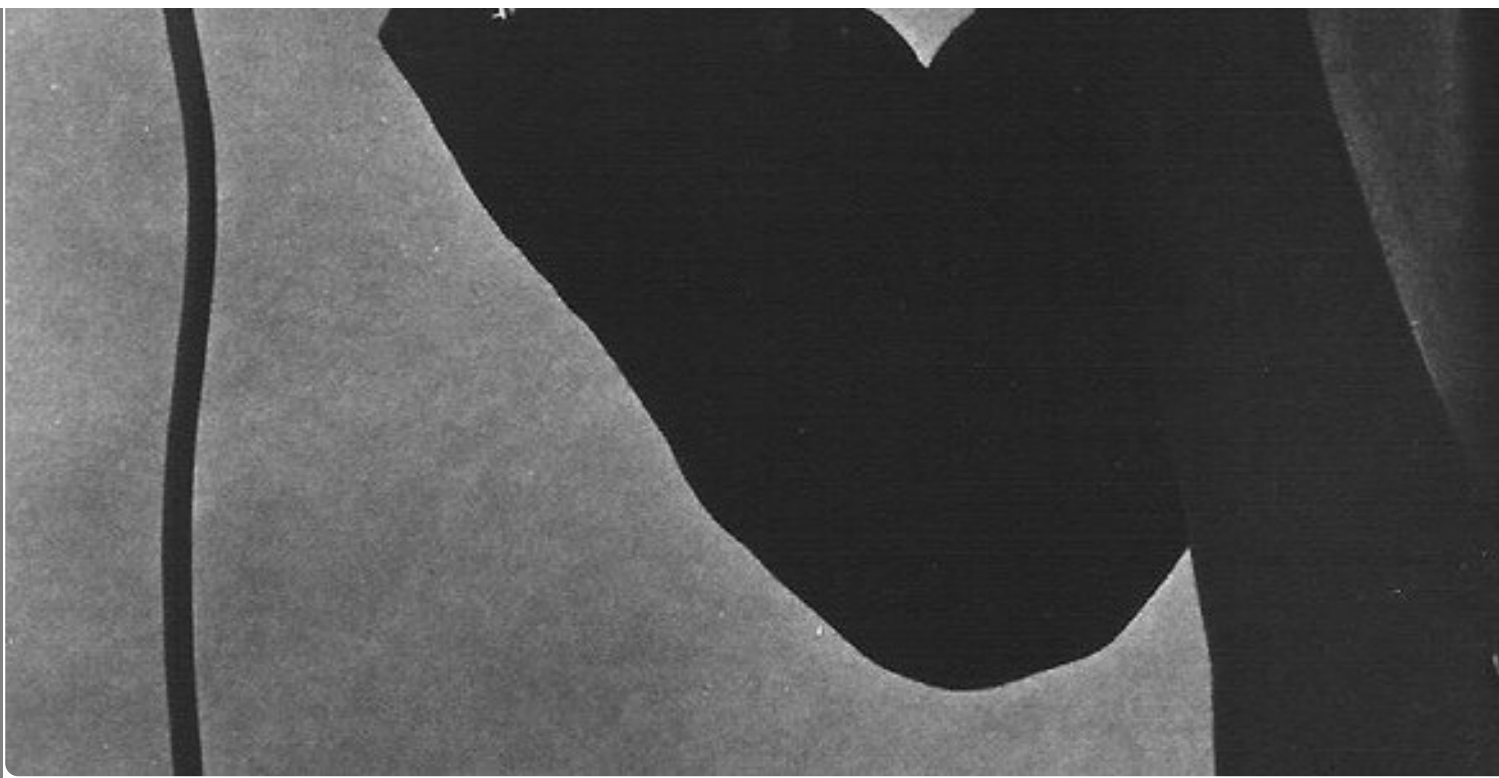


# Sergio Franchi

**Sergio Franchi** (April 6, 1926 – May 1, 1990), born **Sergio Franci Galli**, was a success in the United States and internationally after gaining notice in Britain. He was signed to him to a seven-year contract and in October of that year Franchi appeared on [Hall](#). [Sol Hurok](#) managed Franchi's initial American concert tour.

Franchi became a headliner in Las Vegas, and starred in concerts and cabarets. His early education and studies had been directed toward an operatic career, but he instead found success in musical theater. Franchi performed musical comedies on stage, appeared on numerous television shows, and acted in a picture. He became an American citizen in 1972. After gaining success, Franchi dedicated his time and talent to many causes. For his longtime support of Boys' and Girls' Clubs, he was awarded the title of cavaliere in the Order of Merit (Stella al merito del lavoro) by the





Sergio Franchi in 1970

## Background information

Birth name	Sergio Franci Galli
Born	April 6, 1926 <a href="#">Codogno, Province of Lodi, Italy</a>
Died	May 1, 1990 (aged 64) <a href="#">Stonington, Connecticut, United States</a>
Genres	<a href="#">Traditional pop music</a> , <a href="#">Neapolitan and Italian songs</a> , <a href="#">sho</a>
Occupation(s)	Singer, actor, entertainer
Instruments	<a href="#">Voice</a> , <a href="#">guitar</a> , <a href="#">piano</a>
Years active	1953–1989
Labels	<a href="#">RCA Victor</a> , <a href="#">Columbia Records</a> , <a href="#">United Artists Records</a> ,
Associated acts	<a href="#">Dana Valery</a>
Website	<a href="#">Official site</a> <span><span>↗</span></span>

## Early life in Italy



Young Sergio Franchi Galli in Italy

Sergio was one of three children born to a [Neapolitan](#) father and [Ligurian](#) (Genoa) mother. His two older brothers (born 17 years after the older two) were all born in the Lombardy District. This included [Codogno](#) - where he was born. Some geographical over-simplifications result in his mother's birthplace, [Fausta's \(Dana Valery\)](#) birthplace as "near Milan."<sup>[2]</sup> Because the family also lived in [Cremona](#) his "hometown" at different periods in his life.<sup>[3]</sup> Sergio Franchi stated that his birthplace was [Codogno](#) in the province of [Lodi](#),<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> An uncle who owned a property in the [Italian Riviera](#)) was instrumental in family life on various occasions.<sup>[2][6]</sup>

As a child, Sergio sang for the family with his father, who played the piano and

As a child, Sergio sang for the family with his father, who played the piano and hunchback in a school play.<sup>[1]</sup> Young Franchi formed a three-piece band at age 15 and sang with a male vocal group in local jazz clubs. But, in spite of his musical talents, he pursued a career in engineering. Franchi pursued, but did not finish this training. A businessman who owned several shops, but lost all of his assets during World War II, he became friendly with a Captain in the South African medical corps who, on an officer's suggestion that South Africa would be a land of more opportunity, accompanied the family to Johannesburg in 1947 (Fausta was four years old)<sup>[9]</sup> when Sergio completed his college education.

