN**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 63
- 06 **RAG DOLL**
The Four Seasons Philips 64
- 07 **MY EYES ADORED YOU**
Frankie Valli Private Stock 75
- 08 **CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU**
Frankie Valli Philips 67
- 09 **DAWN (GO AWAY)**
The Four Seasons Philips 64
- 10 **LET'S HANG ON**
The Four Seasons Philips 65
- 11 **WHO LOVES YOU**
The Four Seasons Warner/Curb 75
- 12 **CANDY GIRL**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 63
- 13 **RONNIE**
The Four Seasons Philips 64
- 14 **SWEARIN' TO GOD**
Frankie Valli Private Stock 75
- 15 **I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN**
The Four Seasons Philips 66
- 16 **OUR DAY WILL COME**
Frankie Valli Private Stock 75
- 17 **C'MON MARIANNE**
The Four Seasons Philips 67
- 18 **TELL IT TO THE RAIN**
The Four Seasons Philips 67
- 19 **WORKING MY WAY BACK TO YOU**
The Four Seasons Philips 66
- 20 **DON'T THINK TWICE**
The Wonder Who? Philips 65
- 21 **STAY**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 64
- 22 **BEGGIN'**
The Four Seasons Philips 67
- 23 **OPUS 17 (DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT ME)**
The Four Seasons Philips 68
- 24 **SAVE IT FOR ME**
The Four Seasons Philips 64
- 25 **BYE, BYE, BABY (BABY GOODBYE)**
The Four Seasons Philips 65
- 26 **BIG MAN IN TOWN**
The Four Seasons Philips 64
- 27 **WILL YOU LOVE ME TOMORROW**
The Four Seasons Philips 68
- 28 **I MAKE A FOOL OF MYSELF**
Frankie Valli Philips 67
- 29 **ALONE**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 64
- 30 **SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN**
The Four Seasons Vee Jay 62

*4
*3
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*11
*5
*10

FRANCIS CASTELLUCIO released his first single in 1953. "My Mothers Eyes" featured his distinctive falsetto voice and the name Frank Valley on the label—the first of many names he would use before settling on Frankie Valli.

By 1956, Frankie was singing with a group called The Four Lovers. Their songwriter and producer, Bob Crewe, had them doing background vocals for people like Bobby Darin, Freddy Cannon, and Danny & the Juniors. The first release to feature their new name, inspired by a New Jersey bowling alley, was "Bermuda" by the Four Seasons. It failed to chart.

The group recorded five songs, including "Sherry." Crewe took the masters to a record convention in Miami, and word got around fast. Several different labels bid for them, but the winner was Chicago-based Vee Jay Records.

After "Sherry" spent five weeks at No. 1, Vee Jay released another of the five masters, "Big Girls Don't Cry"; it also spent five weeks at No. 1. A Christmas release of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" followed; the Four Seasons then had a third No. 1 single: "Walk Like A Man."

By the end of 1963, the Four Seasons left Vee Jay because of royalty disputes, signing with Philips and releasing "Dawn (Go Away)." After their final top 30 hit on Philips in 1968, the Seasons experienced several years of chart obscurity. The success of Valli's "My Eyes Adored You" in 1975 led to a new Four Seasons line-up. The group was signed to Warner/Curb, and "Who Loves You" put them back in the top 10 for the first time since 1967. The follow-up—"December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night)," originally written about Prohibition in the year 1933—was the Four Seasons' first No. 1 record since "Rag Doll" in 1964.

UK Record Collector No.284 4/03

FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

The Very Best Of

US import: Rhino R2 74494 (61:06)

The early line-up of the Seasons had it all as a unit: Valli as the stratos-

pheric lead singer and contacts man, Gaudio as the talented, kid writer, Massi as the great vocal arranger, and DeVito as 'da biznizman' who took care of the accounts. Together with the supreme Bob Crewe, they produced a constant flow of quality hits that just about everyone still knows.

All of them are here, together with some of the lesser-known ones, like

'Candy Girl', 'Ronnie' and 'Save It for Me', plus the fine solo Valli outings, 'Can't Take My Eyes Off You', 'My Eyes Adored You' and 'Grease'. Personnel changes didn't dent their success, as Gaudio moved to a background production role that eventually gave the group their biggest hit with 'December, 1963 (Oh What a Night)'. Perhaps their greatest talent was to

write and produce work that hasn't dated, remaining as crisp and danceable as when it first emerged. If by some strange quirk of fate you haven't got a Seasons collection, here is your chance. Now then Rhino, when are we going to get the really definitive box set?

Kingsley Abbott

**FRANKIE VALL AND THE FOUR SEASONS RECORDS USA INFORMATION FOR THE
BILLBOARD POP CHARTS**

(Information obtained from Fred Bronson's (Hottest Hot 100 Hits 2007 & *1995 published editions) Joel Whitburn's (1987, 1990 & 1997 published editions) books on Billboard Chart positions.

