**Jersey Boys**

Welcome to this introduction to **Jersey Boys** by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice with music by Bob Gaudio and lyrics by Bob Crewe. It has been directed by Des McAnuff.

The production lasts for approximately two hours and thirty minutes, including a twenty-minute interval.

The following introduction will take about **15** minutes to listen to and includes information about **Jersey Boys** with descriptions of the set, characters and costumes. For access information for the Theatre please click on the theatre’s name, on the show page.

Please note that there is a gunshot in Act 1 and there will be cigarette smoking on stage.

The audio description will be given for VocalEyes by Di Langford.

Jersey Boys is a fast-moving musical that tells the true offstage history of the pop group **Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons**, and their rocky journey from the rough life of an industrial town to fame and fortune. A cast of 21 performers and musicians recreate the story through the songs made famous by the group, interspersed with short scenes of dialogue. The action takes place in various locations in America from the 1960’s to the present day.

The story is told in four parts, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. The four main characters Frankie, Tommy, Nick, and Bob, who make up the group, tell the story from their own point of view, each of them stepping forward into a spotlight and addressing the audience directly. They play instruments and sing live, recreating the original performances of The Four Seasons. When performing they wear black trousers with lilac shirts and purple ties and single breasted bright red jackets, trimmed with purple on the collar and pockets. Later they wear the same style of jacket but in light blue or grey, with toning shirts and ties. At the peak of their fame the lapels of their jackets are decorated with glittering sequins. They sing behind microphones on stands, doing identical choreographed movements.

As we enter the auditorium the set is open to us. It’s some ten metres across and six metres deep with a section of high mesh fence standing across the back, making the space reminiscent of an urban ballpark. Everything is made of dull grey metal creating a cold and barren atmosphere. A stainless-steel scaffold housing the stage lights is on view, running up and across the inside edges of the proscenium arch of the stage.

Visible through the mesh fence, a three-metre-high steel walkway runs across the back of the space, then angles from the back towards us, finishing in the front right corner. Here a spiral staircase twists down from the walkway to floor level.

In the back left corner furthest away from us more steps lead up to the walkway, which is sometimes used to suggest locations such as a prison, or simply a pathway for a character to travel along. Its permanent presence is a constant reminder of the harsh industrial environment where the Jersey boys have their roots.

More locations appear towards the back where the mesh fence stretches the full height and width of the stage and is framed by a second aluminium scaffold, like the one at the front, hung with theatre lights. A section in the middle, seven metres high by three wide is periodically raised to reveal an area which becomes a variety of locations - a large window descends to create the operation room of a recording studio. The producer and technician stand behind it while the artistes sing standing at microphones in front. Or it becomes various nightclubs where musicians play drums, bass and guitar. Projections on the back wall create the town of New Jersey with pylons and cooling towers silhouetted against an industrial orange sky.

As the action begins and the mesh fence is lifted away, the setting comes to life, with coloured lights, bright costumes and a swift and snappy journey through a variety of locations including the clubs and recording studios that mark the band’s journey to fame.

The four main characters are supported by seventeen other performers, who appear as customers, dancers, singers and play smaller roles. When the action begins in the early sixties, some of the younger men still wear formal suits or conservative slacks and sweaters favoured by their fathers. Others are beginning to express their independence in jeans and sneakers, tee shirts and baseball jackets. For the most part, they keep their hair cut short and well-trimmed with a neat side parting. Older businessmen with connections to the Mafia demand respect in smart three piece suits.

Fashions for women include scoop-necked, sleeveless cotton frocks with bell shaped knee length skirts, or for an evening out, well-fitted, figure-hugging cocktail dresses and high- heeled shoes. They wear their hair long or elaborately styled, or as they grow older, caught back in a neat chignon. Some of the bolder girls show quite a lot of bare flesh – wearing only a bra top with shorts or tiny mini-skirts revealing their long legs.

As the scenes flow quickly into each other, costumes are sometimes changed on stage during the action. Items appear suggesting different locations - brightly coloured neon signs are lowered in; bar counters slide onto the stage; an illuminated cross sets a scene in a church. The cast wheel on furniture - a door represents the offices of music producers, a bed suggests a room in a hotel, a bench a hospital corridor. A drummer sits at his kit on a large rostrum which glides around the stage with no apparent effort, appearing and disappearing on a hydraulic lift.