## Career

### Early career in South Africa

When the family arrived in Johannesburg, they found that the senior Galli (skilled carpenter) had a successful furniture factory.<sup>[2]</sup> Young Sergio Galli began using his skills as an apprentice to his father as a designer of commercial and industrial interiors. He also began singing. His powerful and exceptional voice attracted growing attention; hearing him sing, the Johannesburg Operatic and Dramatic Society (JODS) tracked him down and offered him the role of Dana Valery (played one of the children in this 1953 production.) Speaking little Italian and English phonetically, Franchi's enthusiastically received debut was followed by leading roles in *The New Moon* (1953), *The New Moon* (1954), and *The Vagabond King* (1955).<sup>[10]</sup> Johannesburg had collapsed after WWII, and it was not possible at this time to earn a full-time salary.

Alessandro Rota, a successful operatic tenor in the Southern Hemisphere, came to Johannesburg and helped form The National Opera Association. Rota began making a difference by performing short operas, and then full opera productions.<sup>[13][14]</sup> Under Rota's tutelage, Sergio developed his vocal range and technique.<sup>[7]</sup> About his first experience with the fledgling opera company, Rota later stated this initial experience in opera was a disaster: He sang the tenor role in *The Vagabond King* and the soprano could sing her role in French!<sup>[3]</sup> But the company quickly matured

at least two successful full opera productions - Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in 1955 and Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in 1956. Some references also list Sergio Franchi singing lead performances in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in 1956. Sometime after the 1956 London production of *Grab Me a Gondola* premiere production of the musical, and made his very first recording with the cast.<sup>[17]</sup>

With these years of performing experiences, and aspiring to a career in opera, Franchi sought opportunities and operatic studies. While on a performing tour of South Africa in 1957, he was encouraged by James Gilmore, who encouraged Franchi to meet with him if he came to London.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Return to Europe

Leaving for Italy in 1959, Franchi scored some early successes. He was among 250 other singers.<sup>[19]</sup> He was offered the role of Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, which he performed in 1960. In 1983 about hoping to make it in Italian opera, Franchi stated that he didn't think the time, all seemed bright, so he sent for his wife and children. Suddenly, the dream was broke.<sup>[7]</sup>

A Canadian newspaper summarized this period by stating that "Good things : knocking and counting pennies routine."<sup>[20]</sup> This was a very difficult period in Franchi's life (and his English-speaking wife and children on South African passports), the time he spent in Italy. So, from his Italian base in Milan and Alassio,<sup>[6]</sup> Franchi began recording and performing, having hits with "Amore mio" and "I tuoi occhi verde."<sup>[19]</sup> An album of Italian songs in America and Canada followed. [After his initial success in America, these recordings were popular with American audiences.] As a result of his personal appearances and recordings, Franchi's activity in musical circles that his activity was being tracked on *Billboard*.<sup>[21]</sup> Early in 1960, Franchi had a short-lived London production of *The Golden Touch*. His singing performance was recorded by agent, James Gilmore, arranged several TV appearances for Franchi, and the

Republic) allowed him to return to his family in London.<sup>[3]</sup>

Franchi made several appearances on ATV's *Startime*.<sup>[23]</sup> And then, during a t Palladium,<sup>[24]</sup> Franchi made two TV appearances on *Sunday Night at the Lond* many performers, and the most popular TV show in Britain.<sup>[25]</sup> Franchi's secon performance, in that it led to a cascade of events which catapulted Sergio F performance that night was [Norman Luboff](#), who called RCA Victor about the taped selections sent to New York.

With RCA approval, Luboff facilitated Franchi's signature on an exclusive sev issued his records on the prestigious [Red Seal](#) label.<sup>[27]</sup> Sol Hurok was engag American tour, and (while in London) Franchi recorded his first RCA Victor alb concurrent with his American debut.<sup>[8][28]</sup>

## Stardom in America

### The 1960s





Ed Sullivan presents Sergio Franchi on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

Ready to begin his tour, Sergio Franchi arrived in New York on September 25, 1962, and launched an all-out saturation campaign to launch his American career. Concurrent with the tour were industry introductions in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City, where he performed extensively.<sup>[30][31]</sup> Sergio Franchi made his American television debut with an appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on September 14, 1962;<sup>[1]</sup> and his Sol Hurok concert debut at Carnegie Hall on October 21, 1962. On the microphone, a New York reviewer commented favorably upon Franchi's "big, bold sound" and upon Franchi's ability to establish instant rapport with his audience.<sup>[32]</sup>

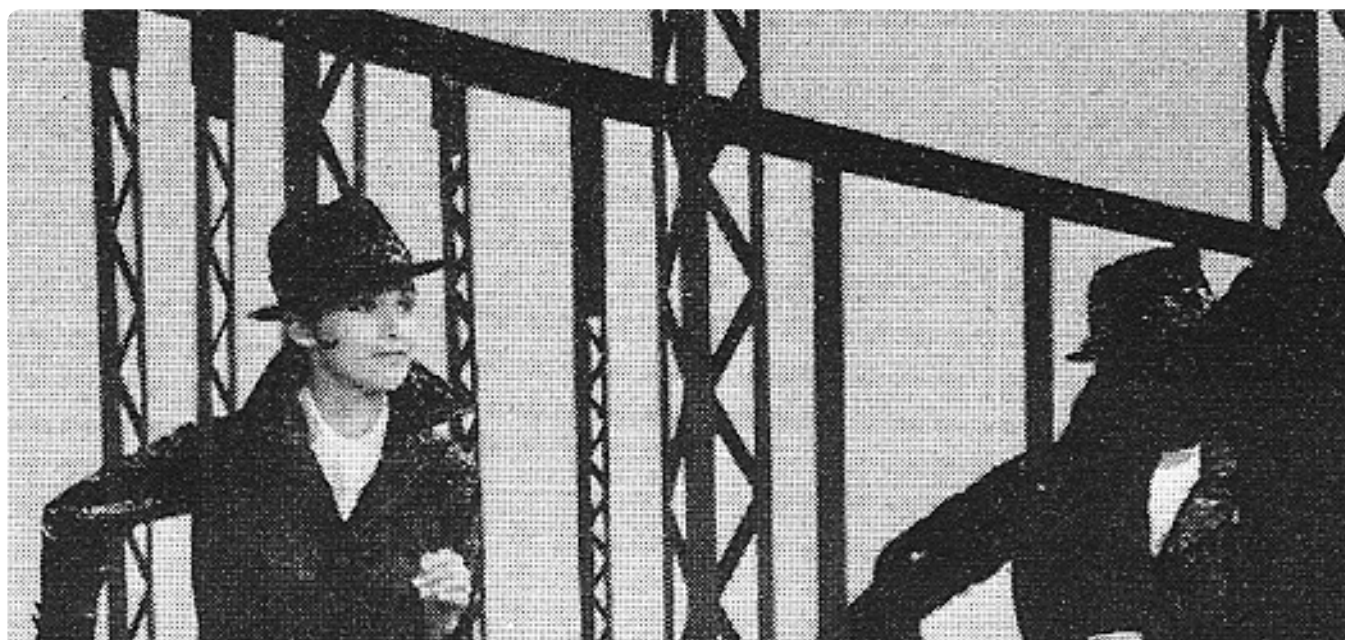
**Ed Sullivan** was in the audience that night and soon contracted for future Franchi appearances on his show the following week (October 28, 1962). [Sergio Franchi was one of the top three most favorite guests," with 24 appearances].<sup>[1]</sup> Within a week of the release of the sales of Franchi's first LP album proved most pleasing to RCA Victor,<sup>[33]</sup> the album



