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**ROMANCE STARS CENTER STAGE AT 2008 HAWAII ROMANCE FESTIVAL**  
**\*\* The Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii to Host 10-Day Celebration \*\***

HONOLULU (October 22, 2007) – Harmonious melodies, divine dinners, and Hawaii – the ideal recipe for Romance. That’s what the Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii has cooked up with the 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival. The 10-day event, to be held from May 2 – 11, 2008 will celebrate some of the most romantic music ever written, performed by guest star entertainers from across the U.S. and the Islands.

Launched in March 2007 as the Return to Romance festival, the newly renamed Hawaii Romance Festival will offer more – more music, more performers, more celebrities, and, of course, more ROMANCE. Romance seekers from near and far are invited to enjoy the sounds of love as Broadway stars, chart-topping recording artists and talented Hawaii musicians join the Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii for live performances, romantic dinners, a movie screening and other incredible events.

“We are excited about the caliber of performers who are joining us from around the globe and showcasing Hawaii as one of the world’s most Romantic destinations,” said founding partner and Grammy Award winning producer Allen Sviridoff. “The Hawaii Romance Festival is growing in popularity and we’re looking forward to building on last year’s success to create an annual tradition in the Islands.”

The 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival schedule of events is as follows:

***Friday, May 2, Opening Ceremonies***

The 10-day festival will kick off with opening ceremonies at ‘Iolani Palace and feature the full Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii performing in front of the historic royal residence. The audience will be treated to a preview of the week’s events with musical snippets offered by the various artists. In keeping with Hawaiian tradition, Aaron Mahi will conduct a blessing and a hula halau will perform. To really bring Love and Romance to the occasion, Kahu Curtis Kekuna of Kawaiaha’o Church will invite audience members to renew their vows with their loved one. The event is free and open to the public.

***Sunday, May 4, International Music Night***

Since Romance and music are universal, what better way to celebrate than with a night with some of the most talented Hawaii and international performers at the Waikiki Shell? Ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro and Hawaii's ambassador of music, Amy Hanaiali'i, will be joined by vocalists from the Mainland, Korea, and Japan.

***Monday, May 5, Romantic Night at the Movies***

Most Romantics at heart agree that *Gone with the Wind* is not only the first Romantic epic, but the grandest as well. The Hawaii Romance Festival will help celebrate the film's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a special screening. Sponsored in part by the Hawaii International Film Festival, this event will be a rare opportunity to watch this classic in wide-screen format. Ann Rutherford, who portrayed Scarlett's younger sister Careen in the film, will be a special guest at this intimate viewing and will take part in a Q & A session following the showing.

***Wednesday and Thursday, May 7 and 8, "The Most Romantic Songs Ever Written...Part 2"***

Hosted once again by Nick and Nina Clooney, these concerts are a continuation of the wonderful Broadway-style show that began last year at the Hawaii Theatre, where a panel of 150 industry specialists including songwriters, music publishers, singers, music historians and journalists voted on the 20 most romantic songs ever written. The next 20 songs will be voted on by the end of 2007, then presented at the Hawaii Theatre by Broadway's finest, including Tony Award winner Brian Stokes Mitchell. Each year, through 2011, an additional 20 songs will be added to the list to create the definitive list of the 100 Most Romantic Songs Ever Written, from which a touring production will be developed in Hawaii and presented around the world.

***Friday, May 9, Back to Romance***

Under the stars at the Waikiki Shell, this concert will celebrate the Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii's *Back To Romance* CD, which features a dozen of the best male musical artists from Hawaii. The incomparable and legendary Motown artist and songwriter Smokey Robinson will join a selection of these leading men for an unforgettable evening of Romance.

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### *Saturday, May 10, The Rhythm of Romance – 2*

With stars including Kenny Loggins, Natalie Cole, Michael McDonald, Cecilio and Kapono, and American Idol Ruben Studdard, last year's Rhythm of Romance concert was an incredible show. This year's Rhythm of Romance 2 will be even more exciting and remarkable with R&B legend Gladys Knight and soul singer Aaron Neville, as well as other renowned music makers, joining Island musicians for this "not-to-be-missed" event at the Blaisdell Arena.

### *Sunday, May 11, Pink Day Concert and Dinner*

Closing the 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival and in honor of Mother's Day, Pink Day will benefit the Queen's Medical Cancer Center in support of breast cancer. The event will be held at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and will include a special dinner with a pink fashion show. Following the dinner, guests will enjoy a concert by a to be announced international superstar who is very passionate about the cause.

The Hawaii Romance Festival is hosted by the Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii and is sponsored in part by the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Starwood Hotels and Resorts, the official hotel provider of the Hawaii Romance Festival. Additional local and national sponsorships are currently being finalized.

For more information about the 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival, visit

[www.HawaiiRomanceFestival.com](http://www.HawaiiRomanceFestival.com).

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