

# MATTI CASPI

## The Man and his Music



### The Legendary Israeli Popular Song Composer

Matti Caspi possesses a magical talent and style of composition that is matchless for its harmonic lyricism and creativity anywhere in the Western world of music.

For a period of over four decades he has produced numerous songs that are unique in their originality and are firm standards in the Israeli repertoire of popular music.

Matti Caspi's music is often based on advanced harmonic progressions that have revolutionized accepted boundaries but are never-the-less deceptively easy on the ear.

He sings his own material in a distinctive, emotionally charged baritone voice that is reminiscent of a plaintive viola.

Matti Caspi's music and performances reflect an unending search for perfection and originality. His songs never fail to move his audience and are an integral part of the daily musical experience in Israel.

### MUSICAL BRILLIANCE A Combination of Technical Genius and Inner Truth

Matti Caspi's musical talents are many and are always described in superlatives.

Apart from his outstanding creativity as a composer and lyricist, Matti is also an accomplished vocalist and instrumentalist.

### UNFORGETTABLE AND SUBLIME POPULAR MUSIC UNLIKE ANY OTHER YOU HAVE EVER HEARD





# MATTI CASPI

THE MAN AND THE MUSIC

Legendary Israeli Popular Song Composer



BORN ON NOVEMBER 30<sup>th</sup> 1949 IN KIBBUTZ HANITA, WESTERN GALILEE

"I had a very happy childhood on the Kibbutz. I enjoyed the solitude and the beauty and natural surroundings of the Galilee Mountains as much then as I do today. I was a quiet child but when in the kindergarten I used to spend hours sitting on top of the dirty laundry hamper, banging away on the lid and singing. Yes, my childhood on the Kibbutz was as good as it gets anywhere. The Kibbutz can be a paradise for children. To this day I still consider myself a Kibbutznik, even after all these years."

### MUSIC ON HIS MIND

At age 5 Matti Caspi attended first grade and immediately began taking flute lessons and then later on lessons on the mandolin. Once hearing the harmonica played, he insisted on playing that, too.

### MUSIC MATTI'S WAY

Matti Caspi claims that he was a bad student at school and was a little out of the ordinary compared to the other children.

"I suppose that I was odd in the sense that I naively always told the truth to the letter. Even when it was to my detriment, like the fact that I loved being bone idle, because laziness made me feel so good. When it came to studying, my teachers always said that I had the ability but not the will and then I would truthfully tell them that they were right and that making music was the only thing on my mind. It never bothered me that the teachers and the school psychologist thought I was a bit of a dumb wit. Strangely, before enlisting in the army, physical education had some appeal for me back then as a possible future profession."





Matti's father had to put up a fight with kibbutz members until they finally agreed to allow him the luxury of a piano on which to practice. Matti took piano lessons from age 10 in the Nahariyah conservatory and although he loved making music on the piano "his way", he objected to the work involved in serious practice. He admits that his father would have to sit alongside him to make sure that he put in a full one hour practice daily.



## CREATING MUSIC

It was only when his piano teacher (Mr. Dragan) gave him an assignment to produce his own arrangement to a written piece of music that Matti discovered the joy inherent in musical creativity. It seems that the result was so impressive that it marked a turning point in his musical orientation - moving from dry theory and practice to personal creativity and the discovery of a whole new dimension of musical possibilities. Matti was 15 years of age at the time.

## TALENT COMPETITION AND FIRST RECORDINGS

At the age of 16 Matti made his first public appearance on the Israeli national radio show in a contest called 'First Applause'.



## THE SOUTHERN COMMAND GROUP AND 'THEY DON'T CARE' TRIO

Matti's musical talent was not immediately recognized when he was admitted into the prestigious Army Southern Command Musical Group. Military service at age 18 was compulsory and he was still in basic training when he was accepted into the group only after a second audition.



Matti's musical career as a composer and musical manager really got underway in the army (1967). It was here that he first started experimenting with different musical instruments and styles. Matti composed two songs for the group.

Matti Caspi also composed, arranged and sang this program's biggest hit, 'I'm Dying'. This light and feisty song was accompanied by a video clip and is now considered as a historical part of those early days of Israeli television. Matti performed this song along with Gadi Oron and Ya'acov Noi who together were known as 'They Don't Care' trio. Apart from singing, the group also performed comic skits.