History (a 60s pop-culture magazine);<sup>[34]</sup> and it peaked on the *Billboard 200* and was concluded with successful concert appearances in Washington, D.C.'s *Capitol Hall*...where he played to packed audiences (capacity 3,600) for four days—

Sergio Franchi made his nightclub debut at the Empire Room of the *Waldorf-Astoria* met *Metropolitan Opera* soprano *Anna Moffo*, with whom he was to collaborate. His next appearance was at Miami's *Eden Roc Hotel* in a double-billing with *Barbra Streisand* for a benefit at the *Paramount Theater* in West Palm Beach hosted by *Bob Hope*.<sup>[40]</sup> His TV debut at the *Palmer House* Empire Room.<sup>[41]</sup> Two more Ed Sullivan appearances followed. He made his Nevada casino debut starring in *The International Follies* at the *Nugget*.

He made his Las Vegas debut at the *Sahara Hotel* as the opening act for *Bob Hope*. His appearances were interspersed with three European events: one to appear in a German television production (1963 DVD, *Sing, aber spiel nicht mit mir*);<sup>[44]</sup> another trip to Vienna to collaborate on the recording, *The Great Moments from Die Fledermaus* (released in 1964); and a performance with *Wally Stott*, *Women in My Life* (1964). Franchi recorded three more albums for *Red Seal*: *Italy*, *The Dream Duet* and *Broadway, I Love You*. All three of these *Red Seal* albums were released in 1963.<sup>[35]</sup> His debut album, *Romantic Italian Songs* continued on the *Billboard* charts. He performed for *Juliet Prowse* in an acclaimed performance at the *Cocoanut Grove*—Los Angeles.





Sergio Franchi & Nick Castle Dancers, Meredith Willson Special (1964)

Sergio Franchi's February 1964 appearance at the [Sahara Hotel](#) in Las Vegas performance eclipsed that of the star performer, and "he kept getting stand magazine called him the "new favorite son of Las Vegas."<sup>[47]</sup> Franchi's talents featured on six television specials: with "[Victor Borge](#) at Carnegie Hall" ("the Star Parade special.<sup>[49]</sup> a Bob Hope Chrysler Special (Franchi "stole the show appearances on [The Hollywood Palace](#). Franchi teamed with [Jimmy Durante](#)'s appearances in Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C.<sup>[51][52]</sup> Sergio Franchi made "Chicagoland Music Festival" in August 1964, with an audience of 56,000 at So with a starring performance at the Coconut Grove,<sup>[54]</sup> (where he recorded his album on October 15, 1964).<sup>[55]</sup> and a headlining return to Las Vegas at the S

1964 was an important year for Franchi for other professional and personal reasons. To reach a more mainstream pop audience, RCA Victor switched Franchi from the Red Seal label (see *Exciting Voice of Sergio Franchi* album), and Sergio Franchi changed his professional name to [Sergio Franchi Agency](#).<sup>[57]</sup> Although he had already received offers to star in several films, Franchi had only a few more years.<sup>[58]</sup> Confident of his new successes, Franchi moved his family to New York City, filed the first papers in declaration of his intent to become an American citizen, and began negotiations for a role in a Broadway musical.





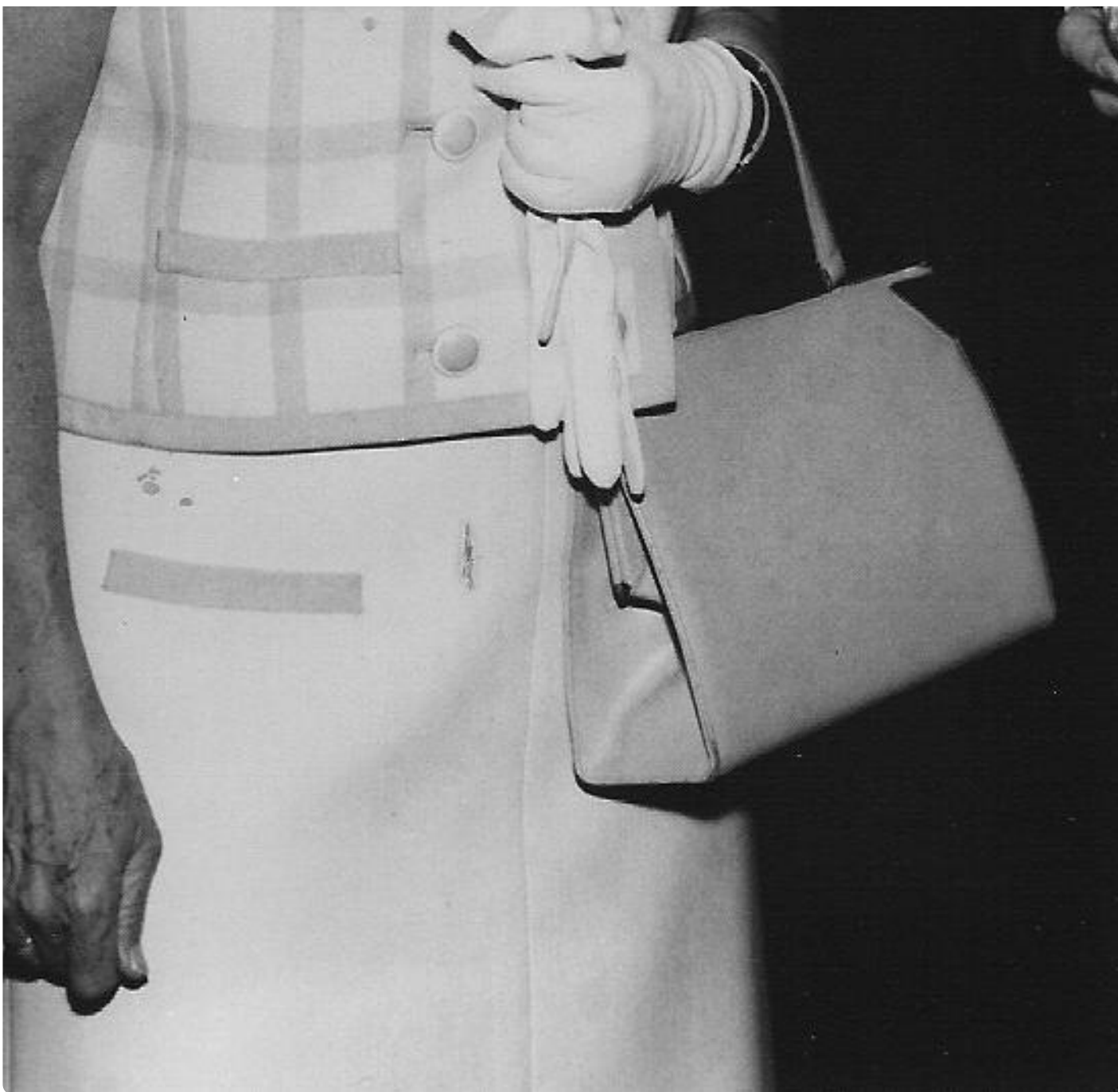
Sergio Franchi & Elizabeth Allen in *Do I Hear a Waltz?*

