THE ENTERTAINERS

The First Lady
The Innovator
The Prodigy
The Showman
The "Perfessor"
The Spirit

There's no time like the old-time
**LOGLINE** – A heartwarming comedy about six piano players striving to win the World Championship of Old-Time Piano (mostly ragtime). With brilliant showmanship and skill these competitors vie for the glow of victory, for escape from the trials of their everyday lives, and for the revival of the first distinctly American popular music.

**SUMMARY** – Every Memorial Day weekend, piano players from across the world strap on their bow-ties, arm garters, and straw boater hats and descend on Peoria, Illinois to battle for the title of World’s Greatest Old-Time Piano Player. The competitors come from all walks of life, but they share an abiding love of old-time music, specifically ragtime.

Now forgotten by many, ragtime dominated the American pop music scene from 1897-1917. The first natively American pop music, ragtime led to the development of the modern music industry, and to jazz, rhythm & blues, and rock & roll. A vital part of our cultural heritage, it’s a vibrant, infectious music that’s been called the most technically difficult music there is to play.

And as all the contestants know, if it’s going to play in Peoria, it had better be great.

www.theentertainersmovie.com
Contact: Aaron Kogan Management (424) 234-3125
With humor, passion and an unsurpassed devotion to the old-time music, these players compete to claim glory and to entertain a devoted audience. It’s a battle to the finish. With fingers flying and constant one-upmanship, the players keep raising the bar one after the other. A year of their lives is invested in the outcome, and every pianist knows - only one can win the title.

In what may be the toughest competition yet, a winner is crowned. For that person, there will be joy and, for all the rest, disappointment. But a broader goal is not forgotten. Every year these players keep going is another opportunity to remind the world that ragtime, the first truly American popular music, shouldn't be forgotten just yet.
“Soooo good...A great glimpse at a world – of old-time piano playing – you never even knew existed. Completely charming.”

--Minnesota Public Radio
Movie Maven Stephanie Curtis


“...the audience members loved every minute—they clapped at the end of ‘Take Your Girl To The Movies If You Can’t Make Love At Home’ and ‘Trés Moutard (Too Much Mustard)’ as if each was being performed live.”

--Onion A.V. Club Madison
Named “Choice Cut” at Wisconsin Film Festival


“I have to believe, after watching “The Entertainers,” that ragtime music is the happiest music that has ever existed.... For the quality, care and craft that shows up on screen, it might be hard to believe that this is the first documentary for both directors.”

--Dane 101, Sarah Bartash

http://dane101.com/film/2012/04/17/wifilmfest2012_the_entertainers_screens_friday_saturday

“Oh thank goodness there are documentaries like The Entertainers, the best film we saw all day, and I’m not alone in saying that. It was one of those rare films that has scenes so enjoyable that the audience applauds for them, and people walk out gushing about their favorite...The finale, in which the five finalists literally raced across their keyboards, was nothing short of breathtaking.”

--This Is Drivel, Film Blog

http://thisisdrivel.com/?p=3320
Press Sheet
Interviews & Articles

Interview with directors - Minneapolis Television Network
http://blip.tv/minneapolis-television-network/interviews-with-filmmakers-4-29-12-pt-1-6118943

The Entertainers wins Audience Choice Award at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival - Minneapolis Television Network (begins 25:00 mark)

Interview with co-director Nick Holle – Wisconsin Public Television (begins 44:00 mark)
http://video.wpt2.org/video/2221147728

Wisconsin Film Festival Coverage of The Entertainers - Dane 101
http://dane101.com/arts/2012/04/30/wifilmfest_2012_interview_the_entertainers_codirector_nick_holle

Wisconsin Film Festival Interview with Michael Zimmer & Faye Ballard - WORT 89.3 FM
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyIugwcdArI

Rhythm and Grooves interview with Michael Zimmer, Jim Boston & Ethan Uslan – KFAI Radio - Minneapolis (begins 17:00 mark)
http://www.kfai.org/node/43565

