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Dancing Stars Heat up The 5th Avenue Stage in Ballroom with a Twist August 15-17, 2014

(July 21, 2014 – SEATTLE, WA) *Dancing with the Stars* champion **Maksim Chmerkovskiy** and his fellow cast mates **Karina Smirnoff**, **Val Chmerkovskiy** and **Sharna Burgess** team up with finalists from *American Idol* and *So You Think You Can Dance* to set the 5th Ave stage ablaze in ***Ballroom with a Twist***. Watching the dancers on television is one thing, but getting up close to the fringe, sequins, and booming sounds of the rumba bass is a whole other thrill. ***Ballroom with a Twist*** will be in Seattle August 15-17, 2014 for 4 performances only at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101). Tickets (starting at \$30) may be purchased online at www.5thavenue.org, by phone at 206-625-1900, or at the Box Office at 1308 5th Avenue in downtown Seattle. A \$200 upgrade per ticket is available by phone or in person at the box office for an opportunity to meet the stars following the performances.

This show brings a frenzy of sizzling dances performed by professional international dancers spanning the hot moves of samba, waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, and jive. As if the jaw-dropping dancers aren't enough, a few of your favorite *American Idol* finalists will also be joining the bill with their powerhouse voices. ***Ballroom with a Twist*** is the who's who of the dance and singing world, joining together for an evening of grace, athleticism, and passion. The show is choreographed by *Dancing with the Stars*' Emmy-nominated **Louis van Amstel**, whose passion and expertise brings a new level of excitement and flash to this family-friendly evening.

About the Stars

Dancing with the Stars Dancers:

MAKSIM CHMERKOVSKIY won the coveted Mirror Ball Trophy in 2014 on the 18th season of *Dancing with the Stars*, dancing alongside Sochi Olympic gold medalist, Meryl Davis. Ukrainian-American Ballroom dance champion, choreographer and instructor, Maks began dancing at the age of four and by his teenage years his talent had taken him to a competitive level. He was introduced to television audiences in 2006, when he first appeared on the second season of ABC's #1 hit television show, *Dancing with the Stars*. Through the show, he garnered nationwide recognition and success as a world class dancer and fitness role model.

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Maks founded his first dance studio, Rising Stars Dance Academy, in 1997, located in Saddlebrook, New Jersey. The success of his school led Maks to launch one of the nation's leading Latin and Ballroom dance studios, Dance with Me, which currently has four locations: Ridgefield, New Jersey; Long Island, New York; Stamford, Connecticut and New York City. Through Maksim Chmerkovskiy Productions, he has contributed his expertise and choreography skills to shows including *Le Rêve – The Dream* at Wynn Las Vegas, Broadway's *Burn the Floor*, a special television spot for AOL aired in 2013, as well as a two month run in Broadway's *Forever Tango*.

Although he is playfully known as the “Bad Boy of Ballroom,” Maks always involves himself in charitable work. He is proud to be one of the creators and directors of Dance Team USA, a non-profit educational and charitable organization that is dedicated to recruiting, supporting and training DanceSport participants. Additionally, he has implemented and spearheaded an art therapy program at Childhelp, the longest-running national non-profit dedicated to meeting the physical, emotional, educational and spiritual needs of abused and neglected children.

VALENTIN “VAL” CHMERKOVSKIY, brother to dancing superstar Maksim Chmerkovskiy, has been a U.S. National Dance Champion 14 times in his remarkable 15-year career. After numerous guest appearances on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, Val continues to take center stage as a series-regular professional dancer. Val was in *Dancing with the Stars* season 16's semi-finals, partnered with Disney superstar Zendaya Coleman and just wrapped up season 18 in 6th place partnered with Danica McKellar.

Val is one of the most accomplished amateur Latin dancers in the history of the show. He began dancing at the age of seven and by 12, had participated in his first overseas competition, the German Open. He was one of only two U.S. couples to compete. By 15, he had won his first IDSF World Championship, becoming the first and last American to ever achieve this honor. In addition to being a two-time World Champion, Val's accomplishments include winning the Asian-Pacific, Blackpool and U.S. Open Championships. Along with his partner Daria Chesnokova, he is the current United States Amateur Latin Champion.

His passion for dance has also fueled his aspiration to launch a series of dance studios. He is the co-founder with his brother of Rising Stars Dance Academy, a ballroom DanceSport school for aspiring young talent. He is also the co-founder of Dance With Me Studios; considered one of the nation's leading social dance studios with locations in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Besides his significant work in the dance industry, Val has an array of diverse musical accomplishments to his name. A multi-talented entertainer, he is a classically trained violinist and is passionate about pursuing music as a rapper and songwriter. He has released two singles, “Champagne Diet” and “White Boy Boogie.” His most recent single, “Straight Outta Jersey,” was released in September 2012. Val believes that passion, dedication, discipline and focus is the foundation of all success.