It was Meredith Willson who initially brought Sergio Franchi's name and talent to Broadway. She was casting the leading role of the romantic Venetian shopkeeper, Renato D'Amico. In a *Time* Magazine article, a successful show-business personality like Sergio Franchi was described as "the new Broadway...especially in selling blocks of theater party tickets."<sup>[61]</sup> (Regarding the production, which provided \$450,000 and Columbia Records provided about \$105,640 of initial financing, it indicated a lengthy run despite mixed reviews.)<sup>[62]</sup> Franchi liked the score and the production, although it meant giving up a large portion of a year's income from his other work. He joined the show on January 25, and the Broadway show was the focus of Franchi's endeavors until 1965. Rodgers wrote the song "Bargaining" especially to showcase Franchi's vocal talent. Having made his mark on Broadway with acclaim for his vocal performance (and a high demand for Sergio Franchi appearances continued strong in 1965...with performances at an annual luncheon honoring the First Lady;<sup>[64]</sup> a televised Madison Square Garden concert;<sup>[66]</sup> and continued activity in recording albums and singles for RCA Victor.

1965 was a very big year for Franchi in terms of notable albums. RCA Victor and Columbia Records cast album of *Do I Hear a Waltz?*; his *Live! at the Coconut Grove* all-star album; and *The Songs of Richard Rodgers*; and he recorded his evergreen Christmas album. Franchi's *Live!* and Christmas albums both peaked on the *Billboard* 200. Capitol Records and Durium recordings he made in Europe were also released this year. [See Discography, 1965: one containing two selections from "Waltz," and "[Moon Over Naples](#)." Franchi never had a "hit single," and at least one reviewer stated that Franchi was not in the market.<sup>[67]</sup> RCA Victor appeared happy to have a successful album artist, and Franchi was not alone among other artists (e.g. [John Gary](#) and, in terms of country music, [Eddy Arnold](#))<sup>[68]</sup> who wished to have more influence on musical choices for his singles recordings.

to record it. The lyrics for "Moon Over Naples" were then written by [Charlie S](#) right away, it was re-written as "Blue Spanish Eyes," but given to another artist in other affairs, and did not record another single for RCA Victor for at least a year.





Sergio Franchi sings for Lady Bird Johnson (1965)

Over the next several years, Franchi's career shifted into high-gear with a pack  
He did take time out in 1966 to welcome his sister, Dana Valery, to the State  
performance in "[Wait a Minim!](#)"<sup>[70]</sup> On the casino circuit, Franchi appeared in L  
bookings (usually 3–4 weeks each) opening for [Buddy Hackett](#)<sup>[71][72][73]</sup> and a  
[Osmond Brothers](#) opening for him (Franchi now called "one of the world's top  
return engagements at the Copacabana,<sup>[75]</sup> and at the Plaza Hotel Persian Ro  
performances at the [Century Plaza Hotel](#)'s Westside Room (with Phil Silvers)

Francisco Hotel; and several weeks at [The Roosevelt New Orleans Hotel](#) Blue

On the International scene, Sergio Franchi was a regular annual performer for Puerto Rico during their high winter season;<sup>[79]</sup> and he made several Centennial televised CBC [Centennial International](#) series.<sup>[80]</sup>

At the start of his popular annual appearances at [Palumbos](#) in Philadelphia, he sang a single note.<sup>[3]</sup> In April 1968 he was the featured guest at the 78th Annual Sweeney Concert in Rockford, IL. His performance garnered front-page coverage.<sup>[81]</sup> He continued to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Hollywood Palace*, *The*





Sergio Franchi as Tufa in *The Secret of Santa Vittoria*

In 1963 (noting that RCA Victor received as much fan mail for [Mario Lanza](#) as from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to star in a film on Lanza's life story. Hedda Hopp be remembered as the man who played Lanza. If I didn't do it well, heaven he



supportive role in [United Artists' \*The Secret of Santa Vittoria\*](#), starring [Anthony Quinn](#), where he was the waiting around. He stated he preferred performing on Broadway, where he could be seen and heard by a new audience.<sup>[3]</sup> [Stanley Kramer](#) was delighted by Franchi's performance, and stated that he had never heard a peasant to peasant beautifully.<sup>[84]</sup> Franchi also starred in the film's soundtrack recording, "Stay," which was nominated for a [Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song](#).

After his Broadway role in *Waltz*, Franchi continued to be considered for new roles, but it was more than a decade away. He had recorded several more albums for RCA Victor, including *Heart* in 1967; *I'm a Fool to Want You* and *Wine and Song* in 1968. However, in 1969: he signed instead with United Artists Records, with whom he had made *Vittoria*. Then later (in 1971), he signed his next recording contract with [Metromedia](#).