Top 100 Songs From Motion Pictures

Grease No. 65 *58

Top 30 Philips Label Sales

Let's Hang On 7 *4

Can't Take My Eyes Off You 5 Gold Disc

Rag Doll 4 *6 Gold Disc

Dawn (Go Away) 6 *7

Ronnie 13

I've got you under my skin 15

C'mon Marianne 18

Tell It To the Rain 19

Working My Way Back To You 20

Don't Think Twice 21

Beggin' 22

Opus 17 (Don't Worry 'Bout Me) 23

Save It For Me 24

Bye Bye Baby (Baby Goodbye) 25

Big Man In Town 26

Will You Love Me Tomorrow 28

I make a fool of myself 29

Top 10 Vee-Jay Record Label Sales

Big Girls Don't Cry 1 Gold Disc

Sherry 2 Gold Disc

Walk Like A Man 4

Candy Girl 8

Top 100 Warner Bros/Curb Record Label Sales

December 1963 (Oh What A Night) 8 *12 Gold Disc

Who Loves You 69 *70

Top 50 RSO Label Sales

Grease 10 *12 Platinum disc

Top 50 ABC Label Sales

Short Shorts (The Royal Teens) 30 *32

Top 100 Songs of the 60's

Big Girl's Don't Cry 20 *16

Sherry 37 *91

Top 100 Records of the 70's

December 1963 *71 (not in 2007)

Grease 93

Joel Whitburn's Billboard Top 1000 Singles For Each Year (1987 Published)

1956 **Apple of My Eye (4 Lovers) 344**

1958 **Short Shorts (Royal Teens) 36 Harvey's Got A Girl Friend (Royal Teens) 438**

1959 **Believe Me (Royal Teens) 179**

1962 **Big Girls Don't Cry 2 Sherry 3 Santa Claus is Comin' To Town 207**

1963 **Walk Like A Man 10 Candy Girl 43 Ain't That A Shame 187 Marlana 264 New Mexican
Rose 266 Soon 480 That's the Only Way 540**

1964 **Rag Doll 16 Dawn (Go Away) 33 Ronnie 70 Save It For Me 104 Stay 151 Big Man In
Town 182 Alone 229 Sincerely 513**

1965 **Let's Hang On 40 I've Got You Under My Skin 108 Bye Bye Baby 124 Don't Think Twice
128 Girl Come Running 262 Toy Soldier 470**

1966 **I've Got You Under My Skin 108 Working My Way Back To You 112 Opus 17 (Don't
Worry 'Bout Me) 148 You're Gonna Hurt Yourself 328 Little Boy (In Grown Up Clothes)
451 On the Good Ship Lollipop 599 You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You 692**

1967 **Can't Take My Eyes Off You 28 C'mon Marianne 89 Tell It To the Rain 103 Beggin' 160
Music To Watch Girls By (Bob Crewe Generation) 67 I Make A Fool Of Myself 173 Watch
The Flowers Grow 244 Birds Of Britain (Bob Crewe Generation) 610**

1968 **Will You Love Me Tomorrow 176 To Give 212**

1969 **And That Reminds Me 304 The Girl I'll Never Know 347 Electric Stories 400 Idaho 620
Something's On Her Mind 656**

1970 **Patch Of Blue 570**

1975 My Eyes Adored You 15 Who Loves You 43 Swearin' To God 82 Our Day Will Come 112
 1976 December 1963 (Oh What A Night) 6 Fallen Angel 203 Silver Star 215 We're All Alone 410
 1977 Down The Hall 321
 1978 Grease 12 1979 Fancy Dancer 411
 1980 Where Did We Go Wrong 459 Spend The Night In Love 461

Fred Bronson's Billboard Top 100 Songs For Each Year (2007 *1995 Published)

1962 Big Girls Don't Cry 3 *3	Sherry 5 *11
1963 Walk Like A Man 15	Candy Girl 42 *39
1964 Rag Doll 19 *20 Dawn (Go Away) 29 *32	Ronnie 76 *74
1965 Let's Hang On 27 *8	Short shorts 1958 (Royal Teens) 48
1967 Can't Take My Eyes Off You 23 *12	
1975 My Eyes Adored You 22 *22 Gold Disc	Who Loves You 43 *34
1976 December 1963 (Oh What A Night) 9 *9	
1978 Grease 13 *19	

Joel Whitburn's Billboard's Top 3000+ Chart Records 1955-1990 In bold italics. Published 1990.

Joel Whitburn's Billboard's Top 1000 Chart Records 1955-1996 (cited in brackets). Published 1997.