KARINA SMIRNOFF - Beauty and lifestyle expert, television star and Season 13 Mirror Ball Champion, Karina Smirnoff is also a principal choreographer on ABC's global hit reality series *Dancing with the Stars*, now in its 17th season. She is the most Googled professional

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dancer on the show, three years in a row. She is also a talented fashion designer and choreographer, creating all of her own partnered routines on *Dancing with the Stars* and designing all of the costumes for both her and her season partners since day one. Born in the Ukraine and growing up in New York, Karina studied at Fordham University and earned two degrees – a B.A. in Economics and Information Systems Programming. Karina started competing in ballroom dancing competitions at the age of 11. She is a five-time U.S. National Champion, World Trophy Champion, and Asian Open Champion and has won the title at the UK Open. She is also a three-time champion at the US Open, two-time champion at the Asian Open, five-time champion at the Dutch Open, and five-time US National Professional Champion. Karina has also taken second at the British Open Blackpool Dance Festival and is the first woman to also ever make the “British Professional Final” with three different partners. She has also been ranked #2 in the world for Latin Dance.

The popularity of Karina’s dance routines on the show inspired the release of her dance fitness DVD, *Shape Up with Karina*, which became an e-commerce success; as well as the launch of her exciting new Dance Fitness DVD series. Karina successfully operates the first-ever, eco-friendly LEED certified dance studio in Woodland Hills, CA, Karina Smirnoff Dance, where she is able to incorporate her scholarship programs for at-risk youth directly related to her charity Dance Intervention – a division of Alternative Intervention Models. In addition, Karina led a celebrity consortium to activate the Wildlife Champions initiative with Procter & Gamble and is a PETA spokeswoman for the I’d Rather Dance Naked Than Wear Fur billboard and print campaign.

In 2013, Karina starred in her first feature film, *Across Grace Alley*, with Marsha Mason, Ben Hyland and written and directed by her DWTS season 12 partner, Ralph Macchio. Karina's past and most recent accomplishments include a starring role in two Broadway hit shows: *Forever Tango* and *Burn the Floor*, plus a performance at the 61st annual Primetime Emmy Awards. She has hosted segments for E! News, TV Guide, EXTRA, and has appeared in specials on Bravo, ABC, and Lifetime.

SHARNA BURGESS lives in Los Angeles and stars on the #1 ABC television show *Dancing with the Stars* as a Pro Dancer and Choreographer. She recently competed with Olympic gold medalist Charlie White in Season 18. In the 2013 DWTS season she teamed up with football-great-turned-ESPN personality, Keyshawn Johnson.

After living in London for two years following her competitive career (which included collecting numerous titles around the globe and appearing in a UK tour with the theatre show *Simply Ballroom*) choreographer Jason Gilkison chose Sharna to go on tour with the hit dance sensation *Burn The Floor*, which was wildly successful selling over four million tickets in more than 30 countries and 160 cities worldwide. Sharna had the incredible privilege to tour the world with them for six years. During that time she also had guest appearances on *Dancing with the Stars Australia*, *Dancing With The Stars USA*, and *So You Think You Can Dance Holland*. Moreover, she was the assistant choreographer to Jason Gilkison on *So You Think You Can Dance USA* and *So You Think You Can Dance Australia* for many years. In 2009 *Burn The Floor* landed on Broadway with Sharna as one of the Lead female dancers. Finally achieving her lifelong dream of performing on Broadway, Sharna bid the world-renowned Great White Way a sweet adieu in 2011.

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Next, she leapt from the theatre world to the film business when she choreographed *Street Dance 2 3D* released in the UK, Europe, India, Australia, and Asia in 2012. She not only created some of the most electrifying Latin and Salsa scenes on film to date, but she also worked with renowned choreographers Rich + Tone Talauega to fuse those Hip Hop and Latin worlds together. This innovative unification created a whole new style and catapulted Sharna into Tinsel Town's stratosphere landing her on one of the biggest prime-time network television shows – *Dancing with the Stars* - after years of devotion, passion, and perseverance to her artistry and craft.

OKSANA DMYTRENKO has been a force in the world of competitive dance since the age of 6. Oksana was a juvenile and junior finalist in multiple competitions in her native Ukraine, before becoming the National Youth Champion. She held this high honor in her country for 3 consecutive years. When Oksana took her skills to the international realm, she truly began to flourish by earning 1st place in the International Dance Union World Cup 2005 and 2006. She earned 1st place in the Dutch Open 2005 & 2006, and 1st place in the 2010 World Masters amongst many other accolades. At the age of 18, she took her pursuits to the United States where she repeatedly took 2nd place in the National Amateur Championships. After turning professional in 2011, Dmytrenko took 1st place in the Professional Rising Star Latin category, making her the national champion. She also became the USDC Open to the World professional Rising Star champion. Oksana now graces television screens worldwide as a pro on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, recently performing on her 3rd season as a member of the troupe.

