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Paul Anka weaves his magic for enthralled audience in Tel Aviv

By [Ben Shalev](#), Haaretz Correspondent

Paul Anka's performance in the Nokia Stadium in Tel Aviv on Wednesday night reminded his audience that he is a talented songwriter, an excellent singer, and an outstanding entertainer, despite his advanced age.

Anka is a performance artist, a quality which turned his show into a memorable, enjoyable and even moving event.

Music-lovers who have dismissed him as just another overly tanned, nostalgic musical tycoon who came to Israel to perform for the elderly, don't know what they missed (and won't, unless they go to his second concert on Thursday).

Anka rocked the stadium, devoured the stage, and redefined what it means to give the audience its money's worth.

Anka is an endangered species, perhaps even the last remnant of an already extinct type of performer. Somehow he managed to remind both young and the old during his show of the beauty and grace his kind of art can bring.

He is not a pure artist, nor even a perfect entertainer, but something in between.

The pure artist will express his truth, whether or not the audience responds. The entertainer will do anything to please a crowd, forgoing all integrity, style and quality if necessary.

The magic word, though, can be found in a balance of the two - and this is something that Anka showed everyone how to do.

It's a shame that Julio Iglesias, who performed in the very same stadium a month-and-a-half ago and spoon-fed his audience a dish of warm noodles was not there to witness what he could have done. Perhaps he would have learned the difference between a dime-charmer and the real thing.

Anka made a symbiotic connection with his audience, which was felt from the very first two songs he performed standing in the crowd.

The show didn't lack moments of sticky American kitsch, such as the number during which his family photos were screened behind him, his duet with recorded versions of Michael Jackson, Sammy Davis Junior and Frank Sinatra singing, and his dance with a woman from the audience during the song "Put your head on my shoulder," and the moment when his beautiful blonde wife went on stage to dance with him.

But even those who tend to show severe allergic symptoms at the sight of any sticky kitsch,

had to admit, surprisingly, that it wasn't disturbing. And a great entertainer knows how to balance between the sugar-sweet melodies and a accurate and enrapturing performance.

If I - who wasn't around to slow dance to the hit ballad "Puppy love" when it first came out in 1959, had such a wonderful time - I can only imagine what his old-time fans felt.