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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 (February 8, 2008) – 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, ‘Iolani Palace

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.

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Sunday, May 4, International Music Night, Waikiki Shell

Romance goes international at the Waikiki Shell with the incredible Latin rhythms of **Sergio Mendes** and his band combining with the **Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii** to create a magical music experience. They will be joined by Hawaii's ambassador of music **Amy Hanaiali'i**; popular Filipino entertainer **Martin Nievera**; 'ukulele virtuoso **Jake Shimabukuro**; and South Korean R&B and K-Drama singer **Kim Bum Soo**.

Monday, May 5, Romantic Night at the Movies, Hawaii Theatre

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 70th 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 moderated by **Nick Clooney** following the showing.

Tuesday, May 6, "Dancing With The Stars – Hawaiian Style" Dinner Dance, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Monarch Room

This neighborhood-style event is a celebration of dancing at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel's Monarch Room. The incredible evening of dinner and dancing will also provide an opportunity for guests to dance with various Hawaii celebrities for \$10 a dance, with all proceeds benefiting the Hawaii Arts Alliance.

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

Hosted once again by one of America's most romantic couples, **Nick and Nina Clooney**, these concerts are a continuation of the wonderful Broadway-style show that premiered last year at the Hawaii Theatre. Tony Award-winner **Brian Stokes Mitchell** stars, along with Hawaii's very own **Jimmy Borges, Matt Catingub, Anita Hall, Glenn Medeiros** and others, performing the next "20 Most Romantic Songs Ever Written" as voted on by a survey of members of the music industry.

Friday, May 9, Back to Romance, Waikiki Shell

This concert under the stars features the legendary and incomparable icon of Motown: Mr. **Smokey Robinson**, who is returning to Hawaii for the first time in two decades. This poetically romantic evening will also celebrate Hawaii's best selling **Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii's Back To Romance CD**, which features some of the greatest male vocalists from Hawaii. Joining **Maestro Matt Catingub** on stage will be: **Robert Cazimero; Cecilio & Kaponu; Eric Gilliom; Nathan Aweau** and **Barry Flanagan** of **HAPA**; and **Kaukahi** – with more to come – for an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime music experience.

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Saturday, May 10, The Rhythm of Romance – 2, Blaisdell Arena

R&B legend and superstar **Gladys Knight**, plus soul singer **Aaron Neville** and *American Idol*'s **Kimberley Locke** all join with Island musicians from the Matt Catingub Orchestra of Hawaii and other vocalists for this second installation of "**The Rhythm of Romance.**"

Sunday, May 11, It's Pink Night Concert and Dinner, Royal Hawaiian Hotel

Closing the 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival and in honor of Mother's Day, Pink Night will benefit breast cancer programs at The Queen's 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: Starwood Hotels and Resorts, the official hotel provider of the Hawaii Romance Festival; the Hawaii Tourism Authority; Pleasant Holidays; The House of Harry Winston; 'Iolani Palace; KGMB-TV; and Paul Brown Salon & Spa. For more information about the 2008 Hawaii Romance Festival, visit www.HawaiiRomanceFestival.com.

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