

# Good Times

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Our Night on the Town

## Clay, Ruben team up for something 'Timeless'

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When "American Idol" alumni Clay Aiken and Ruben Studdard arrive at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods on Aug. 7, it's not going to be a Clay Aiken thing or a Ruben Studdard thing.

When Clay and Ruben hit the stage for their tour dubbed, "Timeless," it will be a team effort.

Clay, calling last Friday from Asheville, NC, for the opening night of the tour, said Ruben and he had spoken for years about doing a tour together.

Clay said Ruben and he loved performing together on the second cycle of "Idol." (Ruben won that cycle and Clay was his runner-up). They especially loved performing together on the ensemble musical numbers featured each week on the show.

Clay said they also performed together when the "Idol" cast took their performances on the road. And there were other opportunities for the two of them to hit the stage together since then, but nothing long-term.

"We wanted to do it again," said Clay of performing together on stage.

But Ruben's and Clay's separate schedules kept getting in the way. Clay took some time to perform on Broadway (he was in "Monty Python's Spamalot"). And Ruben was in the middle of his recording career.

"We were always busy," said Clay.

So, this year, Clay and Ruben both decided to just cancel all of their other plans and turn the ideas and discussions into action and reality.

And "Timeless" was born.

Clay lost to Ruben on "Idol." So, Clay said, there has always been this assumption by the public that there is some competitive tension between the duo. But this is far from the case. Clay said there is more of a sense of family between the duo.

"We're the strangest brothers in the world," said Clay with a laugh.

The two have similarities, Clay explained. They both grew up in the south. They both grew up in the church. They both grew up



Ruben Studdard, left, and Clay Aiken come to the MGM at Foxwoods on Aug. 7.

in small towns. And they both have a love of music. But, he said, that's where the similarities end.

"Opposites attract," said Clay.

For the tour, Clay said the two play up these differences, for fun, on-stage.

Typically when two acts who normally headline hit the road, they take turns each night to close the show. But Clay, for this tour, this isn't about him hitting the stage for a slot of time and Ruben hitting the stage for his set.

For this tour, Clay explained, Ruben and he perform as a team. Although each will sing a

couple of songs by themselves, mostly they will be working as a team, singing together and playing up the humor.

"It's like Sonny and Cher, Bert and Ernie or Donny and Marie," said Clay.

Clay said he and Ruben do come at music from two different angles. Ruben is more about R&B/Motown. And Clay said he is more about pop songs of the 1960s and 1970s. He said they also play up their preferences on stage with Ruben claiming his style is better and Clay arguing his style is better.

But on stage, Clay said there is a common element despite the different genres. Both Ruben and he love "singer songs" where vocals and melody take precedence over production values and studio trickery.

Clay recently released a new album, "Tried and True," which reflects his love for "singer songs." On the album, he covers such classic songs as "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You" from Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, "Crying" from Roy Orbison, and "Mack the Knife" from Bobby Darin.

"These are songs that are tried and true that are

about the vocals. There is no distracting production, just beautiful melodies," said Clay of the tracks on "Tried and True."

But, Clay said it's just a coincidence that he has a new album out in time for the tour. For this tour, it's more about he and Ruben performing together. Clay said he only offers up one full song from his new album and Ruben offers only one track from his last album, "Love Is."

"Everything else is new," said Clay. There are numerous medleys highlighting music from different eras, mostly performed by both he and Ruben. Clay

called the concert more of a musical revue than a showcase for each performer.

Clay Aiken and Ruben Studdard will be at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods on Saturday, Aug. 7 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$40, \$55, and \$70.

Tickets may be purchased online at [www.mgmatfoxwoods.com](http://www.mgmatfoxwoods.com), by calling the MGM Grand Box Office at 1-866-646-0609, by calling Ticketmaster, or in person at the MGM Grand Box Office. Tickets may also be purchased by visiting [www.clayaiken.com](http://www.clayaiken.com) or [www.rubenstuddard.com](http://www.rubenstuddard.com).