*"As long as there are at least two people that find my work moving, then there I have my audience."*

Matti Caspi



### 'THEY DON'T CARE' TRIO

When he was with 'They Don't Care' trio, Matti recorded a record in 1971 under the Phonokol label. The record was released again on 2005.

### SOLO PERFORMANCES, RECORDINGS, THEME MUSIC FOR FILMS AND PLAYS

Following his departure from the group, Matti recorded his first solo recordings that includes: 'Efraim', 'What Will Become of Me', 'My Song and Hers', 'The Happiest Man' and many others. During this time Matti composed music for two theatre productions: 'Also Lily' and 'City of Men', as well as writing material for other singers.

### MATTI CASPI AND SHLOMO GRONICH

His debut solo album was preceded by 'Behind the Sounds' which was the name of Matti's stage collaboration with the talented Shlomo Gronich. 'Behind the Sounds' was a great success (the album was released on 1973) and this collaboration was to be repeated again with equal success in later years. The recording of the same name was considered psychedelic in character and the boldest popular song recordings to have been produced in Israel at that time. The album included many songs of unbelievable beauty and imagination such as: 'Painting', 'But You're Not There', 'Ben Gurion' and 'When God First Said'.



## YEARS OF FRUITFUL CREATIVITY

Increasing success followed with a solo album in 1974 that was recorded in 'Triton Studios' that were just starting up. Matti handled every aspect of this production which included composing the songs and working on the arrangements. He also played all the instruments on the recording himself and even assisted in the technicalities of the studio's newly acquired equipment.

The album included many of Matti Caspi's well-known songs at the time as well as new material with lyrics adapted from the work of the most distinguished Israeli poets. Songs on the recording included: 'My Balloon' and 'Noah', a major song festival hit with background vocals provided by the 'Chocolate, Menta & Mastic' group to the accompaniment of 'the Israeli Broadcasting Authority Orchestra'.

## LIKE A GLOVE FITS A HAND

A second album in 1976 included hits like 'There it Goes Again', 'Covenant of Love', 'No Peace of Mind', 'Who'd Believe You'd Leave' and more. Ehud Manor wrote most of the lyrics. In fact, that remains true to this day... Ehud Manor writes most of the lyrics to Matti Caspi's music.

At first Matti used to travel to Binyamina, be presented with a new text from Ehud Manor and sit around there for hours with his guitar until a new song was born. Later on the roles were reversed and Ehud would create texts to suit Matti's music.

In 1976 Ehud and Matti entered their song 'Say Hello' to the Eurovision song contest with 'Chocolate, Menta, Mastick' the performing group. The song came in sixth in the final countdown.

Two more years passed and another hit album was recorded that reinvented many Matti Caspi hits that had been performed by other artists in the past. This time Matti sang his own material and the recording included: 'Like a Wheel', 'Hot Summer Nights', 'May the Day Come' and entrancing 'Song of the Dove'. This album proved to be an enormous success.





*"My relationship with Ehud is unique. We share a kind of chemistry that is difficult to put into words. His texts and my melodies, and my melodies and his lyrics, work as one.*

*We write the songs together in all senses. I always feel that Ehud's lyrics fit my music like a glove fits a hand"*

Matti Caspi

At this time a special tribute album to Matti Caspi was released: 'Everyone Sings Matti Caspi'. It consisted of a number of Matti's mega-hits performed by the original artists. Matti himself sang 'How Many Songs are There Left to Write', which was also his first attempt at lyric writing.

## GLOBAL MUSIC

Next came Matti Caspi's involvement in Brazilian music and a show and album both entitled 'Beautiful Tropical Land' which introduced a frenzy of Brazilian sounds and rhythms into Israel for years to come. This was followed by 'Another Side' which was an entire album dedicated to children; and then came 'Twilight' which was yet another best seller. For this last album Matti strove for a different musical approach, drawing on reggae, South American rhythms and other influences for his hit song, 'You Have Yet to Find Your Way' and another song that was influenced by the romantic schmaltzy sounds of the fifties, 'Those Who Sing'.

As for Brazilian music Matti claims that he has not been particularly influenced by it but nevertheless enjoys incorporating its rhythms into his music. It seems that among Matti Caspi's musical influences Eastern European gypsy music has been the most influential. When speaking about the original true influences on his music - he refers primarily to the gypsy music of Eastern Europe and the uneven rhythms of the Balkan music to which he was introduced by his grandfather of Romanian ancestry.