More projections appear on three screens that sometimes hang above the stage about two thirds of the way back. They announce the time of year or evoke the period with still images in the style of pop artist Roy Lichtenstein. The illustrations are painted in bold blocks of primary colour like in a comic, with the characters drawn in a thick, black outline. Often speech or thought bubbles appear with the characters’ conversations or thoughts written in them.

Other projections are moving. In a television studio, the views of the onstage cameras are shown live on the screens above; and in an episode of The Ed Sullivan Show the live images sit side by side with audience reactions from the real show from the sixties, as young girls bounce up and down with excitement in their seats.

We first meet the members of the band in the state of New Jersey. The oldest of the four is **Tommy de Vito.** Tommy’s a cocky character in his mid twenties, by turns fun-loving and menacing. He is already a notorious gambler and a seasoned criminal, having spent time in prison. He plays lead guitar.

Tommy introduces us tosixteen-year-old **Frankie Castellucio**. Frankie is slight and boyish, a reserved and self contained figure with a serious expression. A promising singer, with an unusual range, Frankie is easily influenced by the older and more experienced Tommy. At first he is unobtrusive, but as the group’s status grows, so does Frankie’s confidence.

The third member of the group is **Nick Massi,** who plays bass guitar. Nick is recognisable by his deep voice. He holds himself very upright, often standing back from the action, or acting as peacemaker when disagreements arise.

Thefourth member is **Bob Gaudio** - heplays keyboard and is a talented composer and musician. At first Bob appears less streetwise than the others and gives the impression of being a fresh-faced schoolboy. But he’s earnest about his music and his air of innocence hides a quick mind and a good grasp of business.

Soon after forming, the group develops a fan club. At The Silhouette Club Frankie catches the interest of **Mary Delgado**. Mary is older than Frankie and very aware of herself and her attributes. She has curly auburn hair and a trim figure and when we first meet her at the club she’s wearing a pink dress with lace trim around the skirt and pink high heeled sandals. Mary regularly has a lit cigarette in her hand.

A pivotal character in the band’s rise to fame is **Bob Crewe,** a successful music producer. He’s tall and slim, with camp mannerisms. Bob’s clothes look expensive – pastel coloured pullovers worn with open-necked shirts and narrow slacks. He moves lightly around the studio like a dancer, or lolls on a sofa giving orders.

**Gyp de Carlo,** is an influentialMafia boss. He wears a wellcut suit and sits alone at the Sea Breeze Club, looking well fed and prosperous, leaning back in his chair and puffing on a large and expensive cigar.

**Joe Pesci** is a manic little operator who works at a bowling alley and trails the band, ever eager to please. Below average height Joe has dark hair brushed into a quiff and wears a baseball jacket and sneakers. Full of ideas and suggestions he finds it impossible to keep still.

As the group achieves success they are interviewed by **Lorraine,** an attractive young reporter. Lorraine is a shapely redhead, in a lilac pencil skirt and matching jacket.

Later we meet **Francine,** Mary and Frankie’s wayward teenage daughter. She wears a short white jacket, jeans and sneakers, and her long brown hair is cut with a straight fringe.

**Frankie’s mother** appears very briefly, in a pink cardigan over a pink and blue dress, her hair caught back neatly into a chignon.

An all girl singing group - **The Angels**, has three members – a blonde, a brunette and a redhead – they wear short skirts decorated with swinging fringes, or shiny dresses which shimmer in the light as they perform.

Weaving in and out of the narrative are various other characters - Hank Majewskiwho auditions for the group, Donnie, a jewel thief and his sidekick Stosh, Tommy’s brother, **Nick** de Vito, Barry Belson a radio DJ and Norm Waxman a money lender. Members of the cast also play detectives, cops, a priest, and studio technicians.

**Production credits**

Scenic design for Jersey Boys is by Klara Zieglerova

The costume design is by Jess Goldstein

It was choreographed by Sergio Trujillo

The musical director is Dan Wikinson

And the production was directed by Des McAnuff

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