So You Think You Can Dance Finalists:

LEGACY is one of the most sought after dancers in the entertainment industry today, known for being one of the very few true B-Boys who can also execute many different styles of choreography. He has an inspired freestyle, versatility, drive & willingness to tackle all styles of dance that has attracted the attention of industry's top directors, choreographers and artists. He competed on *So You Think You Can Dance* (Season 6) where he placed 4th. Legacy has worked beside his friends (the well-known dance crews) the Jabawokees, the Beat Freaks and the Groovaloos. He has also had the merit to work beside artists like Rhianna, Toni Braxton, The Black Eyed Peas, Chris Brown & Akon as well as as being a featured dancer with Gwen Stefani on both of her solo world tours. While Legacy has been creating shows with dancers for years, his first experience creating and choreographing a show for a recording artist was a successful tour that kicked off in Miami, with upcoming Latin sensation Josie Cordoba.

RANDI LYNN STRONG is best known as a Top 5 Female Dancer on Season 5 of the FOX Hit TV Show *So You Think You Can Dance* and the accompanying 40-city national arena tour. On the show, Randi and her partner turned in one of the more memorable performances in the shows history; the infamous "Butt Dance" choreographed by Emmy award winning Choreographer Mia Michaels. Randi is a multi-disciplinary dancer and a top, in-demand choreographer.

Dancing since the age of 3, Randi trained for over 15 years at Utah's famed 'Dance Club' of Orem. In her many years of competing, she earned numerous titles including National Outstanding Dancer for the New York City Dance Alliance. Randi has performed as a

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member of the ensemble in the highly-acclaimed *Rockettes Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, the 2002 Winter Olympics Closing Ceremonies with 'Earth Wind and Fire', (choreographed by the famed Kenny Ortega) and featured on *X Factor* choreographed by Brian Friedman.

While best known as a Contemporary Dancer and Choreographer, Randi is quite accomplished in many forms of dance and more recently is being known as a professional Ballroom Dancer. She is currently featured as a ballroom, latin, and contemporary dancer on tour with other stars of *SYTYCD*, *Dancing With the Stars* and *American Idol* in Louis Van Amstel's *Ballroom with a Twist*.

JONATHAN PLATERO gained national attention with his athletic dance ability as a *So You Think You Can Dance* Season 5 Finalist. Before *SYTYCD*, Jonathan had already won titles including World Undisputed Salsa Champion and was the head choreographer for Salsa Heats Pro-Team, making his team one of the top team finalists in the world. Being trained in Jazz, Contemporary, Hip-hop, Ballroom & Salsa, Jonathan had always dreamed of being a professional dancer. Shortly after the *SYTYCD*, Jonathan moved to Los Angeles and landed his first major spot on the hit television show, *Glee*, alongside Olivia Newton-John. Immediately following, he appeared on Disney channel's *Shake It Up*, Fran Drescher's hit show, *Happily Divorced*, and the Wendy Williams Show dancing for the international Superstar, Agnes. In addition to all his accomplishments, Jonathan has showcased his talents in music videos for artist such as Jennifer Lopez, John Mayer, & Cody Simpson. Most recently Jonathan was featured on *Dancing with the Stars* Season 16, gaining international exposure. Currently, Jonathan is one of the head choreographers/dancers for Estrella TV's, *Mi Sueno Es Bailar*, the Spanish TV version of *Dancing with the Stars*.

American Idol Finalists:

HALEY SCARNATO was catapulted from a regional favorite to the international stage in 2007 when she earned a spot in the Top 10 *American Idol* Season 6. Haley is currently touring with *Symphony Idol* performing with The Maryland Symphony, The Phoenix Symphony, The Winnipeg Symphony, and The Spokane Symphony, among many others. Haley began a performing career in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas at the young age of 15. Even though Haley was raised on country music, she studied all styles of great singers including Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks, Martina McBride, and Celine Dion. Living in Las Vegas, her country band has opened up for many Country stars including Gary Alan, Aaron Tippin, just to name a few. She has sung the National Anthem for many International boxing events and NBA finals.

VON SMITH was most recently seen on Nigel Lythgoe's new TV show *Opening Act* on the E! network, where he was chosen by Lady Gaga herself to be her opening act on her tour in Australia. First introduced to the world when his version of "And I Am Telling You (I'm Not Going)" from *Dreamgirls* became a sensation on youtube, Von Smith has garnered a legion of fans and has performed on some of the most celebrated stages in the U.S. including ABC's *The View*, BET's *106th and Park*, MTV News and perhaps the biggest stage: *American Idol* Season 8 as one of the top 17 finalists. When he's not rocking out on national stages across the country with fellow *Idol* buddies, or performing in front of symphonies conducted by the likes of the late Marvin Hamlisch, Von has been seen around the Los

Angeles area in several Upright Cabaret productions, and is currently working on his first EP.

