

# Jersey Boys - too good to be true

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

12 Aug 2014

There are two words that will change your life: Jersey Boys! The multi-award-winning stage show you'll never forget, and now a film you will always remember. From the spine-chilling first notes of music underscoring the logos before the film begins, to its emotional and rousing credit sequence, Jersey Boys is a perfectly crafted masterwork and an ultimate cinematic experience.

Having seen the stage show many times, the thrill of watching it burst into life on the big screen, magnifying it 10 times, is just as emotional and gut-wrenching as seeing it live.



Clint Eastwood knows how to tell a great story well and he handles the adaptation delicately, almost like a favourite child, allowing the theatricality and drama of stage, the fictional reality of film, and the sound of music to blend perfectly into a magical harmony that offers the best of all possible worlds.

When live shows mutate from stage to screen, the language and particular nature and integrity of its expression and the uniqueness of its medium are often sacrificed, if not destroyed, but with Jersey Boys, Eastwood - being the consummate artisan he is - collaborated closely with Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice (who wrote the musical book and screenplay), composer Bob Gaudio and producer Frankie Valli, celebrating the glory and magnificent supremacy of this outstanding musical drama. Eastwood gracefully allows the different mediums to merge into an experience that will be remembered long after you leave the cinema.



**Young men from the wrong side of the track**

"Jersey Boys tells of the rise and fall of the iconic rock 'n roll group The Four Seasons, the story of four young men from the wrong side of the track whose trials and triumphs are accompanied by the songs that influenced a generation, including: Sherry, Big Girls Don't Cry, Walk Like A Man, Dawn, Rag Doll, Bye Bye Baby, Who Loves You, and many more.

The film is a pleasant reminder of why their songs have remained in the public consciousness-some for more than half a century-but also revealing the surprising origins of this seemingly clean-cut, all-American rock band.

The film is based on the Tony Award-winning, smash hit musical, which has struck a chord with audiences worldwide, becoming one of the longest running shows in Broadway history (it has been running for more than eight years) and a sensation in virtually every city in which the show has been mounted, both in the US and successful tours around the globe.

The drama of their lives and the passion of their music are interwoven into a tightly-knit tapestry of story and action, reality and fantasy, with the vibrant characters truly bursting to life.



## Heavenly casting

The casting is heavenly: John Lloyd Young reprises his portrayal of the legendary lead singer of The Four Seasons: Frankie Valli, for which Young won a Tony Award, as well as Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Theatre World Awards. He is the first American actor ever to win all four major awards for a Broadway debut. Young also sang lead vocals on the Grammy-winning, certified-Platinum Jersey Boys cast album.

Erich Bergen stars as Bob Gaudio, who wrote or co-wrote all of the group's biggest hits; he also played the role of Gaudio in the first national tour of Jersey Boys, as well as the Las Vegas and Los Angeles productions.

Michael Lomenta and Vincent Piazza star, respectively, as Nick Massi and Tommy DeVito, two original members of The Four Seasons. Lomenta makes his feature film debut in Jersey Boys, having previously played Massi on stage in the first national tour of the award-winning musical. Piazza is perhaps best known today for his portrayal of gangster Lucky Luciano

on the acclaimed HBO series Boardwalk Empire, currently filming the fifth and final season of the show.

There are also great performances from Christopher Walken as mobster Gyp DeCarlo, Mike Doyle as the enigmatic Bob Crewe, an ingenious record producer and the co-writer of some of their biggest hits, Renée Marino as Frankie's first wife, Mary Delgado (having previously played the part on Broadway and on the national tour), and Erica Piccininni as Frankie Valli's second wife, Lorraine (she made her Broadway debut in the original company of Jersey Boys, creating the role of Lorraine, and makes her film debut reprising the role). It's also great to see South African actor David Newton strut his stuff as Delgado's date.

Jersey Boys is a story anyone can easily relate to and fully immerse themselves in, speaking a universal language of the importance of friends and family, the urge to belong and make a difference in the world, and the passion of self-expression at its most profound.

The boys from Jersey changed their world. They will change yours. It is just too good to be true.

## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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