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Drew Lachey, national performers headline July 11 event to start countdown to 2012 World Choir Games

Fountain Square celebration will feature debut of new mascot, inspiring performances, unveiling of collectible pins, countdown clock

CINCINNATI (OH) – The countdown to the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati USA officially starts with a celebration event on July 11 at downtown’s Fountain Square from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Cincinnati native Drew Lachey – member of Grammy-nominated 98 Degrees and winner of the second season of ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars” – will emcee the event, introducing a variety of national musical performers and kick starting a yearlong cultural celebration that will put Cincinnati USA on the international stage.

For the event, Fountain Square will be abuzz with strolling choirs and festival-style booths celebrating the region’s rich international flavor and heritage, hosted by local international chambers and the Cincinnati USA Sister City Association. Lachey will take the stage at noon, welcoming the following local and national musical performers:

- Atlanta-based Gospel recording artist Byron Cage with more than 50 singers from the Cincinnati Citywide Mass Choir. Known as the "Prince of Praise," Cage has been performing and recording songs since the 1980s and has become known for his cross-cultural, mass-appeal praise and worship style. His work has been nominated for Grammy, Stellar and NAACP Image Awards.
- The Eleventh Hour Choir from Kettering, Ohio, finalists in the NBC hit show “The Sing Off.”
- Singer and songwriter Kelly King, star of “The American Dream,” presented at the 2010 World Choir Games in Shaoxing, China.

Lachey will also host the debut public appearance by Whirl, the official mascot of the 2012 World Choir Games. The mascot, designed by local artist Davis Stanard and produced by Stagecraft, Inc., in Northside, will be available for photos.

Prior to that – beginning at 11:30 a.m. – Dan Lincoln, president and CEO of the Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau and member of the Cincinnati Organizing Committee for the 2012 World Choir Games, will unveil the official 2012 World Choir Games Countdown Clock with Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory. The clock is being created by Harrison, Ohio-based Geograph Industries Inc., and will be a permanent fixture on Fountain Square until the Games are completed in July 2012. Lincoln will also welcome Hamilton County Commission President Greg Hartmann, who will recognize the volunteer leadership of the Games from across Cincinnati USA.

In addition, international pin trading opportunities – modeled after pin trading at the Olympic Games – will begin with the unveiling of exclusive, limited edition pins commemorating the Countdown to the Games.

“Our community has spent more than two years preparing for the 2012 World Choir Games, and now this amazing event is just one year away and the excitement and energy is really ramping up,” said Lincoln. “July 11 will be a memorable celebration to start that countdown to the Games in earnest, and we have some amazing people lined up to help us do that.”

The World Choir Games, produced by Germany-based INTERKULTUR, is the largest international choral competition in the world and is held every two years. The 7th World Choir Games will take place July 4-14, 2012, and for the first time ever will be hosted in the United States. The event is expected to attract 20,000 competitors from about 70 countries. Procter & Gamble is the first Presenting Sponsor of the 2012 World Choir Games.

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ABOUT INTERKULTUR:

INTERKULTUR, based in Pohlheim, Germany, has ties to 120,000 choirs made up of 4.8 million choral singers around the world. In more than 20 years since INTERKULTUR was established, more than 5,600 choirs and 250,000 singers from 100 nations have taken part in the World Choir Games and INTERKULTUR's regional choir competitions.

For more information about the 2012 World Choir Games:

- www.2012worldchoirgames.com
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