

CELEBRITY PLAYGROUND

BY MICHAEL SHULMAN

Crooning for a Cause *Michael Bublé Hits Vegas to Support the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute*

What do Freddie Mercury, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday and The Beatles have in common with Dean Martin, Dame Shirley Bassey, Bing Crosby, Otis Redding and the Bee Gees? Well, for one thing they represent some of the biggest names in the history of recorded music. And they all sang songs that have been covered in the past 10 years with both critical and commercial success by Grammy-nominated Canadian crooner Michael Bublé. The baby-faced boy from British Columbia has used the past decade to introduce a new generation to the music that we Las Vegans can trace back to our city's genesis. Equally comfortable singing jazz, pop or big band, Bublé has plucked the ripest fruit from the fertile orchards of the greats (folks with names like Porter, Kern, Gershwin, Cahn, Brecht and Anka) and made them his own.

2000 can probably be looked upon as a contemporary rebirth of slick, when Bublé was invited to sing at the wedding of Caroline Mulrone by her father, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulrone. Bublé wowed the crowd with his spin on the English version of *The Threepenny Opera's* early-century pop standard (and later, McDonald's ad jingle), "Mack the Knife"—after which Mulrone introduced the singer (then 25) to Grammy-winning producer David Foster, who wasted no time in signing Bublé to his 143 Records (a sub-label of jazz, rock and R&B powerhouse Atlantic Records).

Now Bublé returns to the Las Vegas stage, when Keep Memory Alive presents its annual Power of Love gala on February 9th at the MGM Grand Conference Center to benefit the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute, a Las Vegas-based nonprofit organization dedicated to cure Alzheimer's, Huntington's, Parkinson's, ALS and other memory disorders. This year's event, with its luxe theme of chocolate, is honoring one of Keep Memory Alive's founders, Bobby Baldwin, chief of design and construction at the MGM Mirage (and the man overseeing the massive \$7.4 billion CityCenter project on Las Vegas Boulevard). Perhaps the evening will best be expressed in song, when Bublé channels his inner Nina Simone (the high priestess of soul herself) while performing his inspirational version of Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley's 1965 jazz standard "Feeling Good" and belts out its triumphant conclusion: "It's a new dawn. It's a new day. It's a new life for me, and I'm feelin' good!" ♠

Bublé has taken the greats and made them his own.

Keep Memory Alive presents Power of Love 2008 benefiting the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute

Saturday, February 9th, at the MGM Grand Conference Center

The gala will honor Lou Ruvo Brain Institute co-founder Bobby Baldwin, with cuisine by chefs Wolfgang Puck, David Robins, Guy Savoy and Tom Colicchio, and a special performance by Michael Bublé.

For more information, call 702-263-9797. Seating is limited.



Michael Bublé (with Emily Blunt at last year's Academy Awards) returns to Sin City February 9th to perform at Keep Memory Alive's Power of Love 2008 gala at the MGM Grand Conference Center.