"The Entertainers: comedic documentary details Old-Time Piano contest" – Volume One
http://volumeone.org/articles/article/3125/The_Entertainers

"Musical highlights of the 2012 Wisconsin Film Festival" -- Isthmus - The Daily Page
http://www.thedailypage.com/daily/article.php?article=36343

"The Entertainers event" - The Livingston Inn Albums
http://livingstoninn.phanfare.com/5562000

Onion AV Album - "WFF 12" - Mark Reichers
http://www.flickr.com/photos/markonflre/6958753694/in/set-72157629486742088/

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ETHAN USLAN quit his day job as a librarian to pursue his dream of being a professional ragtime player in Charlotte, NC. His flashy play and innovative arrangements have helped him become the toast of Charlotte’s nursing homes, not to mention book a gig on Prairie Home Companion.

But Ethan’s burning passion is to reclaim the world championship he lost by one point, out of a possible 1200, to a 16-year-old. With the support of his wife and young son, he practices day and night, coming up with ever more complex, show-stopping pieces he hopes will dazzle the contest judges.

ADAM SWANSON, 17, is number one in his class at Shenandoah (Iowa) High. But school for Adam is just a distraction from his real love -- ragtime. His classmates may never have heard of it, but Adam loves ragtime and detests all other types of music. And he has a preternatural talent. A three-time junior champion by the age of 12, Adam won last year’s contest by one point out of 1200 (dethroning Ethan). His adult contemporaries admire his skill and limitless potential, and Adam knows he wants to devote his life to playing ragtime. But will the audience be there to support him? And first things first, all world championships aside, will he ever get a driver’s license?

JIM BOSTON practices on old upright pianos he finds in the basements of churches in Omaha, Nebraska. A machine operator by day, Jim lives to play ragtime, but struggles to get by from paycheck to paycheck. He’s the first to admit that he’s not the most polished player in the competition, but sometimes there are bigger goals than simply winning a contest.

In a life filled with hardship, sometimes the simple joy of performing onstage and sharing the music you love is enough to keep you going.
FOUR ARROWS a prominent Native American professor and author, taught himself to play the piano at an early age. He can’t read music and he never plays a song the same way twice, but he infuses his playing with the kind of showmaship that ignites audiences. When he steps up to an old upright piano, he feels a spiritual connection; sometimes, he says, the piano tells him what to play.

His unconventional, completely improvisational style can amaze crowds, but he never knows if his improvisations will lead him instead to fall on his face. His chances of a title ride on his ability to rise to the moment, and he always plays on the fine line between brilliance and disaster.

FAYE BALLARD began competing at the age of 12, at the second ever contest, where she narrowly lost to a 70-year-old grandmother. Faye has competed ever since, often the only female finishing in the Top 10 or Top 5.

She has been called “the First Lady” of the contest, but after 30 years, the championship has still eluded her. With the help of her mother, ERMA, who is Faye’s business manager, roommate and best friend, Faye pushes her own musical boundaries in search of her first championship.

“PERFESSOR” BILL EDWARDS is a 19-time finalist and one-time champion (1991), a computer programmer by day and ragtime historian at heart. Bill’s Virginia home is a living, breathing shrine to ragtime music. The walls are lined with framed original sheet music covers and his downstairs parlor is designed to replicate a parlor from the ragtime era.

Bill’s love for the music doesn’t mask his competitiveness; he relies on take-no-prisoners tactics to get any edge he can. Bill wants his name back on the trophy, and he wants to show his competitors that the “Perfessor” can still take them to school.
PRODUCTION TEAM

Directed and Produced by................. Michael Zimmer
                                  Nick Holle

Executive Producers.................... Seth Hedrington
                                  Charlie Stickney
                                  Brent Watkins

Cinematography.......................... Derek Keyeski

Co-Producers............................. Paul Hogseth
                                  Emery Skolfield
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FILM TRAILER

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rnIW_8Cxlbo

http://twitter.com/#!/entmovie

https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Entertainers/211857170726