

PIANO DUOS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE TO COMPETE IN ELEVENTH DRANOFF INTERNATIONAL TWO PIANO COMPETITION

Judging to be held March 9 –16, 2008 in Miami

MIAMI, November 1, 2007 -- The Dranoff International Two Piano Foundation today announced that semifinalists from ten different countries will compete for more than \$50,000 in cash prizes and performance opportunities at the Eleventh Dranoff International Two Piano Competition, which will be held March 9 –16, 2008 in Miami.

Open to performers between the ages of 21 and 33, the Dranoff International Two Piano Competition is the world's only international competition dedicated exclusively to duo pianism. The biennial event brings a prestigious panel of judges, including world-renowned two-piano performers, teachers and critics, to Miami for the semifinal and final rounds, which are open to the public.

Ten semifinalist teams were selected for the 2008 competition from an impressive field of applicants representing more than 18 countries.

During the week-long competition, the semifinalist teams will perform three recitals of two-piano works of their choice as well as a specially commissioned work, "Lillibulero Variations," by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, one of Britain's most respected and versatile composers and performers. Each duo will also perform an obligatory repertoire, including two-piano works by Max Reger and three movements out of "Four Songs of George Gershwin," arranged for two pianos by Paul Posnak.

On March 16th, the top three teams will perform Max Bruch's Concerto for Two Pianos with the Florida Classical Orchestra, under the direction of Stewart Robertson, Music Director of the Florida Grand Opera and Glimmerglass Opera, in the grand finale concert on Miami Beach.

The semifinalists for the 2008 competition are:

>Cara Hesse & Laura Pauna (South Africa) – Cara Hesse and Laura Pauna are the first piano duo team from South Africa to ever obtain a Bachelor of Music degree and a Performance Licentiate from the University of Cape Town and the University of South Africa, respectively. Recent competition prizes include the IBLA Grand Prize in 2006 and third prize at the “Valentino Bucchi” two-piano competition in Rome in 2007.

>Susan and Sarah Wang (United States) – Twins Susan and Sarah Wang hold bachelor’s degrees in piano performance from the University of Michigan and master’s degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, and they currently are students of Hans-Peter and Volker Stentzl at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock. The duo won second place in the 2003 Ellis National Duo Competition and first place in the University of Michigan Concerto Competition in 2004.

>Longford-Brown Piano Duo (United Kingdom) – James Longford and Lindy Tennent-Brown have performed together since 2002, when they met as Legal & General Junior Fellows at the Royal College of Music in London. The duo took third place in the 14th International Schubert Competition for Piano Duos in 2005 and received second prize as well as the Rachmaninoff Award at the IBLA Grand Prize Competition in 2007.

>Piano Duo LP (Serbia) – Sonja Loncar and Andrija Pavlovic are currently pursuing postgraduate studies at Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock as well as studying contemporary two-piano music at the Music University in Belgrade. In 2006, the duo won second prize in the two-piano category and third prize in the piano duet category at the International Music Competition in Rome.

>Duo Stephanie Ho & Saar Ahuvia (China/Israel) – Stephanie Ho and Saar Ahuvia received Graduate Performance Diplomas at the Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, where they studied under Leon Fleisher, and they also completed a Performing Artist Residency at the Banff Centre in Canada. In addition to their performing careers, both artists currently serve on the faculty of Concordia College’s Conservatory of Music in New York.

>Piano Duo Vis-à-vis (Russia) – Polina Grigoryeva and Yulia Yurchenko are currently pursuing post-graduate studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock. The duo performed as part of the International Duo Festival “Baltic Piano Duo” in 2006 and 2007 and the International Festival of Modern Music “Musical Spring” and “Wait Nights” in 2005 and 2006.

>Piano Duo Yoshie and Takashi (Japan) – Yoshie Shiramizu-Fujii and Takashi Fujii studied under Prof. Paul Dan and Prof. Robert Benz at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Mannheim in Germany, where they were German Academic Exchange Service scholars from 2005 to 2006. In 2005, the duo won top prize at the London International Music Competition and “Best Performance of a Commissioned Work” at the 10th Dranoff International Two Piano Competition.

>Irina Silivanova & Maxim Puryzhinskiy (Russia) – Irina Silivanova and Maxim Puryzhinskiy have been playing as a piano duo since 1998 and studied under Elena Richter and Prof. Alexander Bonduriansky. In 2005, the duo received third prize at the 54th ARD International Competition in Munich and first prize as well as the special jury prize for best performance of a Schubert work at the 14th International Schubert Competition in the Czech Republic.

>Piano Duo Humburger (Germany) – The twins Richard and Valentin Humburger are currently studying under Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich. Competition prizes include first prize at the International Schubert Competition in the Czech Republic and at the Torneo International Music Competition in Italy.

>Victor & Luis del Valle (Spain) – Brothers Victor and Luis del Valle are currently studying at the Instituto Internacional de Musica de Camara de Madrid, and they previously studied under Prof. Dmitri Bashkirov at the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia. The duo won second place as well as the Special Audience Prize at the 54th ARD International Music Competition in Munich, and they were awarded the Silver Medal at the “Primer Palau Programme” in Barcelona.

For more information on the Eleventh Dranoff International Two Piano Competition, visit www.dranoff2piano.org.

About the Dranoff International Two Piano Foundation

As a member organization of the World Federation of International Music Competitions, the Dranoff International Two Piano Foundation is dedicated to the presentation of Two Piano music and its outstanding artists to the publics of the world. Foundation programs develop audiences and appreciation for this unique art form through education, performance, and the commission of new Two Piano compositions by world renowned composers, including Morton Gould, John Corigliano, William Bolcom, Ned Rorem and Michel Legrand.