

You are my dream come true": Singing icon Paul Anka winds up two nostalgic days in Tel Aviv

Article

By [Maurice Picow](#)



Paul Anka, singer and song writer from the late 1950's wowed and charmed an adoring Israeli audience in two sold out concerts Wednesday and Thursday night in Tel Aviv's Nokia Arena. The 68 year old icon brought his entire show band with him for the two performances, but in the end, it was he himself who entertained and brought back memories to adoring fans who were teenagers during the years his songs like *Diana*, *Puppy Love*, and *You are my Destiny* were played everywhere, especially in Israel.

This concert was Anka's first in Israel, despite the fact that his music was made immortal in Israel by the local comedy film classic, *Lemon Popsicle*, or *Eskimo Lemon* as it is titled in Hebrew. The movie, filmed during the mid 1970's revolved around the sexual escapes of three teenage boys and included several songs by Paul Anka and other artists like Neil Sedaka and Elvis Presley.

My wife and I were privileged to see the second show on Thursday that began with Anka entering the arena from a side exit and going right into a large group of people who were sitting in seats located on the floor of the arena that also is the home game venue of the Maccabbi Tel Aviv basketball team. He started off with *Diana*, his first hit song (at age 17) and spent considerable time mingling with the audience, shaking hands, and even posing for photos. Taking one woman by the hands, he started dancing with her, exclaiming, "I've finally found a woman my own size (he's only about 5'4" tall).

Back up on stage he proceeded to go through a list of most of his golden hits that included ones like *Put Your Head on my Shoulders*, *Puppy Love*, *Lonely Boy*, and *You are my Destiny*. During the 2 hour long concert, he sang all the numbers unaccompanied by backup or chorus singers, and only with the assistance of his fantastic "big band" which included

2 guitarists, 2 percussionists (one playing bongo and tango drums) and several trumpet, trombone and sax players. An accomplished musician in his own right, being well known as a song writer, he sang several songs he had written for artists like Frank Sinatra, Buddy Holly, Sammy Davis Jr., Barbra Streisand, and Michael Jackson. He also included a personal nostalgic photo sketch of his own career, going back to the late 1950's.

The songs dealing with the Michael Jackson number *This is It*, and the one made immortal by Frank Sinatra, *My Way*, were perhaps the most poignant ones, as both brought tears to many in the audience, including ourselves. The *This is It* song had been written by Anka back in the early 1980's and Jackson had rewritten it for his own use. It was never released, however, due to a dispute between the two artists, which, according to Anka, was settled with each artist agreeing to receive 50% of the proceeds from any royalties generated from the song. It was due to be used by Jackson on his scheduled *This is It* tour, cut short by the singer's death last June.

In my opinion anyway, Paul Anka's rendition of *My Way* which he wrote for Frank Sinatra back in 1968, and another song, *New York New York*, also made famous by Sinatra, was the "frosting on the cake" of a fantastic evening. Anka appeared really moved by the reaction of the audience in the packed arena, and expressed his thanks for the appreciation the audience had of both himself and his music. He told everyone: "Your country is fantastic and has really made the desert bloom, which Los Vegas has only managed to do artificially".

Singers and songwriters like Paul Anka are a vanishing breed, and it's a shame that music tastes have changed so much in that good pop singing artists are now being replaced by such "artists" singing rap and hip-hop type of "songs" that are really not even considered as music to anyone who has better tastes. Now that we are in the 21st Century and pop music stars like Anka, Barbra Streisand, and Tony Bennett are ending their careers, I for one can only hope that music tastes will become more sensible and go back to types of songs that really are worth listening to. I know Paul Anka's style of music definitely is!