Rydell, Bobby (1942-) Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

Rydell, Bobby (1942-) Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Rydell, Bobby (1942—).....3

Rydell, Bobby (1942—)

Boyishly handsome, with an infectious smile, teen idol Bobby Rydell summoned up the image of the boy next door. Like fellow Philadelphian heartthrobs Frankie Avalon and Fabian, he catered to teenage desires at a time, circa 1959-1960, when the music world wanted safe alternatives to the sexually explosive Elvis Presley.

Still, Rydell stood out as a bonafide talent. A musical prodigy, he began playing drums at six, had a nightclub act at seven, and became a regular on a television amateur show at nine. He was a drummer with the group Rocco and the Saints, which also boasted Avalon on trumpet, when he was approached about a singing career. Resulting hits, including "Volare" and "Wild One," were marked by a smooth delivery. In his only major movie, *Bye Bye Birdie* (1963), however, he was eclipsed by volatile Ann-Margret. In the 1990s, Rydell played to former fans in "oldies" shows.

Further Reading:

Miller, Jim, editor. *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll.* New York, Random House, 1976.

Rydell, Bobby, as told to Marya Saunders and Bob Gaines. "Now That I'm of Age." *Family Weekly.* April 28, 1963, 4.