

FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS: 1962-1967



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**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
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Digital Remaster

**FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS: 1962-1967**

- 1 **Sherry** (2:31) 1962
- 2 **Candy Girl** (2:39) 1963
- 3 **Marlena** (2:36) 1963
- 4 **Ronnie** (2:56) 1964
- 5 **Big Man in Town** (2:46) 1964
- 6 **Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby, Goodbye)** (2:32) 1965
- 7 **Big Girls Don't Cry** (2:27) 1962
- 8 **Walk Like a Man** (2:17) 1963
- 9 **Ain't That a Shame** (2:36) 1963
- 10 **Girl Come Running** (3:03) 1965
- 11 **I've Got You under My Skin** (3:41) 1966
- 12 **Dawn (Go Away)** (2:43) 1964
- 13 **Stay** (1:52) 1964
- 14 **Save It for Me** (2:35) 1964
- 15 **Alone (Why Must I Be Alone)** (2:49) 1964
- 16 **Rag Doll** (2:54) 1964
- 17 **Tell It to the Rain** (2:30) 1966
- 18 **Let's Hang On** (3:15) 1965
- 19 **Opus 17 (Don't You Worry 'bout Me)** (2:32) 1966
- 20 **Working My Way Back to You** (3:03) 1966
- 21 **C'mon Marianne** (2:33) 1967
- 22 **Beggin'** (2:48) 1967

**SEE PROGRAM NOTES INSIDE**

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*The*  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
•ERA•

**FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS**

COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-15  
OPCD-2551

TIME  
**LIFE**  
MUSIC

- 1 Sherry 2 Candy Girl 3 Marlena 4 Ronnie 5 Big Man in Town 6 Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby, Goodbye) 7 Big Girls Don't Cry 8 Walk Like a Man  
9 Ain't That a Shame 10 Girl Come Running 11 I've Got You under My Skin 12 Dawn (Go Away) 13 Stay 14 Save It for Me 15 Alone (Why Must I Be Alone) 16 Rag Doll 17 Tell It to the Rain 18 Let's Hang On 19 Opus 17 (Don't You Worry 'bout Me)  
20 Working My Way Back to You 21 C'mon Marianne 22 Beggin'

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## FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS: 1962-1967

In 1962, with no money in their pockets and success continuing to elude them, the Four Lovers entertained serious thoughts of abandoning show business for good. Lead singer Frankie Valli, who had a wife and three daughters to support, was working construction in Newark, New Jersey, to make ends meet. He wrote to former group member Nicky DeVito about job prospects in Las Vegas. As DeVito explained, "I wrote him back and said, 'don't worry about it. I can get you a job if you come out, and I'll put your family up at my place until things work out.' I didn't get an answer. Thirty days later I heard **Sherry** on the radio."

With a new name taken from a New Jersey bowling alley-cocktail lounge, the Four Seasons burst onto the pop scene with one of the most singular sounds in rock history. Although it had taken keyboard player Bob Gaudio only 15 minutes to write *Sherry*, and the group an hour to record it, this was a cha-cha with a difference. Thanks to Valli's piercing falsetto, "*Sherry bay-yay-bee*" cut through the clamorous atmosphere of Top 40 radio like an air-raid siren. In just four weeks, the song reached No. 1 and sold a million copies.

There was good reason to expect that the Four Seasons' time at the top would be brief. Valli's falsetto recalled one-hit wonder Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs of *Stay* fame and Jimmy Jones, who exhausted his career with two shrieking hits, *Handy Man* and *Good Timin'*. Besides, vocal groups were on the way out.

Yet within months **Big Girls Don't Cry** and **Walk Like a Man** both zoomed to No. 1 on the charts, and Frankie Valli's stratospheric voice became the group's trademark, not merely a gimmick. From 1962 to 1967, the Four Seasons racked up an amazing 25 top-40 and 13 top-10 hits. Together with the Supremes and the Beach Boys (another doo-wop-raised and falsetto-oriented vocal

group) the Four Seasons were America's only real competition for the Beatles.

Teenagers buying hit after hit by this "new" group had little idea that the Four Seasons traced their origins to the late '40s and an ice-cream parlor in Belleville, New Jersey. Brothers Nicky and Tommy DeVito and their pal Nick Massi used to hang out there and sing harmonies together, occasionally joined by Frankie Castelluccio. For the next decade, these four young Italian-Americans performed together in numerous combinations as the Variety Trio, the Variatones and the Four Lovers. Castelluccio, who took his stage name from country singer Texas Jean Valley, also recorded singles as a solo act.