Big Girl's Don't Cry 75 (104)	Short Shorts (Royal teens) 1314
Sherry 87 (117)	Let's Hang On 1363
Walk Like A Man 264 (309)	Candy Girl 1452
December 1963 274 (319)	Ronnie 2285
Grease 364 (419)	Swearin' To God 2322
Rag Doll 429 (493)	C'mon Marianne 2967
My Eyes Adored You 577 (654)	I've Got You Under My Skin 3102
Can't Take My Eyes Off You 1029	Working My Way Back To You 3109
Dawn 1193	Save It For Me 3286
Who Loves You 1244	Tell It To The Rain 3412

Fred Bronson's Billboard Top 5000 Songs Of The Rock Era (2007 Published; *1995 edition)

December 1963 247 *79	Dawn 1607 *2137
Big Girls Don't Cry 294 *231	Short Shorts (Royal Teens) 2633 * 2248
Grease 629 *589	Candy Girl 2393 *2279
Sherry 360 *791	Ronnie 4499 *3525
My Eyes Adored You 1259 *1153	Our Day Will Come *4294
Can't Take My Eyes Off You 1416 *1180	C'mon Marianne *4758
Walk Like A Man 750 *1235	Tell It To the Rain *4776
Rag Doll 905 *1506	Working My Way Back To You *4784
Who Loves You 1897 *1759	Stay *5000

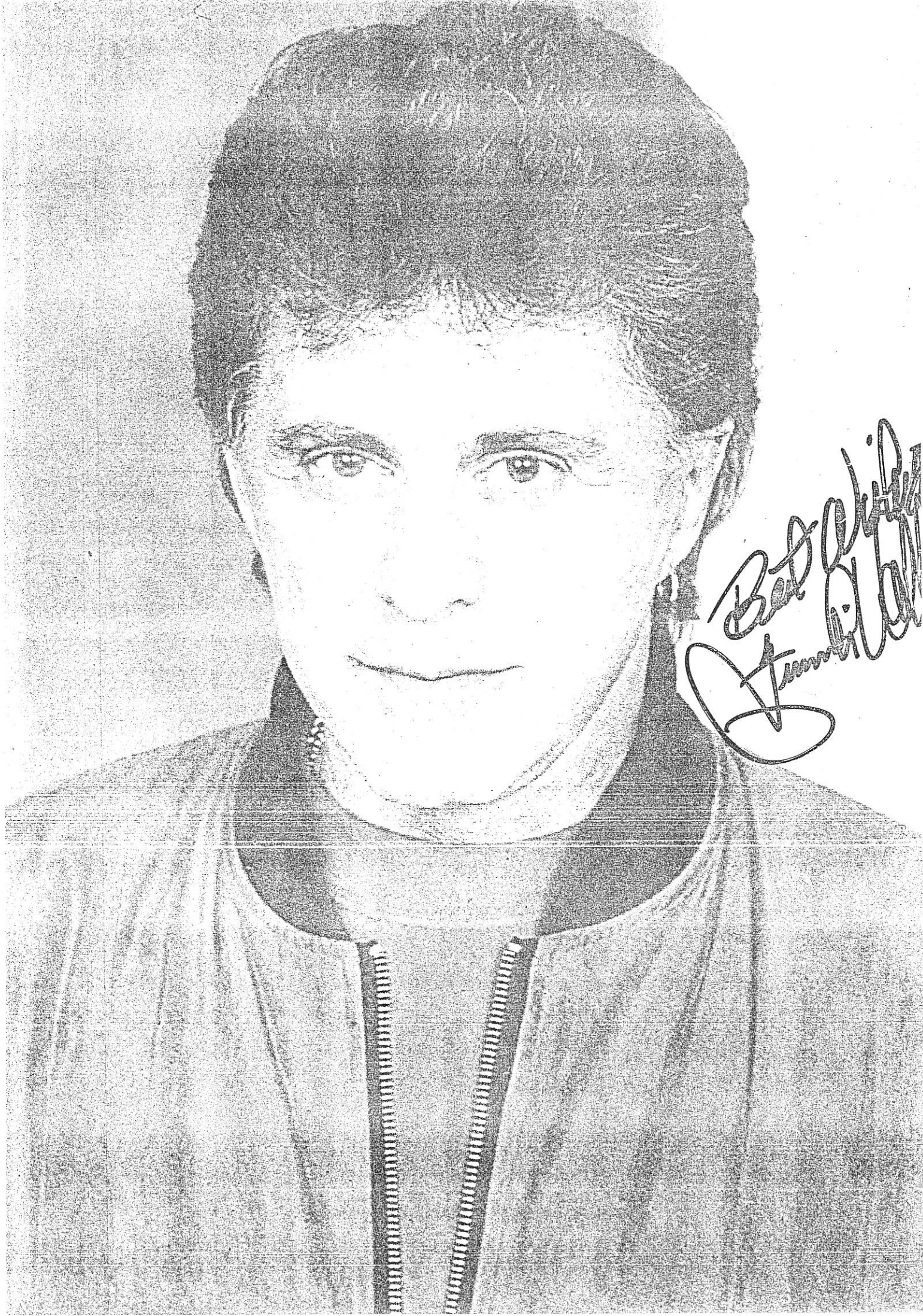
Gold Discs for LPs: *Gold Vault of Hits, 2nd Vault of Golden Hits and Edizione D'Oro (Gold Edition)*

Billboard's Top Artists: 4 Seasons no. 26 Billboard's Top 100 albums: Grease no. 43

Billboard's Top 200 Adult Contemporary Artists for 2002: Frankie Valli no. 186

Billboard Adult Contemporary 1970's chart longevity: 4 Seasons "December 1963" 37 weeks in chart.

Billboards Top 100 songs with Girls Name Title: Sherry no. 14



Bob Odenkirk
Franklin