An Honored moment. Matti Caspi receiving the ACUM award from the hands of the former President of Israel Mr. Itzhak Navon, who was at the time, the Minister of Education of Israel.

The Gate of Mercy  
a poem written by the former Israeli  
President Mr. Itzhak Navon  
and composed by Matti Caspi

*"Matti Caspi has invented his own musical language. As I sit and analyze his harmonies, I find myself amazed over and over again. The fact that he also functions as the performer, arranger and conductor has formed certain contradictions, but the truth is that he is a musical wild man. He alone has introduced sophistication in popular music in the region."*

Musicologist and Researcher  
Tzipi Fleischer





## MATTI CASPI AND SASHA ARGOV

Matti Caspi's next two albums consisted of Sasha Argov compositions: 'Matti Caspi Sings Sasha Argov' and 'Mattityahu and Alexander'. In these recordings Matti contributes a fresh interpretation to Sasha Argov's music and plays various instruments himself on the recordings: synthesizer, piano, bass, mandolin, drums, percussions and accordion. Matti Caspi always speaks of Sasha Argov with great admiration and claims that he would wish to compose just like him. At this time they both performed on stage together with Matti presenting and singing the songs to Sasha's accompaniment on the piano.

The album 'My Second Childhood' from 1984 included the song with the same title and also 'My Girl', 'Friday Night is Bath Night' and others.

On the record Side C Side D from 1987, Matti once more releases new interpretations of some of his previous material: 'Binyamina Days' that had been originally recorded by Hava Alberstein, as well as 'Man was Not Meant to be Alone', 'Woman', 'You've Shown Me' and others.





*"I believe in my music. I never used hit formulas nor do I go looking for them. Because of this it is particularly rewarding for me when a song of mine becomes a success. I know that as long as I remain faithful to myself, my audience will remain faithful to me."*

Matti Caspi

In 1987 Matti introduced an authentic Brazilian group to the Israeli public with whom he produced an all time successful show and album called 'A Wild Tropical Land'.

'One to One' from 1988 was a very emotive album with Matti accompanying himself on the piano and guitar. There were memorable hits on this recording such as: 'Forgiveness', 'Return Oh Shulamit' and the sublime 'Lost in Faith'.

Matti then collaborated with the 'Parvarim' duo in a show that featured South American songs. This collaboration yielded yet another album which was called 'A Distant Love Song'.

At this time Matti renewed his collaboration with Shlomo Gronich and 'Behind the Sounds' was once again released in 1984 followed by a third show together in 1989 and by single releases in 1990 and 1992.

Two of Matti Caspi's major albums of the 80's were with Riki Gal: the first, 'Riki Gal' in 1987, and 'What is Love' in 1988. As usual Matti took complete charge of the production and musical compositions and created some of his finest work on this record. The albums included many hits that are now firm Israeli standards; among them 'Forbidden Child', 'What is Love', 'West of Here', the spicy 'Rock 'n Roll Girl' and the thought provoking all time hit 'Someone Cares'. This amazing harvest of creativity was a stunning success for both albums as well as the Caspi/Gal joint stage performances that followed.

Another series of concerts in the late 1980's was with the rock star Shalom Hanoch and the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra.



During this time (1980's) Matti Caspi wrote, arranged and produced for others: Matti claims to love studio work, especially seeing results take shape from the raw material. Some of the local Israeli artists who have benefited from his work are: Oshik Levi, Hava Alberstein, Nathanella, Nurit Galron, Yehudit Ravitz, Dani Robas, Gali Atari, Arik Sinai, Meir Banai, Erez Halevi, Shoshana Damari as well as many others.

Matti Caspi opened the nineties with the album 'Songs in Tomato Sauce'. The album was a joint mischief of his and Ehud Manor's in which Matti shared the task of writing the comedy style lyrics.

This was followed by 'Buba Matti', a Matti Caspi album and video especially featuring songs designed for young children.

In 1993 the album 'Matti' was released. This was a personal album which included texts by Ehud Manor specifically written for and about Matti with songs like 'I'm no Angel', 'Airfield' and 'In my Piano'.



