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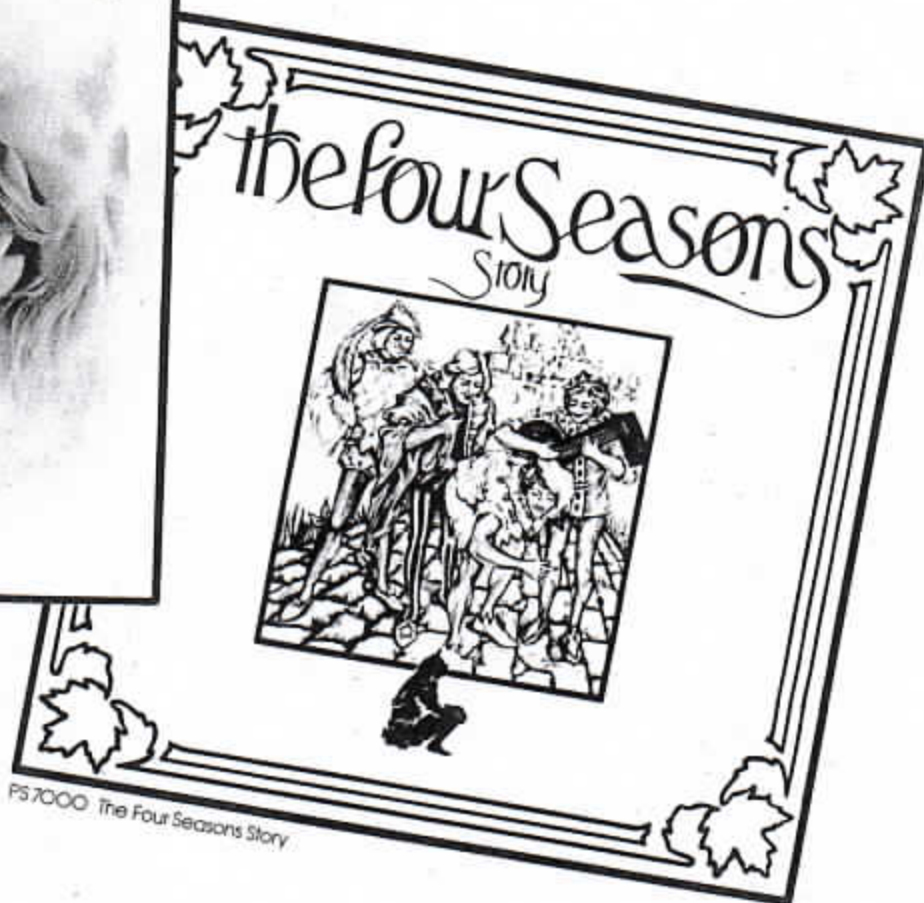


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Frankie Valli / The Four Seasons

Album Discography

RECORD	LABEL	YEAR OF ISSUE
Sherry and 11 Others	VJ	1962
The Four Seasons Greetings	VJ	1962
Big Girls Don't Cry and 12 Others	VJ	1962
Ain't That A Shame & 11 Others	VJ	1963
Golden Hits of the Four Seasons	VJ	1963
Folknanny (also titled Stay & Other Great Hits)	VJ	1964
Born To Wander	Philips	1964
More Golden Hits of the Four Seasons	VJ	1964
Dawn and 11 Other Great Songs	Philips	1964
The Beatles vs. the Four Seasons (Double Album)	VJ	1964
Rag Doll	Philips	1964
Girls, Girls, Girls—We Love Girls	VJ	1965
Four Seasons Entertain You	Philips	1965
Sing Big Hits by Bacharach, David & Dylan	Philips	1965
Gold Vault of Hits	Philips	1965
Live On Stage	VJ	1965
Working My Way Back To You	Philips	1966
Second Vault of Golden Hits	Philips	1967
Lookin' Back	Philips	1967
Christmas Album	Philips	1967
Solo (Frankie Valli)	Philips	1967
New Gold Hits	Philips	1967
Timeless (Frankie Valli)	Philips	1968
Edizione D'Oro (Gold Edition) Double Album	Philips	1969
Genuine Imitation of Life Gazette	Philips	1969
Brotherhood of Man	Pickwick	1970
Half and Half	Philips	1970
Chameleon	Mowest	1972
The Greatest Hits of Frankie Valli & The Fabulous Four Seasons	Longines Symphonette	1974
Close Up (Frankie Valli)	Private Stock	1975
Inside You (Frankie Valli)	Motown	1975
Who Loves You	Warner Bros.	1975
Our Day Will Come (Frankie Valli)	Private Stock	1975
The Four Seasons Story	Private Stock	1976
Valli Gold	Private Stock	1976
Valli	Private Stock	1976

Frankie Valli / The Four Seasons

Bob Crewe: A Man for All Seasons

By JAAN UHLSZKI

■ Bob Crewe's affiliation with the Four Seasons goes back prior to the time that they were the Four Seasons. His first association with any of them was in 1960 when he produced Frankie Valli's "I Go Ape" album for Epic. The second time Crewe crossed paths with them was about a year later in the offices of Madison Records, one of Larry Uttal's first labels.

