

Opus 17

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One of pop culture's earliest icons is stepping away to focus on his health.

According to Christina Dugan Ramirez of Fox News, Frankie Valli has canceled the remainder of his tour dates to focus on his health. Valli is credited with saying on social media, "I'm sorry to the folks who have purchased tickets to my shows, but I have decided to take the rest of the tour off to focus on my health." He is also credited with saying, "I'm looking forward to getting healthy and seeing you all again soon. Thank you all again for your good wishes." Today, Valli, who is the frontman and one of the co-founders of The Four Seasons, is the only original member still performing. His farewell tour, titled The Last Encores, was originally launched in 2023. His health concerns sparked media attention when videos surfaced of him struggling to remember lyrics. However, he responded by saying that he was not suffering from elder abuse and that he wants to keep performing for as long as he can.

Frankie Valli is not just another artist. He redefined how we hear the falsetto and helped shape pop music and culture forever. Valli, whose real name is Francesco Stephen Castelluccio, recently celebrated his 92nd birthday. He was born in 1934 in Newark, New Jersey. Valli grew up in a working-class Italian American family during the Great Depression. His father, Anthony Castelluccio, worked on the railroads and was also a barber, while his mother, Mary Rinaldi, worked for a beer company.

His inspiration for music started at a young age through radio and street music such as doo-wop. His mother encouraged him, though she worried because music was not considered a safe career path at the time. Singing was viewed more as a hobby than a profession. Before becoming a musician, Valli worked as a barber apprentice, following in his father's footsteps.

Before forming The Four Seasons, he performed with groups such as The Variety Trio and The Variatones, and he also used the stage name Frankie Tyler. During this time, he met Bob Gaudio, who would write many of The Four Seasons' biggest hits and become a lifelong creative partner. The original lineup consisted of Frankie Valli, Tommy DeVito, Nick Massi, and Bob Gaudio.

Their music centered on strong vocal harmonies, catchy pop hooks, and Valli's unmistakable falsetto. Their breakthrough came with songs such as "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Walk Like a Man," and later "December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night)." The Four Seasons helped define early 1960s pop music before the British Invasion. Frankie Valli later enjoyed a successful solo career and reunited with The Four Seasons in the 1980s.

People who knew Frankie Valli often described him as a very private person. My grandpa described Frankie Valli this way: "When I was growing up as a teenager in the 1960s, I enjoyed listening to Frankie Valli because his music put a smile on my face. They always made wholesome music."

He later shared a story about why he enjoyed The Four Seasons so much: "When their song 'Sherry' came out, it struck home with me because I was dating a girl named Sherry at the time."

There is no timeline for when Frankie Valli may take the stage again. However, no matter what he decides, his legacy will last forever.