The group verged on national prominence in 1956 when RCA, looking for another rock 'n' roll act to complement Elvis Presley, signed them as the Four Lovers. Songwriter Otis Blackwell contributed *Don't Be Cruel* for their first single, but when Elvis demanded the song, Blackwell gave the Four Lovers *You're the Apple of My Eye* instead. It was a minor hit for the group and earned them an appearance on the Ed Sullivan TV show. After follow-up singles and an album flopped, the Four Lovers were back on the nightclub circuit.

Nick Massi, possessor of a booming bass voice, and an excellent vocal arranger, rejoined the Four Lovers in 1959. Then they added Bob Gaudio, who had already scored a hit with *Short Shorts* as a member of the Royal Teens. By 1960, the quartet that would become the Four Seasons — Valli, Gaudio, Massi and Tommy DeVito — was intact. They signed a three-year contract with producer Bob Crewe but did little outside of serving as anonymous backup singers and musicians on Crewe's productions — until Gaudio wrote *Sherry*.

Crewe sold the song and the group to Vee-Jay Records, a Chicago-based label that up until then had re-

corded only black R & B acts. Much like the Supremes' success with the Motown production and song-writing team of Holland-Dozier-Holland, the Four Seasons' five-year hit streak resulted from a creative collaboration in perfect tune with pop tastes.

Gaudio and Crewe composed songs with almost formulaic precision. Each one delivered the essential dance beat, a sing-along chorus and Valli's aggressive falsetto, which didn't reach notes so much as attack them. Crewe, sometimes known as "the Fifth Season," had a knack for turning the group's material into no-frill, instantly recognizable pop nuggets. His approach was simple: Keep Valli and the harmonies up front, and augment the beat with handclaps and tambourines.

*Walk Like a Man*, perhaps the quartet's finest creation, took advantage of a clever street-corner arrangement using Nick Massi's bass voice ("He said . . ." and "I'm gonna . . .") to set up the chorus. (For a song with such a heavy macho message, it's ironic that Valli emphasizes the prideful title with his high-pitched wail.) During the recording session at the Stea-Phillips Studio in Manhattan's Abbey Victoria Hotel, Bob Crewe's determination to get the right take became dangerously obsessive. Although smoke and water began to fill the studio, and there was a pounding on the studio's locked door, Crewe pressed on. Firemen finally had to chop down the door to get in and then wrestle him to the floor. The room above was on fire!

The Four Seasons sang mostly about girls, and inspiration came from everywhere. Gaudio wrote **Rag Doll** after a young girl, dirty-faced and dressed in tatters, walked up to his car at a stoplight in Manhattan and washed his windshield for a tip. One night Crewe was watching a grade-B movie on TV, in which John Payne slapped his blond girlfriend and barked, "Whaddaya think of that, baby?" Her answer, "Big girls don't cry," inspired another Four Seasons hit.





Because of financial disputes with Vee-Jay, the Four Seasons switched labels to Philips in 1964, immediately making the top 5 with **Dawn (Go Away)**. In late 1965, they landed two hits on the charts simultaneously with **Let's Hang On** and *Don't Think Twice*, a tongue-in-cheek remake of a Bob Dylan song by the group mysteriously billed as the Wonder Who. Valli's clarion falsetto, of course, was a dead giveaway.

While best known as a singles group, the Four Seasons also released a variety of albums. These included a Christmas LP, a folkish collection (*Folk-Nanny*), an unusual pairing of Bacharach-David and Dylan songs, and a tribute to their doo-wop roots (*Lookin' Back*). The most highly prized is a 1964 Vee-Jay double album, *The Beatles vs. The Four Seasons*, now valued at well over \$100.

Despite their eclectic LP catalog, it was the familiar sound of such singles as **Candy Girl** and **Ronnie** that really sustained the Four Seasons' reputation. They allowed for an occasional new wrinkle, like the heavy guitar line in *Let's Hang On* and the Phil Spector-style production of **Save It for Me**. For the most part, though, the profound changes in rock inspired by the Beatles and Dylan left the quartet unfazed.

By the late '60s, the group did prove vulnerable to the changing tastes of rock fans. After **C'mon Marianne** (1967), the hits dried up. Suddenly it looked as if the Four Seasons, like so many other pop acts, had become passé in the psychedelic era. They tried to keep up with the times, and in 1969 released an ill-fated assortment of social-consciousness songs by Gaudio called *The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette*. Three years later, the Four Seasons began an unproductive stay on Motown Records. By then, the only original member still performing was Valli, though Gaudio recorded with the group.