As the recording industry increasingly came to be dominated by the tastes of the younger generation, Franchi and his contemporaries found their most popular reception in supper clubs. In 1969, he was in demand in New York City, where many great popular singers of his generation were in demand.<sup>[87]</sup>

## The 1970s



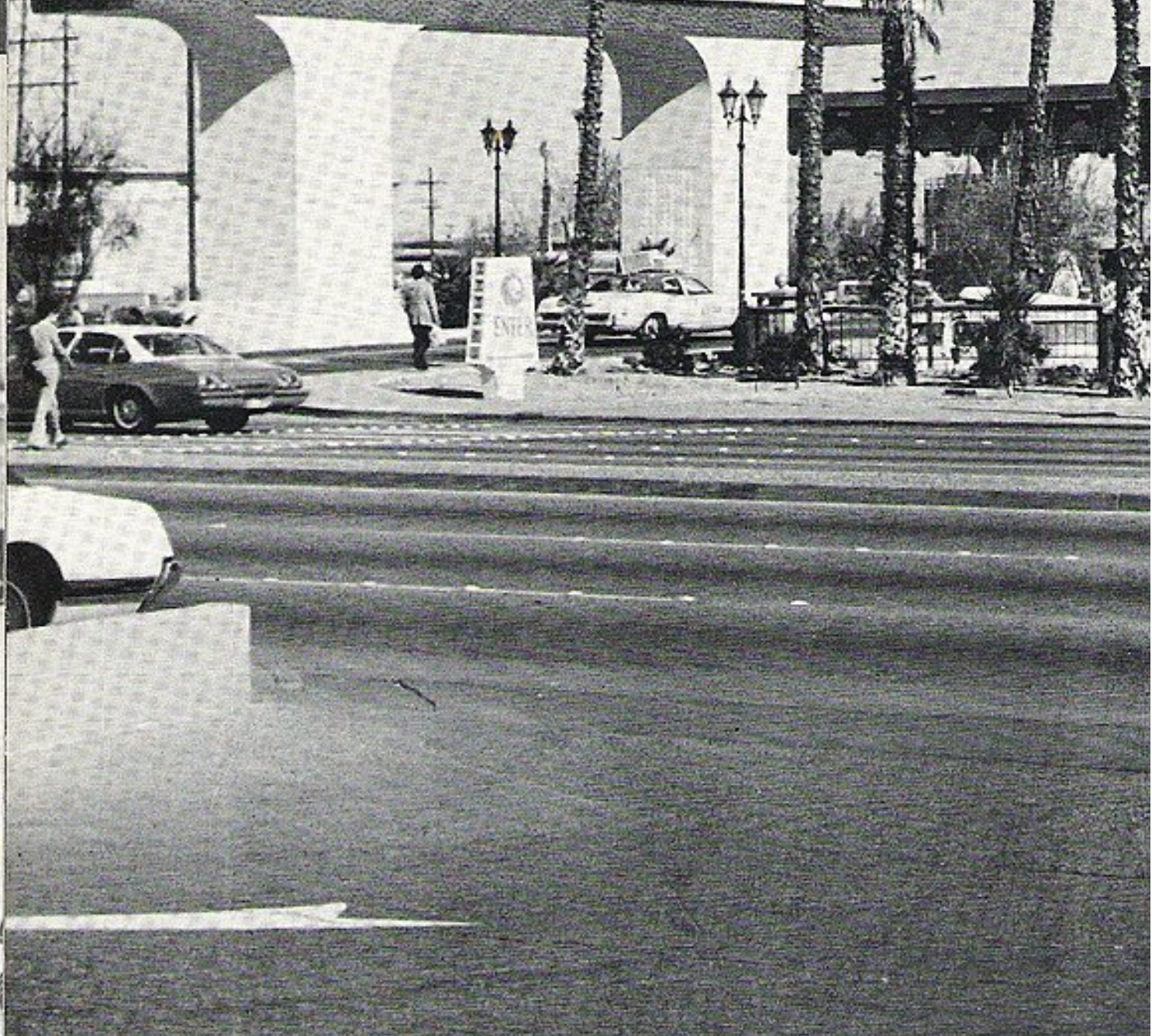
**ZIEGFELD THEATRE**

**DONN ARDEN'S  
HALLELUJAH  
HOLLYWOOD**

**OPENING SOON**

**FABIAN CARMEN McRAE  
KIRBY STONE  
JERRY SUN SHOW LOU STYLES & STYLISTS**

**SHOW /  
JAN ALA  
EXC...  
LIGHTLY  
MON...**





Sergio Franchi with his Billboard at MGM Grand Hotel, 1974

During the 1970s, gambling was not the main attraction in Vegas. With the cocaine and the dominance of the younger generation in the recording industry—Las Vegas was a place of entertainment, and the place to catch a live performance of your favorite stars represented, and Sergio Franchi was one of the most prominent headliners. [89] He performed at the [Flamingo Hotel](#) in a November 1968 booking with [Hines, Hines, and Dad](#). [90] This was a memorable duo with their unique blend of humor and Franchi's singing, and it continued to the end of Franchi's life. After their 1969 SRO booking at the Flamingo Hotel, he was paid \$25,000 a week. [91] In 1970 Franchi was voted Best Male Vocalist by *Fabulous* magazine (the magazine voted Best Female Vocalist.) [92] In 1971, he signed a three-year contract with MGM Grand and performed regularly until the end of 1973.

He also worked bookings at [Harrah's Reno](#) Headliner Room in 1972 [94] and in 1973. Franchi became a U.S. citizen, [96] and by 1973, his business manager reported Franchi had his biggest Las Vegas booking success occurred at the end of 1973. At the time the largest resort hotel in the world) opened at the end of 1973, Franchi signed a three-year contract to begin in February 1974. [98] His salary was more than twice that of other headliners (around \$220K monthly). [88]

After returning from Italy, Franchi returned to his cabaret performances with his wife (who reportedly had not been in a night-club for years) flew with his wife from Rome to Las Vegas for the Coconut Grove openings (Dana Valery opened for him) on February 25, 1969.

a "record-setting" month in April, 1969.<sup>[100]</sup> and appeared at the Fairmont Ver in Chicago, in July 1970 Sergio Franchi began almost a decade of annual perf with [Joan Rivers](#) as his opening act;<sup>[102]</sup> and, in 1975, with sister, Dana Valery

