

3/19. EAST MEETS WEST - with The Beach Boys

(Bob Gaudio/Bob Crewe)

(*) FBI single #7701 (1984)

At first glance, the *idea* of a 4 Seasons-Beach Boys rivalry seems to have legs. They're evenly matched adversaries: harmony-reliant, falsetto-powered, the Jersey boys and the Cali kids both made their Top 40 debuts in August '62. Both were American survivors of the British Invasion, both stalled in their respective lanes when psychedelia barreled down the turnpike, and both reignited their careers in the mid-'70s. Each has since prospered in a variety of comebacks and incarnations.

And there were the perceived disses: that "Dawn" flip side "No Surfin' Today," where the Surfer Girl drowns in a sea of harps and finger-snaps; that admonition on the fade of "Surfers Rule" ("4 Seasons, you better believe it"). But really, I love both groups more than any other. There's something stirring, emotional—hell, spiritual—about those intersecting vocal vectors and nave-pitched top lines. If you want a turf battle, why not The Beach Boys and The 4 Seasons vs. everybody else?

To these ears, 100 percent Italian-American and native Californian, the musical affinity between the Seasons and The Beach Boys is what makes the notion of a Gaudio-helmed summit between Frankie Valli, Mike Love, and the Wilsons such a cool proposition. And that prescient verse about "Driving down the Jersey Shore/Riding 'round La Jolla" is a gas. It was in that beach town 20 years after this track was cut that *Jersey Boys* made its debut and began its record-breaking run.

—Gene Sculatti, California

In the early '60s The 4 Seasons were my favorite group. I thought they were fantastic. The voice blend was fantastic. The competition helped me to get cracking. It inspired me, because they made good music. I went to the piano thinking I could top their music. The Seasons are a very competitive group, although not to a fault. They do take their work very seriously. I could see why they would want to compete with us. "East Meets West" is an ultimate statement of ego. Those 4 Seasons are full of it, aren't they?

—Brian Wilson, California