*Well-seasoned music veterans Tommy DeVito, Frankie Valli, Bob Gaudio and Nick Massi in 1961.*

Just as the '70s threatened to turn Valli and the Four Seasons into memories, they bounced back. Valli struck first with *My Eyes Adored You*, a No. 1 solo hit in 1975, and a reconstituted Four Seasons answered with *Who Loves You* and the chart-topping Gaudio song *December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night)*. In 1978, Valli achieved the biggest seller of his career with *Grease*. A Four Seasons reunion tour followed in 1980.

Prior to *Sherry's* release back in 1962, Frankie Valli and Bob Gaudio had begun a business partnership. That deal, struck with only a handshake, has stood firm for 25 years. They still own the rights to the Four Seasons' name, and, during the summer of 1987, Valli took the Four Seasons onto America's concert stages for another reprise of the group's street-corner serenade.

— Joe Sasy



*Frankie Valli*



## DISCOGRAPHY

*\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position*

- 1. Sherry** (2:31) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio. Original issue: Vee-Jay 456 (1962). No. 1\**
- 2. Candy Girl** (2:39) *Music and lyrics by Larry Santos. Original issue: Vee-Jay 539 (1963). No. 3\**
- 3. Marlena** (2:36) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio. Original issue: Vee-Jay 539 (1963). No. 36\**
- 4. Ronnie** (2:56) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Philips 40185 (1964). No. 6\**
- 5. Big Man in Town** (2:46) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio. Original issue: Philips 40238 (1964). No. 20\**
- 6. Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby, Goodbye)** (2:32) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Philips 40260 (1965). No. 12\**
- 7. Big Girls Don't Cry** (2:27) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Vee-Jay 465 (1962). No. 1\**
- 8. Walk Like a Man** (2:17) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Vee-Jay 485 (1963). No. 1\**
- 9. Ain't That a Shame** (2:36) *Music and lyrics by Dave Bartholomew and Antoine Domino. Original issue: Vee-Jay 512 (1963). No. 22\**
- 10. Girl Come Running** (3:03) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Philips 40305 (1965). No. 30\**
- 11. I've Got You under My Skin** (3:41) *Music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Original issue: Philips 40393 (1966). No. 9\**
- 12. Dawn (Go Away)** (2:43) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Sandy Linzer. Original issue: Philips 40166 (1964). No. 3\**
- 13. Stay** (1:52) *Music and lyrics by Maurice Williams. Original issue: Vee-Jay 582 (1964). No. 16\**
- 14. Save It for Me** (2:35) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Philips 40225 (1964). No. 10\**

**15. Alone (Why Must I Be Alone)** (2:49) *Music and lyrics by Morton Craft and Selma Craft. Original issue: Vee-Jay 597 (1964). No. 28\**

**16. Rag Doll** (2:54) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Bob Crewe. Original issue: Philips 40211 (1964). No. 1\**

**17. Tell It to the Rain** (2:30) *Music and lyrics by Mike Petrillo and Chubby Cifelli. Original issue: Philips 40412 (1966). No. 10\**

**18. Let's Hang On** (3:15) *Music and lyrics by Bob Crewe, Sandy Linzer and Denny Randell. Original issue: Philips 40317 (1965). No. 3\**

**19. Opus 17 (Don't You Worry 'bout Me)** (2:32) *Music and lyrics by Denny Randell and Sandy Linzer. Original issue: Philips 40370 (1966). No. 13\**

**20. Working My Way Back to You** (3:03) *Music and lyrics by Denny Randell and Sandy Linzer. Original issue: Philips 40350 (1966). No. 9\**

**21. C'mon Marianne** (2:33) *Music and lyrics by L. Russell Brown and Raymond Bloodworth. Original issue: Philips 40460 (1967). No. 9\**

**22. Beggin'** (2:48) *Music and lyrics by Bob Gaudio and Peggy Farrar. Original issue: Philips 40433 (1967). No. 16\**

*All selections courtesy of Bob Gaudio and Frankie Valli, dba The Four Seasons Partnership*

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NOTES INSIDE

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**Recording Producers:** Bill Fry, Joe Sasfy  
**Art Director:** Don Sheldon  
**Assistant Producer:** Charles McCordell  
**Production Coordinator:** Brian Miller  
**Pictures:** Betty H. Weatherly  
**Art Studio:** Nina Bridges

**The Four Seasons** was produced by Time-Life Music in cooperation with Warner Special Products. Proprietary equipment and engineering by Fry Systems, Arlington, Va., using AEG professional audio tape recorders. Cutting engineer: Alan Moy, Masterdisk, New York.

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