

Mp3 Matt Wessel - Carry On



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A unique blend of inspirational religious and secular music ... from Ben Folds to Billy Joel to Caedmon's Call, the influences are many. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Piano, EASY LISTENING: Soft Rock Details: A native of Gurnee, Illinois, Matt Wessel was born on September 2, 1981 to Thomas and Patrice Wessel. He didn't come into the world alone, however. His twin sister, Kim, arrived on the same day he did. Two more sets of twins were to follow years later. In 1985, Amy and Beth were born. In 1989, Ben and Mike made their entrance into the world. Nicki, the oldest, was born in 1979. The whole "three sets of twins" thing garnered quite a bit of media coverage. The distinguished family even appeared on CBS This Morning (twice). Being musical in the Wessel family was not an option. Matt's father played guitar and his mom plays the piano. Matt started taking piano at the age of 5. He studied with his mother for one year, and then began taking privately at the age of 6. He studied with Maureen Hart in Grayslake, Illinois from then until the end of high school. Matt began singing at an early age - joining the choir in 4th grade and only giving it up in high school so that he could do sports. He joined the school band in the 5th grade and did his best to learn the clarinet. After a couple of years, he made the switch to saxophone. None of these instruments really pleased Matt. However, he played them so that he would be eligible to play in the Jazz Band, where he played the piano. Matt attended Warren Township High School in Gurnee. He played the piano throughout high school in the Warren Jazz Ensemble where he earned such honors as "oustanding soloist" and "oustanding musician". He was honored in his senior year as the most oustanding member of his school jazz band, one of the most oustanding members of his symphonic band (where he was then playing the bass clarinet), and was also recognized as one of the Top 5 young composers in the state of Illinois. The song that won him that last recognition was "Everlasting Love", off of his first album, "Pure Inspirations". Upon entering high school, Matt also began to play the piano at his church, St. Paul the

Apostle in Gurnee. Every Saturday night he was up in front of the church banging away on the piano. It was through his time at St. Paul's that Matt not only obtained a strong desire and longing for liturgical music and the church itself, but it is where he also learned to write music. Matt attributes his ability to write music from having had to play the piano from guitar chords at masses. When Matt was a freshman, his father was diagnosed with a brain tumor. In his junior year, on November 23, 1997, his father passed away from the disease. Matt began to write music as a way of escaping the sorrow of his father's death. The result was a collection of inspirational songs called "Pure Inspirations". The songs were meant to be a tribute to Matt's father as well as a form of inspiration for the world to experience. The album did quite well. At the time of its release, Matt had not planned on creating a second album. However, the songs kept coming, so the CDs did as well. Eventually, Matt started writing a great deal of liturgical music and he also started to sing again (something he had stopped once high school began since he was no longer in choir). During his time at Marquette, he wrote a number of liturgical pieces, with the idea that they might one day be used by churches everywhere during standard liturgical services. As he became more involved in liturgical ministry at Marquette, he noticed more and more that much of the "new" liturgical music that was being published tended to be very challenging and difficult music ... music that a congregation wouldn't be able to pick up very easily. Matt's goal was to write simpler music - music that had strong melodies and familiar words. Of course, he still had a desire to write instrumental pieces. And being a teenage musician also led Matt to write an occasional pop song or love ballad. Come Run With Me was released when Matt was a freshman at Marquette University (1999). Daily Bread and One Step Forward were released in the fall of 2001, Matt's junior year on campus. His most popular CD, Be With Me, was released in the Spring of 2003. His latest album, Carry On, was released in February of 2006. He has sold over 5,000 albums since Pure Inspirations came out. To this day, Matt's music still touches on his experiences with his father's cancer and passing, but continues to be dominated by themes of hope, courage and love. His music is not superficial. It's about reality. His music is something that everyone can benefit from and relate to. One promise Matt can make is that his music will never be about anything but life as we all know it. While he began writing seriously in 1998, Matt didn't begin his performing career until 2000, when he held his first ever concert called "Matt Wessel Live". One year later, several students from Warren High School's FBLA program, who had been at that first concert, approached Matt about playing a cancer benefit show for Kate Pedersen, a Warren student who was

fighting cancer. It was a perfect fit for both Matt and the Gurnee community. The 2001 Concert For Life was a huge success, raising over \$6,000 for the American Cancer Society. Since that first show, Matt and his musicians have performed at over a dozen concerts aimed at raising money for the ACS, including six shows organized through Warren High School. Over \$100,000 has been raised for the American Cancer Society since 2001. Matt has also played at a number of other fundraisers, ranging from well known organizations like Habitat For Humanity to general church fundraisers for better parish programs. The American Cancer Society awarded Matt with a Distinguished Service Award (Youth Category) in the summer of 2004 and a Chairman's Award (Illinois Division) in the fall of 2005 for his work with the Concert For Life and for his support of the ACS. He has also made many guest appearances at various Relay For Lives throughout the Midwest. Matt currently lives in Milwaukee, WI, on the city's East Side, and is a member of the Milwaukee Bucks Front Office, working with the team's Public/Media Relations Department. He also plays the piano and sings at Three Holy Women Catholic Church (when he has the time).

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