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## **Amateur and professional pianists will tickle the ivories at the 2008 Liberace Piano Competition**

LAS VEGAS (July 7, 2008) - A glittering showcase of music, piano and showmanship will be performed by amateur and professional pianists as they tickle the ivories during the 2008 Liberace Piano Competition season.

"We're excited to continue a 15-year tradition of the Liberace Piano Competition, as this is a significant event in the piano performance discipline and vital for us to build greater awareness of the Liberace legacy of showmanship and support for the arts," says Liberace Foundation President Darin Hollingsworth. "The competition, too, is important to help us generate additional funds to support our scholarship and grant program, as well as care for Liberace's collection of glittering and delicate costumes, pianos, cars, antiques and jewelry. We invite the public and businesses to support us and come and watch the competitors."

The competition will recognize pianists from across the U.S., and adults and children starting at age 8 were invited to enter the competition to compete in classical or showmanship categories. Philip Fortenberry will serve as Competition Artistic Director and Chair of the Adjudicator Panel. He currently is the associate music director for the Las Vegas musical production of "Jersey Boys" and holds a Master of Music degree in classical piano performance from New Jersey City University. He was an adjunct faculty member in the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. Fortenberry has studied piano privately at Juilliard and previously competed in many competitions.

The official competition season begins on **Sunday, July 13**, at 1:30 p.m. during the Liberace Museum's monthly 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays event with a showcase of pianists from last year's competition who will perform in the Museum's showroom. Too, an artistic poster will be revealed that will serve as the competition poster and **2008 semi-finalists will be announced** at this time.

The Competitor's Showcase event, where all competitors will be given the opportunity to tickle the ivories and showcase their talent, will be held on Sunday, **Aug. 10**, starting at noon. The Semi-Final competition will be held at noon on **Sept. 13-14**. These events will take place at the Liberace Museum, 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. (at Spencer), and admission is free but space will be limited with seating on a first come, first serve basis.

The **finals of the 2008 Liberace Piano Competition** are set for Sunday, **Sept. 21**, at the auditorium at Community Lutheran, 3720 E. Tropicana Ave. in Las Vegas. Cost of admission to the finals event is \$15 per person or \$50 for a family four pack of tickets. Proceeds from the competition admission will benefit two Las Vegas non-profit organizations: The Liberace Foundation and Family Promise.

To date, UnitedHealthcare and Cirque Du Soleil have made early sponsorship commitments to the Competition.

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The Liberace Piano Competition has evolved from a 15-year tradition at The Liberace Foundation and Museum. Foundation board member and former Liberace publicist, Jamie James, and his team at The James Agency in 1993 created the Liberace Play-A-Like Contest to inspire enthusiasm for the wonderful performance legacy given to us by Mr. Showmanship himself.

Liberace himself studied classical music for 17 years at Wisconsin Conservatory of Music and received a scholarship for his studies. Accordingly, The Liberace competition features two categories: classical and showmanship.

In the past two years, the competition has grown and expanded to focus on Liberace's significant classical performance training and expertise as well as his infamous showmanship. Twenty-eight competitors in 2007 represented a variety of ages presenting diverse musical repertoire with local talent and performers from as far away as Australia, England, Mexico and Russia.

For more information about the 2008 Liberace Piano Competition, to enter the competition, or to buy tickets for the finals, call the Liberace Museum, (702) 798-5595.

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### **ABOUT THE LIBERACE FOUNDATION & MUSEUM:**

Liberace transported audiences to a dazzling world of color, jovial music, glittering costumes and humor. His legend lives on in the Liberace Museum, considered to be Mr. Showmanship's greatest encore performance. Liberace opened his Museum in 1979 to share his collections with the world and to support his love of being an active patron of the arts, and most importantly to support his mission of helping talented students pursue careers in the performing and creative arts through scholarship assistance. To date, the Liberace Foundation has awarded in excess of \$5.2 million in scholarships to more than 2,500 students at over 120 colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

The Liberace Museum, located at 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. in Las Vegas, serves as a significant funding source for the Liberace Foundation. It features Liberace's collections of rare pianos, classic cars, famous sequined and bejeweled costume wardrobe, glittering stage jewelry and rare antiques, as well as Liberace's private papers and memorabilia. April 15, 2009 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Liberace Museum. For more information and to become a member of the Liberace Foundation, call 702.798.5595 or visit the website at [www.Liberace.org](http://www.Liberace.org).