*"I never feel more relaxed and at home than I do as when on stage. I have no fear of making mistakes on stage, that is, as long as all technical aspects are 100% in order.*

*I try and bring to the stage the same results that I have achieved at home. Contrary to commercially oriented shows based on the audience reaction, I choose to rely on my own instincts.*

*I rarely put any faith into any director and never into stunts and gimmicks to help me work with the audience. And no one ever tells me what clothes to wear on stage. I always wear my own clothes, that is, if they are not being washed that very day."*

Matti Caspi



*"The act of composing for me, is something that should be done by inspiration only. Therefore I can't adjust myself to techniques situations such as: writing a song which was pre ordered by someone, for a certain purpose. I first write them for myself. Once completed, then I decide who were they born for and who will perform them best."*

Matti Caspi



## LIVING ABROAD

With the release of this album, Matti left Israel for an extended stay of four years abroad. During this period he lived in Canada as well as in the United States. At the same time he collaborated once more with Riki Gal to produce their third album together: 'I Love You More'. Matti composed, arranged, played the accompaniment and produced most of this album. On this occasion his wife Raquel Caspi joined Matti in the compositions. Matti later on in 1998 produced an album in Portuguese for his wife: 'Raquel'.

Matti returned to Israel in 1997 and was warmly welcomed by the Israeli public who never forgot him for a moment during his absence. He immediately commenced on a very successful countrywide tour with the first outstanding performance recorded live in the desert frontier town of Arad: 'Matti Caspi Live - Arad'.

The 1998 album 'Another World' was once again an album with a personal message where Matti establishes himself as a lyricist as well as composer, although Raquel Caspi contributed most of the lyrics to this album. Matti claims that "Words don't come easy to me, but they eventually do appear." He says that he experiences a kind of torment when writing lyrics, unlike composing music, which he says arises and appears in a torrent of rapid inspiration.



The year 2000 commenced with the album *Matti Caspi – 'Duets'*, an album that symbolized, according to Matti Caspi, "The collaboration of talent between performing artists as it should naturally be". The artists appearing on this disc are among the cream of musical talent in Israel and included: Aviv Gefen, Hava Alberstein, Rami Kleinstein, Shoshana Damari, Eti Ankri, Dani Litani, Yehudit Ravitz and others. Matti claims that it was always a dream of his to work with his fellow artist in close cooperation.

Matti Caspi's work with other artists during these years also includes collaborating on stage with Raquel Caspi, Yoni Rechter, Ehud Manor, Yehudit Ravitz, Tukan (Brazil Summer Time), Meir Banai, Rami Kleinstein, Aviv Gefen, Riki Gal, The Parvarim and Shlomo Gronich once again in *Behind the Sounds 2002 – 2004*.





## MUSIC THAT CONVEYS HUMOR, TENDERNESS, ROMANCE, JOY AND BEAUTY

Matti Caspi is one of Israel's most respected and versatile musicians.

He has left his mark on every production he has ever been involved in, displaying a combination of technical genius and inner truth.



Matti has played a major role in the development of Israeli popular music for more than four decades. Every undertaking has been met with immediate popular and critical acclaim.

Although he is immensely popular and loved, Matti Caspi never seeks popularity. Instead, he focuses on developing and expressing his "inner truth" through his music. "If I want the audience to believe in what I do, I have to believe in my music myself".

Matti does not immediately commit his compositions to paper but uses his own memory as a gauge for their quality, saying that if he isn't astonished by something, he simply forgets it. However, Matti Caspi's inner focus has never lead to insularity. He continually searches for new sounds and combinations that result in unique blends of rhythms and melodies that convey humor, tenderness, romance, joy and beauty.

The musicologist and researcher Tzipi Fleischer considers Matti Caspi to be the most important creator in the musical field in the last two decades and not just locally, but by global standards: "He is a genius among his fellow artists; his music marks an important milestone in the history of world of music".



## FROM SCHUBERT TO CASPI

Over the years Matti Caspi has founded his own methodology of creating and arranging music. His methods and technique are now taught at the universities and in musical academies throughout Israel. For example, The Hebrew University in Jerusalem has presented a musicology course entitled 'From Schubert to Caspi'. At no time during Israel's musical history has an Israeli artist been so universally admired and respected as Matti Caspi.