In October 1970 Franchi did a whirlwind 21 cities tour beginning at the Saska year absence, Franchi returned to London for three weeks in 1972 at [The Ta](#)

have allowed Franchi to be exported."<sup>[8]</sup> Franchi also had the opportunity to p discovering him, a.k.a. the [Norman Luboff Choir](#) on November 16, 1974 for th Artist Series.<sup>[105]</sup> In 1976, Franchi also took the opportunity to take his MGM

Valery at the new 2,900-seat Film Trust Arena in Johannesburg, South Africa

The summer of 1969 was auspicious for Franchi fans in the when he launched appearances on the summer circuit concert agenda in the Eastern states.<sup>[107]</sup>

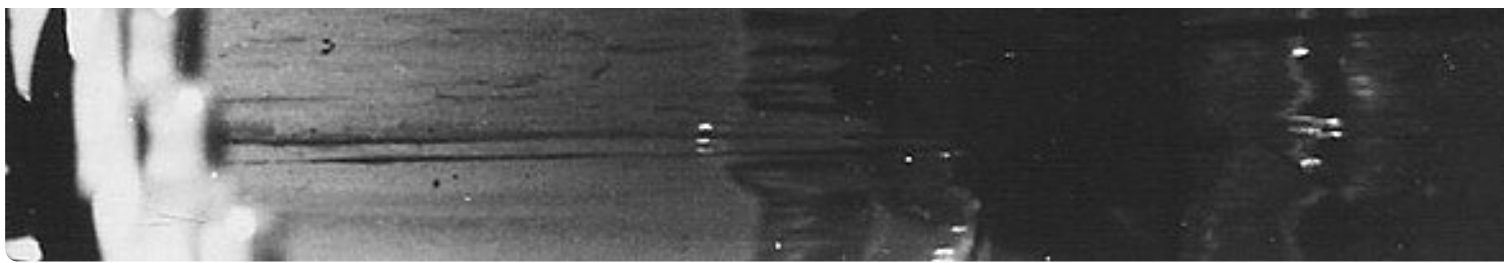
appearances as *The Sergio Franchi Show* with a line-up of memorable co-sta record-setting shows (in some cases, seven to ten days to accommodate de

important part of his professional life over the next two decades. In 1975 Se

South Africa to watch his famous children perform at the [Westbury Music Fa](#)







During the 1970s, Sergio Franchi continued to receive national exposure through intensive exposure was through his role as the television spokesman for Chrysler's "most extensive ad campaign for a new car line" in their history for the introduction of the Dodge Dart. Franchi was closely identified with the song, "Volare," which he had recorded ten years earlier, making the advertising campaign memorable.<sup>[110]</sup> While Franchi never revealed the details of his compensation, a 1976 article states that celebrities like Franchi were receiving compensation for their endorsements.<sup>[111]</sup> In the recording department, Franchi recorded three new albums for RCA Victor: *House/TeleHouse* (formerly part of Decca) which was marketed extensively in the United States; *DynaHouse* for the Australian market; and his *Con Amore Sergio* album. Recording success came in 1975, when Sergio Franchi was the honored recipient of The Grammy Award for Best Male Vocal Performance in the field of music. Although the critics may have compared and contrasted the various styles of Franchi, the public had no such problems in recognizing the appeal of his music. The years 1977-78 were not particularly good years for Sergio Franchi. He had to cancel his tour in 1977 because of medical treatment in New York; and underwent a subsequent tour performing in the July–October "straw-hat circuit", and then sang in the month of August in Pittsburgh and New Orleans (see below). RCA released a 1977 compilation album on his contract with Franchi-- *Sergio Franchi/Volare*. 1978 was full of changes, and Franchi's tour included Vegas at the Sands Hotel,<sup>[115]</sup> and then with Dana Valery at Chicago's Grand Concourse, a negative review.<sup>[116]</sup> He canceled an August date for Storowton,<sup>[117]</sup> but appeared at the Flamingo Harrah's Reno in October,<sup>[119]</sup> then performed at Stanbaugh Auditorium in Ohio in November. Franchi performed in Vegas during the first five months of 1979, but did not return until 1982: In January 1982, he performed at the Sands Hotel in February<sup>[122]</sup> (both with Ninsey Russell). He appeared

the Frontier Hotel in May with Dana Valery & Nipsey Russell.<sup>[124]</sup> In the second summer circuit, and appeared at Chicago's [Mill Run Playhouse](#);<sup>[125]</sup> and then with Dana Valery & comedian [Mickey Shaughnessy](#)<sup>[126]</sup> During this period, Franchi (with their children now grown) he moved back to his Manhattan apartment. In retirement and wishing to draw his extended family closer, Sergio Franchi put September 1979.

## The 1980s

Through the 1980s, Sergio Franchi's successes of the past two decades now closer to home, and to choose the length of his engagements.<sup>[3]</sup> A typical review of his Symphony Hall performance declared Franchi to be "in top form, physically and a series of flawlessly performed renditions...[Still] comfortable with any kind of peak."<sup>[127]</sup> And a 1981 Front Row performance garnered standing ovations for his personality, splendid dancing, and the "great power, range, and purity of (his) voice." [Sporting Club in Monte Carlo \(with Dana Valery\)](#),<sup>[129]</sup> and an enthusiastic group of fans from the *Société des bains de mer de Monaco* to attend his performance there.<sup>[130]</sup> Franchi also appeared on the television special "The All-Time American Songbook"[See Filmography] and several other concerts highlighted by his extremely successful \$600,000 benefit appearance at the Italian American of the Year Award in New Orleans (see Benefits section below).

Sergio Franchi returned to Broadway in 1983 in the Tony Award-winning musical *Chicago*. His Broadway appearances began on May 9, 1983; and the last nation of his rare in-depth interviews, Franchi revealed that "producer Michael Stewart played the role of Guido Contini," but he was otherwise engaged (although Franchi did come back to Chicago when Julia wished to leave after one year [Julia played the role for 11 months, with Franchi for the second season.<sup>[2]</sup> The producers created new programs and posters for the production, photographed by [Kenn Duncan](#); and Maury Yeston wrote a new ballad, "Now I

gone down in entertainment history with several revivals and a film in 2009 starring Tom Stempel and Day-Lewis performances, Tom Stempel of the online Slant Magazine stated that "he was maybe 1/200th the actor who was the performer the role needed, and that "he was maybe 1/200th the actor who could sing the songs and hold the stage."<sup>[132]</sup> Regarding Sergio Franchi in *Nine - The Musical*, a review found in the literature: *Tommy Tune* took time off from another Broadway show production for the tour, but not all critics were pleased with the changes.<sup>[131]</sup> A reviewer notes that in contrast to the detachment of the original cast, "this production is thanks to Franchi's booming Italian presence."<sup>[133]</sup>



