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AWARD WINNING A CAPPELLA POWERHOUSE TAKE 6 SETS *THE STANDARD* FOR JAZZ VOCAL RECORDINGS

**Heads Up Debut Features Aaron Neville, Al Jarreau, George Benson,
Jon Hendricks, Roy Hargrove, Till Brönner, Brian McKnight, And Others**

A cappella powerhouse Take 6 marks a new jazz vocal milestone with the September 30, 2008, release of *The Standard* (HUCD 3142). Winners of 10 GRAMMY® Awards, 10 Dove Awards, one Soul Train Award and two NAACP Image Award nominations, the influential sextet – Mark Kibble, Claude V. McKnight III, Dr. Cedric Dent, David Thomas, Alvin Chea and Joey Kibble – makes their debut on Heads Up International with a recording of mostly jazz (and some R&B) standards, including “Straighten Up and Fly Right,” “A-Tisket, A-Tasket,” “Someone To Watch Over Me,” “What’s Going On” and “Windmills of Your Mind.”

The Standard showcases a new jazz-influenced approach for the group. “While we sing lyrics that always exemplify our spiritual and moral convictions, what we really are at the core is a jazz vocal group,” says David Thomas, a member of the Take 6 lineup since 1985. “So we decided to do an album of jazz standards, a record that will stand up as the jazz vocal album for all time.”

Take 6 co-founder Claude McKnight also stands behind the ambitious claim. “We go into every project saying it will be the best,” he says. “At least the best we’ve ever done, and depending on the concept or the genre, it may be the best that’s ever been done by anyone. When we take on a project or step into a new phase of our career, we’re not afraid to say, ‘Hey, let’s move some mountains.’”

The Standard features guest appearances by veteran jazzmen George Benson, Al Jarreau, Jon Hendricks, Roy Hargrove, Till Brönner and others, as well as R&B luminaries Aaron Neville and Brian McKnight (Claude’s brother).

“We decided that, for any given song on this record, we would ask for the person who we thought would make the most sense for the song,” says McKnight. “And everyone we asked said yes. We’ve never really had a problem reaching out and finding whomever it is we wanted. That’s been a blessing for us.”

Take 6 gives definitive vocal treatments to such jazz classics as “Sweet Georgia Brown,” “Straighten Up and Fly Right” with vocalist/guitarist George Benson, “Someone to Watch Over Me” with trumpeter Roy Hargrove, and “Seven Steps to Heaven” with Jon Hendricks, Al Jarreau and German flugelhornist Till Brönner (featuring new lyrics by Jon Hendricks). *The Standard*’s crowning glory is a version of “A-Tisket, A-Tasket,” Ella Fitzgerald’s signature song – created in the studio using her original vocal from the classic 1938 Decca Records 78.

Other highlights include “Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans” with Aaron Neville, Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On” with Brian McKnight, Quincy Jones’ “Grace” and “Windmills of Your Mind” (from the 1968 film *The Thomas Crown Affair*).

Listening to Take 6 causes one to appreciate their brilliant vocal mastery passed to them, as a mantle, from early American musical icons such as the Hi-Lo’s, Ella Fitzgerald and Stevie Wonder. Today, Take 6 has managed to keep that mantle, yet still share some of its influence with countless other black male pop groups of the 1990s.

Take 6 launched their career by singing traditional spirituals and newly composed gospel material. They released their self-titled debut album on Warner Brothers’ Reprise label in 1988, and spent the next two decades crafting a series of records that defied easy categorization but instead embraced a broad cross-section of styles – soul, gospel, R&B, pop, jazz and more. Although they have enlisted the help of session musicians along the way, the greatest strength of their recordings has been – and continues to be – their richly layered and masterful vocal harmonies. Their talent, hard work and Christian faith has earned them their place as one of the most enduring and best-loved groups in all a cappella.

Never content to rest on their substantial laurels, Take 6 continues to grow and evolve. McKnight says, “The fact that we’re going outside of what we would normally do, and including some jazz standards in this collection, leads us to believe that we can go outside of the traditional Take 6 listener and bring some other people into the party that we’ve been having for twenty years.”

The Standard is destined to be one of the finest jazz vocal recordings and a classic of its kind.

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