*"I write songs that come from deep inside of me, and if I personally don't find them moving, then I need to forget they ever existed. I find that I cannot write something that is designed to be liked by everyone; songs that exploit talent and technique instead of the blessed muse of inspiration."*

Matti Caspi



*"It has been a dream of mine to work with fellow singers and to let their exciting individual styles take over in the recording studio so that I am obliged to adapt my style to theirs'. This is not only professionally satisfying but it is also an honor to work with artists that I had never worked with before. There is also an added dimension with working with others that frees the creative process, so that one does not comfortably settle back with a song's generally accepted interpretation."*

Matti Caspi



*"...He has a voice of an angel and the world should listen to him. I'm sorry that for all those years I haven't had the chance to be introduced to his music"*

(Mercedes Soza about Matti Caspi in her last concert in Israel).



## MATTI CASPI AWARDED THE ACUM PRIZE (2006)

Matti Caspi has won numerous awards for his work and now the prestigious Acum Prize!

The Performing Rights Society of Israel has recently awarded the composer Matti Caspi the Acum Prize for 2006 for his outstanding creativity in the field of popular music in a sparkling career than spans over 40 years.

The Acum prize is considered to be one of the most prestigious awards to be conferred in Israel and only one level before the Israeli prize which is the country's highest honor.

Matti Caspi has composed and arranged in excess of 900 compositions, many of them standard classics in the Israeli repertoire of popular music. His music is heard daily and is an ubiquitous part of the Israeli experience.

In their deliberations, the ACUM judges considered that Matti Caspi's compositions combine the highest musical standards with formidable emotional appeal and that he has produced works of outstanding originality which exploit highly complex harmonies and progressions. His music being immediately recognizable and yet never rehashed, always transporting the listener on to new musical vistas.

Matti Caspi's musical creativity is extremely fertile and reflects a wide range of different styles and genres from the classics to rock, ethnic, Brazilian and black music. Although complex and stylish, his music is highly communicative with meaningful ballads, progressive pop, humour and satire that evoke responses over a wide range of emotions to delight the listener.





Over the past many years Matti Caspi has produced numerous recordings of his work. He has also been the recipient of frequent awards, including the prestigious 'David's Harp' (Kinor David) prize.

Many of the Israeli songs that are played on various radio programs are in one way or another related to Matti Caspi, whether as a singer, composer, arranger or producer.

## Matti Caspi's Productions





## Matti Caspi's Solo Albums



## MATTI CASPI SOLO ALBUMS

& introducing

## You are My Woman



Matti Caspi's music is intricate but deceptively easy on the ear; each composition a distinctive musical gem that one never tires of hearing. Apart from his impressive personal contribution to Israeli music, Matti Caspi has had an enormous influence on generations of musicians and artists that thanks to his inspiration continue to create music in Israel that is enviable for its innovation, emotional insight and style.

## MATTI IN A RETRO-ROMANTIC MOOD

For connoisseurs of Matti Caspi, his new disc ('You are My Woman') is a must. In this age where original melody is a rarity, Matti's new disc is like a breath of fresh air that transports us back to a world where a song was a song, written and performed to enchant and move the listener. Matti has always been out there in a class of his own and never more so than on this new disc where his sonorous tenor, come baritone weaves its gentle way in and around enthralling orchestrations and intricate harmonies.

Matti's mood is unashamedly retro-romantic on this disc, either when singing his own material or a cover of Charles Aznavour's 'She'. Matti's rendition of this exceptionally beautiful song is nothing but sheer perfection. The translation of 'She' into Hebrew by Ehud Manor and other lyrics of his on this disc must sadly be the last in Matti and Ehud's cooperation that produced so many memorable songs.

The romantic style of this disc is also reflected in its captivating presentation which is the creative fruit of Matti's wife and vocalist Raquel Caspi who created the the artistic concept and coordinated the production of the album in all aspects, including producing a high quality format of pictures, script and scenes of Matti in Edwardian settings and dress that are perfectly suited to the songs and make this disc a great gift to oneself or another.

As an added treat, Matti reveals yet another side of his intricate personality, as he has written lyrics on this disc, some in cooperation with his wife Raquel. He also performs original material on the disc with his daughters Suyan and Sean.

'You are my Woman' has songs that stay and play over in one's mind that are sure to become standards in the Israeli repertoire of popular music. The disc comes with an added bonus disc performed in Rap style by Suyan Caspi who demonstrates with disarming ease the Caspi family's outstanding musical talent.