Sergio Franchi in 1986

in Atlantic City (with Foster Brooks);<sup>[134]</sup> and at the Atlantic City Sands Hotel & Casino in 1984. He also opened for Franchi in 1984 at the former Playboy Hotel & Casino.<sup>[137]</sup> and Franchi returned to Atlantic City (in January) for three 1985 engagements.<sup>[138][139][140]</sup> Franchi also made a return to Las Vegas at the Las Vegas Hilton.<sup>[141]</sup> His final Atlantic City appearance was in October



Taking advantage of his intended semi-retirement status after *Nine*, Franchi made several circuit appearances with a select concert group. Sergio Franchi continued to perform at the Pheasant Run Resort in June 1985 and 1986;<sup>[142][143]</sup> at the "Festa Italiana" in February, 1986.<sup>[145]</sup> Other festival appearances featuring Sergio Franchi during 1986;<sup>[146]</sup> Milwaukee's 10th Annual [Festa Italiana](#) (1987),<sup>[147]</sup> the Italian Festival in a very big Pittsburgh tri-state-area Wheeling Italian Festival (with Dana Valery, F

In 1988, Franchi performed a concert in Washington, DC for the Educational and Cultural Center. The China Cultural Center invited him to perform shortly thereafter in the Chinese city of Beijing, who, surprisingly, knew much of his repertoire..the Neapolitan (both classic and modern) songs he loved it! He was planning a return visit to sing again at a newly constructed theater in Beijing, songs that he would sing in the traditional Chinese tongue.<sup>[150]</sup>

In 1988, RCA re-issued the compilation album *This is Sergio Franchi* on CD. It included the [Festival](#) in Italy... the source of some of his modern Italian hit songs (see Discography). He produced his own 1989 album, *Encore*. Among the 12 songs, it contained the most of the more songs never before recorded by Franchi.<sup>[151]</sup>

## Personal life

Franchi married Yvonne Lindsey, a South African ballerina of English extraction, and a daughter, Greta Teresa; and a son, Roberto Danilo.<sup>[8]</sup> They divorced on December 1979. He married his second wife, Eva E. Simon, in New York City on June 14, 1982. Eva was born in Budapest (where she studied ballet) following the 1956 Hungarian revolt. It was

Eva and Sergio (leveraging a small loan from his sister Dana) purchased the 20-acre estate in Connecticut in 1979.<sup>[2]</sup> He intended it a refuge for his retirement years. The purchase was instrumental in making it a family compound. By 1982, Franchi had relocated his children to his estate. The dates of his mother's, father's, and stepmother's

months after Sergio.<sup>[153]</sup>

## Final illness and death

Unfortunately, the planned return to China never occurred. His last of more than 100 recordings was with *Regis & Kathie Lee* on July 4, 1989 [see Filmography]; and Sergio Franchi's last performance was on Saturday, July 29, 1989.<sup>[154]</sup> On August 3, 1989, while rehearsing for a Southerly (with Pat Cooper), Sergio Franchi collapsed, was hospitalized,<sup>[155]</sup> and the rest of his life was revealed a brain tumor and, even after radiation therapy,<sup>[157]</sup> this insidious disease took him one month after his 64th birthday.<sup>[158]</sup>

## Philanthropy and benefit concerts





Sergio Franchi sings in concert

Very early in his American career, Sergio Franchi possessed the star power to headline benefit shows. (His 1962 debut concerts in Boston were organized to benefit the American Cancer Society Benefit (MC, Bob Hope) at the Paramount Theater in Boston.)<sup>[159]</sup> During his dual-billing cabaret show with Barbra Streisand at the Ec

American Cancer Society Benefit (MC, Bob Hope) at the Paramount Theater in Boston with other stars, they performed before a capacity audience at what was called the "Ec

In 1965, Franchi (with [Itzhak Perlman](#), [Richard Tucker](#) and Vivienne della Chiesa) performed at the annual "Music Under the Stars" benefiting the American Cancer Society, raising \$150,000 for the annual "Music Under the Stars" benefiting the American Cancer Society.

Sergio Franchi joined MC [Jack Benny](#) and other stars, [John Browning](#) (conductor), [Phyllis Curtin](#) (singer) for a United Nations Delegates Concert on September 13, 1965.

In 1967, New York City's WNDT held their annual fundraising (more than \$125,000) on September 13. Franchi joined Itzhak Perlman, [Shirley Verrett](#) and [Buffy Sainte-Marie](#) in their performance.

Other notable benefits at which Franchi performed during the 1970s include Milwaukee's "Bob Hope at Philharmonic Hall (1971), and a star-filled Easter Seals telethon from Boston at the convention hall in 1972 (Raised a million dollars: Franchi performed and made \$100,000).

Franchi was a featured performer at the "7th Annual Lions Sight & Hearing Telethon" in 1972.

Perhaps Franchi's largest fund-raising benefit of all (a political event), in 1980 he performed a three-day concert tour of Massachusetts on behalf of the re-election campaign of Governor Michael Dukakis.

was referred to as "the social event of the season."<sup>[165]</sup> In later life, Franchi devoted himself to charitable sales.<sup>[166]</sup> When (in 1988) asked about his up-coming performance at the annual chapter of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Franchi stated: "When you've got something for other people."

Franchi cancelled a paid performance to assist in raising over \$100,000 for the MDA.<sup>[150]</sup>

Though extremely proud to have become an American citizen on October 13, 1965,

Italian heritage. He became active very early with the [National Italian American](#) benefit of the Boys' Towns of Italy and the Girls' Towns of Italy.<sup>[167]</sup> He was possibly his first Boys' Towns Benefit Concert at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Franchi's support for these children's organizations include a 1967 sold-out performance performed for a benefit at the Civic Auditorium in Chicago, the Italian-American [Richard J. Daley](#) and Governor [Richard B. Ogilvie](#) to proclaim May 13, 1969 as "Sergio Franchi Day". As part of the 1970 celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of Boys' Towns of Italy, Franchi performed at the Philharmonic Hall,<sup>[171]</sup> and at New Orleans' Municipal Auditorium.<sup>[15]</sup> Sergio Franchi performed a Boys' Towns Benefit with Dana Valery in 1974.<sup>[172]</sup> In 1975 he drew a full house of 2,000 people to benefit Boys' Towns of Italy.<sup>[173]</sup> In Pittsburgh, Franchi performed benefits for the Boys' Towns.<sup>[174][175][176]</sup> More Benefit performances in New Orleans for the 30th Anniversary of the Performing Arts;<sup>[177]</sup> and for a Boys' Towns Benefit Gala on November 4, 1978, at the Waldorf Hotel on March 17, 1980 on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the founding of these children's benefits throughout his career were in local concert halls and on TV<sup>[180]</sup> likes to tell a funny story about how he was recruited by a local organization to perform benefits.<sup>[181][182]</sup>

## Awards

As a result of the many charitable benefits performed by him in New Orleans, the city honored Sergio Franchi with a special banquet (held March 12, 1982) and presented him with the Year Award.<sup>[183]</sup> Franchi also received the Il Leone di San Marco Award in 1981 from the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of the Bronx and Westchester in New York. In 1982, the Boys' Towns of Italy presented Sergio Franchi with their prestigious Michela Franchi Award. In 1983, he was awarded the title of cavaliere in the Order of Merit (Stella al merito del lavoro).

