

## Take 6 opens Tri-C JazzFest 2024

by Max Newman



If there's anything to be said about legendary a cappella sextet Take 6, it's that the group has most certainly still got it. This was apparent on the evening of June 20 as the ensemble took the stage at the Mimi Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square. The concert was the perfect introduction to Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland 2024, with a timeless musical performance and an incredible level of energy to boot.

The high-ceilinged Theatre was a majestic venue for this performance, set with six stools for the performers, two pianos, and a back table with glasses of water. It almost felt like Take 6 was singing from an open living room, balancing out the monumental feel of the space with a more casual and inviting energy.

This beautifully inviting atmosphere was a product of the performers' behavior as well. Between every song, the members took time to interact with the audience, talking about their experiences as a band, why they chose each work, and their time in Cleveland. The crowd was not on the outside looking in — it was its own part of the Take 6 experience.

Given that Take 6 has existed — with a fairly consistent lineup — for over 40 years, this was to be expected. But their sheer musical chemistry astonished. Everyone knew their own role to perfection, without any sonic imbalances. Even lead lines and solos highlighted their own accompaniment rather than drawing attention away from it. It was hard to pick out individual star performers —vocal lines interchanged so seamlessly that every piece of the puzzle was beautiful.

As for the setlist, it was a masterclass in tasteful arrangements that built upon original works with Take 6's trademark flair. Even the opener, "Got to Get You Into My Life," contained an absurd number of dazzling, overlapping melodies and harmonies. High notes buzzed with brilliant, unfettered energy.

The arrangement of Eric Clapton’s luminous “Change the World” did justice to the original piece — sultry and smirking, full of emotional purpose and directness. Optimistic, bright chords, clean as a whistle, also hung in the air, framing passionate lyrics.

Stevie Wonder’s “Overjoyed” was glistening and perfect, backed up by a twinkling guitar and piano arrangement. The performance emphasized the percussive quality of the group’s singing, with subtle acapella beatboxing highlighting the carefully measured chords and notes.

Then, during Ben E. King’s “Stand By Me” — orchestrated fantastically by the performers — the audience played their part with enthusiasm. And a Take 6 original, the uproarious and upbeat “Spread Love,” provided a perfect treat for the ears.

The group’s impeccable arrangement of Michel Legrand’s “Windmills of Your Mind” showcased their versatility. Yes, they were capable of filling the Mimi Ohio Theater with a wall of sound — but here, they sang with a compelling, delicate beauty. Each note felt effervescent, like a morning sunrise, at times almost emulating the tone of a plucked instrument. The song’s aesthetically pleasing chords, cascading down upon the audience, filled the concert space with joy.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 2, 2024.*

*Click here for a printable copy of this article*

[Return to the Front Page.](#)