Rounding out the cast are dancers **C.J. Bair**, **Brent Borbon**, **Yana Blinova**, **Magda Fialek**, **Allen Genkin**, **Patricia Kaniowski**, **Alla Kocherga**, **Tony Pututau** and **Julz Tocker**.

About Choreographer Louis van Amstel

Ballroom with a Twist is directed and choreographed by *Dancing with the Stars* own Emmy nominated hit Louis van Amstel. Louis brings the same passion, expertise and excitement to ***Ballroom with a Twist*** as he exhibited on television with his celebrity partners Priscilla Presley, Lisa Rinna, and Monique Coleman, and as the choreographer of the live *Dancing with the Stars* tour. Louis first began his Dancesport career, training in a theatre school where he gained a background in ballet, tap, and jazz while simultaneously engaging in rigorous competitions. Upon graduating, Louis attended the University of the Arts in Amsterdam to enhance his skills in the classical dances and theory. Training under life-long dance/acting coach, friend and mentor Dr. Ruud Vermeij, Louis is a student of Laban choreology, and is well versed in human movement dynamics. During his competitive ballroom Dancesport career, Louis has amassed a staggering number of accolades including:

- 7 Time Dutch National Amateur Champion
- European Amateur Latin Champion ('95)
- World Amateur Latin Champion ('94, '95)
- Grand Slam Professional Latin Champion ('95)
- World Professional Showdance Champion ('96)
- Professional World Latin Finalist ('96)

Upon immigrating to the United States, Louis became the U.S. National Latin Champion in 2000 and founded VanDance, LLC. Through VanDance, Louis created *Latin Fusion*; a feature production on Broadway at City Center in New York City. The success of *Latin Fusion* was quickly followed up with a second creative effort in 2004, *Latin Revolution*. Louis is constantly sought out for independent performances and maintains a busy instructional calendar. Louis has coached master classes for championship competitors and has served as a creative consultant to ice dance couples. Louis has made numerous television appearances such as winning the National Talent competition in 1992 and 1993 which was televised on channel RTL4 in Europe.

Louis has also recently appeared in guest roles on several hit TV shows most notably *The Suite Life With Zack and Cody* (Alexander the Great) and *All My Children* (Himself). Most prominently, Louis has been featured prominently in seasons 1-3 of *Dancing with the Stars*; a show that has become a pop culture phenomenon in both the US and abroad. His success led Louis to serve as creative director, choreographer, and performer in the *Dancing with the Stars Touring Show* which has performed in cities across the US and Canada. Constantly active, Louis is currently engaged in several concurrent projects including the formation of his new dance company Visionworx Dance, promoting physical fitness through dance, as well as choreographing a full scale production for *Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines* which is slated to debut on one of the company's flagship ocean liners.

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About The 5th Avenue Theatre

The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musical theater. Since 2002, the celebrated company has produced 16 new musicals. To date, nine have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 15 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). The 5th Avenue Theatre is also known for its world class, critically acclaimed productions of musicals chosen from both the contemporary canon and the Golden Age of Broadway.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernadine C. Griffin and Producing Artistic Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of more than 287,000 and ranks among the nation's largest and most respected musical theater companies.

In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its extensive educational outreach programs which include: The Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company, The 5th Avenue Awards Honoring High School Musical Theater, the Rising Star Project, Show Talks with Albert Evans, and Spotlight Nights.

For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit www.5thavenue.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: *Dancing with the Stars* champion **Maksim Chmerkovskiy** and his fellow cast mates **Karina Smirnoff**, **Val Chmerkovskiy** and **Sharna Burgess** team up with finalists from *American Idol* and *So You Think You Can Dance* to set the 5th Ave stage ablaze in ***Ballroom with a Twist***. This show brings a frenzy of sizzling dances performed by professional international dancers spanning the hot moves of samba, waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, and jive. ***Ballroom with a Twist*** is the who's who of the dance and singing world, joining together for an evening of grace, athleticism, and passion. The show is choreographed by *Dancing with the Stars'* Emmy-nominated **Louis van Amstel**, whose passion and expertise bring a new level of excitement and flash to this family-friendly evening.

WHEN: August 15-17, 2014

SHOW Friday – 8:00 PM

TIMES: Saturday – 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM

Sunday – 1:30 PM

WHERE: **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle)

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TICKETS: For single tickets (starting at \$30) and information, please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900. Tickets may also be purchased at (888) 5TH-4TIX.