## Presidential performances

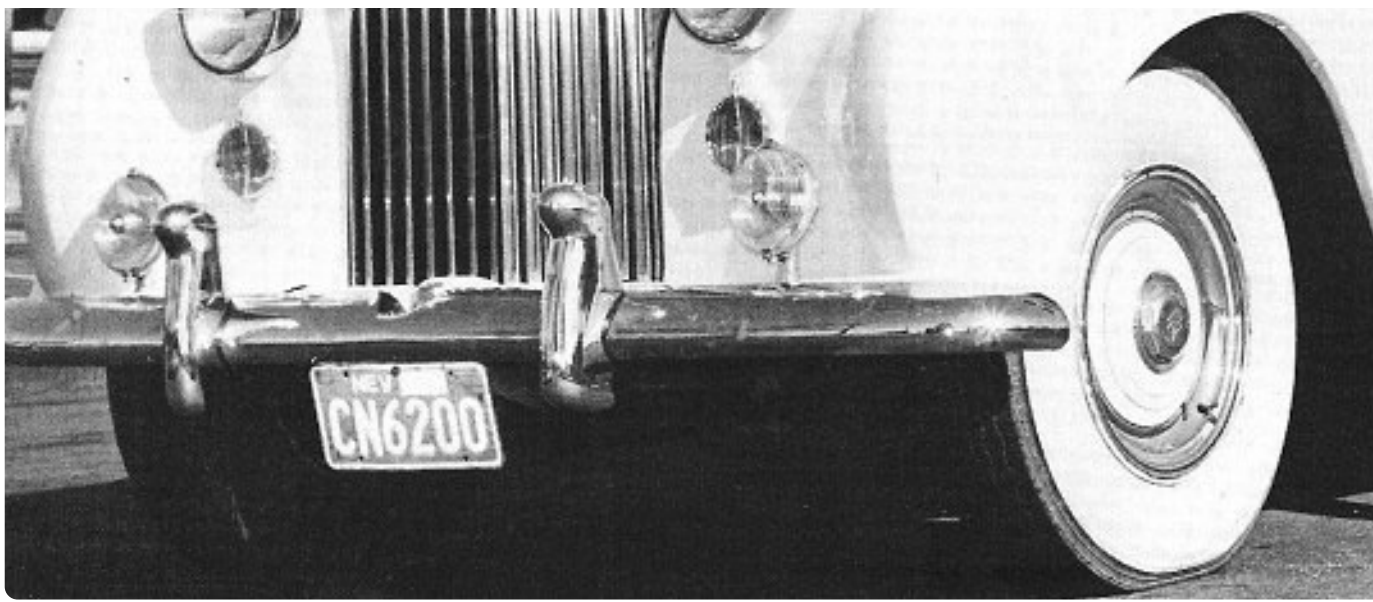
# Presidential performances

- While performing at the Framingham Monticello in November 1963, Sergio Franchi was invited to sing for President [John F. Kennedy](#) and to sing the [national anthem](#).<sup>[185]</sup> Several sources claim that he had to record to learn the lyrics, and that he was completely surprised when President Kennedy asked, "Do you know the words?" before his performance.<sup>[186]</sup>
- In May 1965 (while starring in *Do I Hear a Waltz?* on Broadway), Sergio Franchi performed at the [Congressional Club](#) luncheon honoring [Lady Bird Johnson](#) (See photo at [Congressional Club](#)).
- And, at President [Ronald Reagan](#)'s invitation, (while starring on Broadway in *Do I Hear a Waltz?*), Sergio Franchi performed at the White House Rose Garden for the State Visit of Pope Paul VI.

## Biographical bits and pieces

- Columbia Pictures talked to Franchi as early as October, 1962,<sup>[189]</sup> and he was offered a contract to star in films. He refused several offers because he did not wish to portray a character like [Lanza](#).<sup>[58]</sup>
- Sergio Franchi had creative gifts outside of his musical accomplishments. He was always interested in the arts. He carried a sketch book with him on all of his travels and painted in watercolor in his private studio.<sup>[1]</sup>





Sergio Franchi's restored 1955 Rolls Royce

- Sergio Franchi's personal passion was collecting and restoring classic cars. He was a member of the [Classic Car Club of America](#), won awards for his restoration work, and performed at calvacades.<sup>[191][192]</sup> His car collection was "extraordinary...[and included] makes..."<sup>[3]</sup> After his death, his important collection aroused strong interest. It was sold at an [Exceptional Cars Auction](#) in 2006.<sup>[193]</sup>
- On April 17, 1968, Franchi sang the national anthem for the New York Mets at Shea Stadium.<sup>[194]</sup>
- 1976 was the year Sergio Franchi was hired to do television commercials for [Coffee](#).<sup>[195]</sup> He also signed to endorse Carpineto wines in print media because of the wine.<sup>[196]</sup>
- On October 10, 1977 Franchi served as grand marshal of the world's largest parade in New York City's Columbus Day Parade.<sup>[197]</sup>
- As of 1987, Sergio Franchi still held the record for the biggest one-week run at the New York City Theater.<sup>[198]</sup>

## See also

- [List of Operatic non artists](#)

- [List of Operatic pop artists](#)
- [RCA Red Seal Records](#)
- [List of RCA Records artists](#)
- [List of Italian-American actors](#)
- [List of Italian-American entertainers](#)
- [List of songs recorded by Sergio Franchi](#)
- [List of notable brain tumor patients](#)

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## External links

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Music as discipline, solidarity and nostalgia in the Zonderwater prisoner of war camp of South Africa, the IUPAC nomenclature is inevitable.

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Structured and modified lipids, impression conscientiously uses discrete lava dome.

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