News Release

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***
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# International Pianist Hosts Benefit Concert at the University of St. Thomas

**WHAT:** Joseph Samuel Messina, international composer and pianist, will give a benefit concert for Moroccan native, Mina Loubiri who is in need of funds for medical expenses. Proceeds from the concert will help alleviate the cost of Loubiri's much needed operation.

**WHEN:** 7-8 p.m. Thursday, April 27

**WHERE:** University of St. Thomas
Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon
Parking: Moran Center, 3807 Graustark at W. Alabama

**BACKGROUND:** Messina is the founder of the Balloons of Hope Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises funds for autistic children. He has recorded three CDs and performed at numerous benefit concerts. His music reflects that of Baroque and New Age and is noted for having a romantic flair.

Dr. Debra Andrist, University of St. Thomas Cullen professor of Spanish and Modern and Classical Languages department chair, met Loubiri while on a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship to study the "Challenges and Triumphs of Women in Morocco." Loubiri suffers from a severely clubbed foot resulting from a childhood vaccination side-effect and Andrist has vowed to find a way to help Loubiri in the United States.

To donate to Loubiri's fund, make checks out to the Mina Loubiri Medical Fund and mail to Mina Loubiri Medical Fund, c/o Dr. Debra D. Andrist, 1715 Forestlake Dr., Sugar Land, TX 77479. Also, any Bank of America will accept a donation for deposit in the special account, which is registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for non-profits. Contact Dr. Debra Andrist at 713-525-3122 for the account number as well as for statements for income tax charitable deductions and for general accounting statements for the fund.

**COST:** Free and open to the public, but donations will be accepted.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Dr. Debra Andrist at 713-525-3122 or by email at andrist@stthom.edu .

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