

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Note: Photos available at <http://mccallumtheatre.com/index.php/media>

**PAUL ANKA**  
**McCALLUM THEATRE**  
**Friday – January 12 – 8:00pm**  
**Saturday – January 13 – 8:00pm**

Palm Desert, CA – Paul Anka returns to the McCallum Theatre for two performances on Friday, January 12, at 8:00pm, and Saturday, January 13, at 8:00pm.

The January 12 performance is presented through the generosity of Dan and Brooke Koehler. The January 13 performance is presented through the generosity of Manny and Linda Rider, Nancy Stone, and Robert and Carlyn Stonehill.

One of the most successful singers/songwriters in music history, with over 900 songs to his credit, Paul Anka has the distinction of having songs in the Top Forty in four different decades. His instantly recognizable hits include “Diana,” “Put Your Head on My Shoulder,” “My Way” and “The Tonight Show” theme.

Born in Ottawa into a tight-knit Canadian family, Paul Anka didn’t waste much time getting his life in music started. He sang in the church choir and studied piano. He honed his writing skills with journalism courses and working at the *Ottawa Citizen*. By 13, he had his own vocal group, the Bobbysoxers. He performed at every amateur night he could get to in his mother’s car, unbeknownst to her, of course. Soon after, he won a trip to New York by winning a Campbell’s soup contest for IGA Food Stores that required him to spend three months collecting soup can labels. It was there his dream was solidified. He was going to make it as a singer/composer; there was not a doubt in his mind.

In 1956, Paul convinced his parents to let him travel to Los Angeles, where he called every record company in the phone book looking for an audition. A meeting with Modern Records led to the release of his first single, “Blau-Wile Deverest Fontaine.” It was not a hit, but he kept plugging away, even sneaking into Fats Domino’s dressing room to meet the man and his manager in Ottawa. When Paul returned to New York in 1957, he scored a meeting with Don Costa with ABC-Paramount Records. He played him a batch of songs that included “Diana.” Costa was enthusiastic about the potential of the young singer and songwriter. The rapid and enormous success of “Diana,” his first #1 hit, made him a star.

“They are all very autobiographical,” says Paul of his early hits. “I was alone, traveling, girls screaming, and I never got near them. I was a teenager and feeling isolated and all that. That becomes ‘Lonely Boy.’ At record hops, I’m up on stage and all these kids are

holding each other with heads on each other's shoulders. Then I have to go have dinner in my room because there are thousands of kids outside the hotel. 'Put Your Head on My Shoulder' was totally that experience.

Soon Paul found himself traveling by bus with the "Cavalcade of Stars" with the top names of the day, performing at the Copacabana, the youngest entertainer ever to do so, and honing his craft surrounded by the likes of Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly, Frankie Lyman, and Chuck Berry.

By the time the Beatles arrived in the 60s, Paul had another tool in his survival kit. "After a few hits," he says, "I knew I was a writer, and with writers, the power was always in the pen. When I started writing for Buddy Holly and Connie Francis, I felt that it made me different for people. They'd say, 'Hey, you can write, you can fall back on something.'" Among his proudest accomplishments was writing the Academy Award-nominated theme for *The Longest Day*, the 1962 film in which he also starred.

Songwriting and performing "are what gave me the confidence to keep going," he says. Becoming a junior associate of Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack also had its privileges. By the 70s, the success of "My Way" and a string of hits like "(You're) Having My Baby" confirmed his status as an icon of popular music. His later achievements as a recording artist included "Hold Me 'til the Morning Comes," a duet with Peter Cetera in 1983; the Spanish-language album *Amigos* in 1996; and *Body of Work*, a 1998 duets album that featured Frank Sinatra, Celine Dion, Patti LaBelle, Tom Jones and daughter Anthea Anka. If this wasn't enough, it was revealed upon its release in 2009, that Paul co-wrote Michael Jackson's posthumous #1 worldwide hit "This Is It," which further cemented his place in the most prolific and versatile songwriters of any generation.

Paul's two recent albums *Rock Swings* and *Classic Songs, My Way* featured songs originally created by some of the biggest rock performers of the day, as well as artists across several genres. The twist: Paul did the songs "his way." Paul spent months researching music from the 80s and 90s, trying to find the songs that would work in the new context he proposed. The songs that made the cut included Bon Jovi's "It's My Life," Lionel Richie's "Hello," Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven," and his transformations of "Wonderwall" by Oasis, "Black Hole Sun" by Soundgarden and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

Tickets for these performances are priced at \$137, \$97, \$87 and \$67. Tickets are available at the Theatre's website at [www.mccallumtheatre.com](http://www.mccallumtheatre.com) or by calling the McCallum Theatre Box Office at (760) 340-ARTS. The McCallum Theatre, located at 73000 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert CA 92260, accepts payment by cash, personal check, VISA, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

*The McCallum Theatre Box Office, its phone center and website, are the **only** authorized outlets for tickets to performances presented at the Theatre. Tickets purchased from any other sources, such as brokers or secondary market websites, are purchased at consumer's own risk and cannot be guaranteed as valid.*

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