

COLORADO STATE FAIR

Centennial singers 'to know what love is'

Choir to join Foreigner on stage for timeless ballad Thursday evening

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

If you want to know what love is, members of the Centennial High School Schola Cantorum choir will be happy to show you.

Thursday evening, when classic rock legends Foreigner perform their signature 1984 ballad on the Southwest Motors Events Center stage, 25 Schola Cantorum choir members will be there to accent that soaring chorus with some lush backing vocals.

The local choir's appearance is part of Foreigner's commitment, together with the GRAMMY Foundation, to keep music programs thriving in high schools.

At each concert stop, Foreigner partners with a local high school choir, not only pledging grant money but inviting the young vocalists to share the stage. This alliance is a nod to the original recording (and video) of "I Want To Know What Love Is," which featured the talents of the New Jersey Mass Choir.

Brook Mead, vocal music director at Centennial, said the opportunity to join Foreigner is a rare one the students are



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

Members of Schola Cantorum at Centennial High School rehearse in the school's auditorium Tuesday for their upcoming performance with the band Foreigner on Thursday at the Colorado State Fair.

excited to embrace.

"I had gotten word through the Fair that Foreigner would be coming and they might need a choir," Mead said. "Naturally, I told them I was very interested and

that it would be a great opportunity for our kids.

"And when Foreigner's general manager contacted me, I told him the same thing."

Mead, a professional musician and member of

the popular The Martini Shot, began preparations by studying concert footage.

"I looked at a video and saw what other choirs had done," Mead said. "During the part

when the choir sings, Foreigner asks everyone in the audience to join arm and arm and sing along."

A number of rehearsals followed, culminating with a final run-through

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earlier this week.

Despite the song being more than 30 years old, with the video just a by-gone memory, Mead said he was "amazed at how many of the kids actually already knew the song. The kids in this generation get it and that says a lot about Foreigner and (leader) Mick Jones, who was able to pump out hit after hit."

In addition to performing, the Schola Cantorum members will be selling a Foreigner "greatest hits" CD before and after the show, with all proceeds benefiting the GRAMMY Foundation. Everyone who purchases a disc will be entered into a drawing for a guitar autographed by band members.

"The opportunity to play in front of thousands of people is in itself great," Mead added. "Anytime someone gives you that opportunity, no matter how small, you have to take it."

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