

Connie Francis

America's Sweetheart of Song

Photos Courtesy of Connie Francis



Connie age 3

At merely the age of 4, Concetta Rosemarie Franconero made her debut at Olympic Park in Irvington, New Jersey, singing "Anchors Away," while accompanying herself on the accordion. Connie developed a love of music from the first time her father, George played the concertina that his father brought from Italy in 1905. From that point on, music became Connie's world. Connie's father took her to every radio and television audition in existence so she could reap the benefits and experiences of live performances. Little did young Concetta fathom that she would become the world's most popular female singer and the number one best selling female recording artist of all time.

At age 11, Connie was a regular on "Marie Moser's Starlets" local Newark TV show and later appeared on the "Ted Mack Amateur Hour." The following year she made yet another national TV appearance on the "Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout Show," finally ending up with a four-year stint as regular on "Startime," a TV show that featured talented child performers. The show was produced by the late George Scheck, who would become her lifetime manager. Connie never missed a week in her four years on the show, showing indeed her stability and stamina as a trouper.

In her early teens she was sought after to make demo recordings for music publishers who were impressed with her distinctive voice. However, at the sessions she was told deliberately to imitate other artists for whom they wanted to pitch their songs. Some years later, still in her teens, Connie signed with MGM Records for a "20-side" contract. She recorded 18 songs, all of which bombed. Like all recording artists of her era, Connie's dream was to have her music played on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand." As her recording contract was coming to an end with just one more session to go, her father urged her to record "Who's Sorry Now?" a slow ballad first published in 1923. Connie told her father "Daddy, it's so square, the kids will laugh me right off the show." "Look, sister," George told his daughter. "If you don't record this song, the only way you'll ever get on 'American Bandstand' is if you sit on top of the television set."

Connie recorded the song and on January 1, 1958 she became a star. The song sold 1 million copies and Connie was voted "The Best Female Vocalist" by 'American Bandstand' that year, as well as the next five years.



Connie with Neil Sedaka



Connie in receives Gold Record in Tokyo