"Frankie and his friend Bob Gaudio were coming out of the offices with a couple of masters Larry had just turned down. Having worked with Frankie before, I asked him up to my offices the next day. They gave me the masters to listen to, and I thought they were good, so we spent the next day talking about working together. At the time I had a label deal with London to distribute my own label, Tropics. We agreed to work together, and I put out the record 'Trance.' At this time they were calling themselves The Four Lovers," Crewe remembers.

"It was exciting, and being involved with them was part of a whole fanning-off process for me. We were all looking for something, so we looked together. I don't think we necessarily knew how long we would be associated," Crewe said.

Busy Years

After the initial album, Crewe worked with the group in other facets of his own musical projects. "The fellows did so much back-up work for me, singing and playing instruments on almost all of the projects I was involved with at the time. Bob Gaudio might be writing a song with me, or Tommy DeVito would be playing guitar on someone I was recording . . . These were incubating, bubbling years. Everybody knew something was happening. There was that itching kind of feeling. It was busy. I mean busy takes on a new meaning. Everybody was doing something.

"They were good back then, although the high falsetto hadn't appeared yet. Frankie had a beautiful voice and the four of them together had this incredibly good sound. They were into progressive harmonies. I think Bob Gaudio liked the Four Freshmen and the Hi-Los, and they would try to get as close to some of those sounds as they could. The Seasons were very versatile. They could sing right down the middle of the road. They could get as funky as any black group, and Frankie has got an incredible

country attitude when he wants to. The Four Seasons made you get up and dance. They were disco before disco was even called disco."

Although the band was doing quite well, the development of Frankie's falsetto insured them their own niche in the hit parade. It was quite by accident that the Seasons decided to incorporate Frankie's vocal calisthenics into "their sound."

Birth Of A Voice

"The guys were appearing under one name or another, but the night we went down to Jersey they were using The Four Lovers. That night Frankie did an imitation that really blew me out. He took somebody's scarf and a pair of maracas and did an imitation of Rose Murphey (Rose Murphey was a singer during the forties who had an extremely high voice). My God, I never heard this voice come out of Frankie quite so pronounced. I knew he had a hell of a range, but he did this whole take-off on her and brought the house down . . . It was really sensational, and I got talking to Frankie and Bob afterwards and I said: 'Gee, if there's some way you can take that high sound of Frankie's, give him an octave jump, I don't care if he's singing about cars or whatever. It could be about the wall, just

let him go wa—all.' It was amazing the sounds he was getting. About eight or nine days later Bob came to see me. He had completed the song called 'Sherry' which had Frankie singing falsetto and it sounded fabulous. Sure enough, 'Sherry' was an incredible beginning that led to an enormous career that I loved and felt I had a big part in," Crewe recalled.

Do you think if the band hadn't Frankie's falsetto they would have just been "any band?" Crewe was asked.

A Gold Mine

"Frankie had the gold in a gold mine, somebody just had to dig it out. It was there," he replied. "I think it certainly set them apart from any group. People, when they first heard the Four Seasons, thought they were black. In fact the Four Seasons broke black. The record was a runaway r&b hit before anyone even had a chance to ask whether they were black or white. It also was on Vee Jay Records, which was a black label, and who would stop and think they were a white group. The record was breaking so fast in Italy, that the Romans sent a group out on the road, a black group, and said they were the Four Seasons. Were their faces red . . . or black?"

The Seasons developed their

own novel sound, highlighted by the use of Frankie's distinctive and conspicuous vocalizations. Crewe nurtured the sound by selecting and writing material that would showcase their unique vocal style.

"Once you know you're working with certain instruments you learn how to use them accordingly," he said. "I knew I had a unique instrument. If you're writing for harp you write differently than if you were writing for a piccolo or trumpet. I know that no one would have done the things that Frankie did with the songs that we tailored for him."

From Studio To Stage

To some, the group seemed to be over-produced and there was speculation within the industry that the Seasons wouldn't be able to recreate the excitement of their studio sound on stage, but they proved their critics to be wrong.

"The Seasons sounded almost identical to their records," states Crewe. "There were jokes in the industry when I was first associated with the band, like, 'Do you put a helium tank in the studio to get Frankie up that high?' He just has one of the most unique falsettos in the world. It's a very rare thing, but he has it, so it isn't something you have to fabricate by punching it in, piece by piece. So consequently when he sang in person, people would say: 'Wow this isn't a put-up job, he's got all those pipes.'"

If the Four Seasons were so successful and so secure for all those years, why did they go into a slump during the late sixties?

Why A Slump?

"Don't forget, in those days you went after single hits. The concept of album artists happened kind of while we were busy making all those single hit records," says Crewe. "We were blithely unaware of the fact you really went in to make an album as a concept, as a package. What an album meant to us was a greatest hits package, whether it was the Four Seasons or Ray Charles, or whomever. Consequently, my life style recordwise, and the Four Seasons', was on a 45 basis. We were looking to get fast hits and who the hell ever had time to sit down and plan out a 45 minute or hour of entertainment with one general kind of following thought pattern? In the beginning, the album consciousness of the industry hurt us. What also hurt us was the acid

(Continued on page 22)



The early Seasons

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USA Record World Magazine Mega Article on Frankie Valli the 4 Seasons
published January 8th, 1977 – Part 3 (Concluding – Newsletter No. 64)