

*Two of the most acclaimed, award-winning vocal groups in pop music history*

## **The Summit: The Manhattan Transfer and Take 6**

**Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 8:00pm**

(Los Angeles, CA) January 17, 2017 – Combining musical forces for the first time, The Manhattan Transfer and Take 6 will create an unforgettable swinging concert event at Valley Performing Arts Center on Thursday, February 9 at 8:00pm. Between them, the two groups boast a remarkable 20 Grammy Awards, and a range of styles that covers nearly every genre of popular music; from jazz to swing, from gospel to R&B. No ordinary double bill, this is a show combining unexpected twists and turns to create a once-in-a-lifetime event.

As The Manhattan Transfer (TMT) mark the 45th Anniversary of their debut recording on Atlantic Records, Janis Siegel, Alan Paul, and Cheryl Bentyne will honor founding member, Tim Hauser, as they continue to tour with their newest member, Trist Curless. TMT joins Take 6 as they share their crystal-clear harmony, innovative arrangements and funky grooves, demonstrating why this sextet is recognized as the pre-eminent a cappella group in the world.

“Our venue is perfect for this unique blending of voices,” said VPAC’s Executive Director, Thor Steingraber. “Manhattan Transfer and Take 6 not only inspire each other musically, they also represent the tightest harmonies in the music business. You’ll be able to hear their delightful artistry magnificently in our Great Hall.”

Take 6 member, Joey Kibble, explains how The Manhattan Transfer influenced him, musically: “I grew up trying to mimic my brother. Whatever he listened to, I used to listen to and he was listening to Manhattan Transfer.”

Dave Thomas, also with Take 6, continued, “The Manhattan Transfer are the reasons why we enjoy harmony. They’re the reasons why we can say we’re ‘harmony geeks.’ They are the reason why we do what we do.”

### **About The Manhattan Transfer**

It’s been nearly forty years since Tim Hauser, a former Madison Avenue marketing executive, paid his bills by driving a New York City cab while aspiring to form a harmony vocal quartet sui generis that could authentically embrace varied musical styles, and still create something wholly unique in the field of American popular song.

Hauser had been in doo-wop groups, folk groups, and even in a short-lived quintet named The Manhattan Transfer, but as the sounds of jazz, R&B, pop, rock ‘n’ roll, salsa and swing poured out of brownstones, Hauser now dreamt of four-part harmonies without limits.

In the Fall of 1972, Hauser’s taxi fare was an aspiring young singer named Laurel Massé, who was familiar with the sole album by Hauser’s earlier Manhattan Transfer combo, and was looking to form a group. A few

weeks later, another of Hauser's fares invited him to a party where he met Brooklyn native Janis Siegel; although already in a group, Siegel agreed to help out on some demos and before long she was the third member of The Manhattan Transfer. As Hauser, Massé and Siegel began rehearsing, Massé's then-boyfriend, who was drumming in a Broadway pit band, introduced Hauser and Siegel to Alan Paul, who was co-starring in the original production of *Grease*, and the rest, as they say, is history.

In 1974 the group began performing regularly throughout New York City at Trude Hellers, Mercer Arts Center, Max's Kansas City, Club 82, and other cutting edge cabaret venues. By the end of the year they were the number one live attraction in New York City, prompting *Newsweek* to send a writer to their show at Reno Sweeney's in Greenwich Village to report on this growing phenomenon.

Signed to Atlantic Records by the legendary head of the label, Ahmet Ertegun, the group released their self-titled debut in 1975; the second single from the album, a remake of the Friendly Brothers gospel classic "Operator," gave the group their first national hit. "Operator" took radio stations by storm, from the opening four-part a cappella intro to Siegel's emotional lead vocal, eventually peaking in the Top 20.

As "Operator" rose up the charts, the group was invited to make guest appearances on various variety shows and television specials. Hollywood took notice; and the band was soon tapped to helm a weekly hour-long summer replacement comedy-variety show. The Manhattan Transfer show premiered on August 10, 1975, broadcast in CBS' old Ed Sullivan time slot, Sunday nights at 8:00PM. Despite censors restricting performances of some of their more risqué songs ("Well Well Well, My Cat Fell In The Well"), and some in the writing staff trying to appeal to youngsters who normally watched *The Wonderful World of Disney* at that hour, the band still managed to do some wonderful things including featuring Bob Marley and the Wailers in their first US television appearance.

Their next two albums, *Coming Out* and *Pastiche*, brought them a string of Top 10 hits in Europe and produced a #1 smash in Britain and France with "Chanson d'Amour."

In 1978, Massé was injured in a car accident and during her convalescence, decided not to rejoin the group that had since moved to California. One of many who auditioned for her slot was Cheryl Bentyne, a stunning singer from Mt. Vernon, Washington, and a four-year veteran of The New Deal Rhythm Band. At Bentyne's dazzling audition, the other Manhattan Transfer members immediately felt her impact, invited her to join, and, as Paul puts it, "The Transfer's second phase began."

The first album featuring the now legendary quartet of Hauser, Siegel, Paul & Bentyne was 1979's *Extensions* which earned the band another smash (#1 in New York and #2 in Los Angeles) with "Twilight Zone/Twilight Tone" – their updated take on, and, if you will, extension of, the theme to the Rod Serling hosted program of the same name. The album also featured a vocal remake of the Weather Report classic "Birdland," with lyrics by Jon Hendricks, that would go on to be recognized as the group's anthem, and earn them their first two Grammy Awards for Best Jazz Fusion Performance, Vocal or Instrumental and Best Arrangement For Voices for Siegel's work on the song.

The group went from strength to strength, when in 1981, they became the first group ever to win Grammy Awards in both Pop and Jazz categories in the same year – Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal for "Boy From New York City," and Best Jazz Performance, Duo or Group for "Until I Met You (Corner Pocket)," both from their fifth studio long player, *Mecca for Moderns*.

In 1982 and 1983 the group won consecutive Grammy Awards in the Best Jazz Vocal Performance, Duo or Group category for, respectively, "Route 66" and "Why Not!"

The critical praise and commercial success of the group's first seven studio albums could hardly have prepared them for the monumental 12 Grammy nominations they received in 1985 for the album *Vocalese*. Those 12 nominations made *Vocalese* the single greatest Grammy nominated album in one year, and cemented the group's status as one of the most important and innovative vocal groups in the history of popular music.

Not willing, or able, to rest on their laurels, the band's next studio album was the ground breaking Brasil. Much as the seminal Getz/Gilberto album 23 years earlier had introduced American audiences to the talents of Brazilian songwriter Antonio Carlos Jobim, Brasil introduced audiences to the next generation of tropical talent – featuring songs by Ivan Lins, Milton Nascimento, Djavan, and Gilberto Gil. The album won the Grammy for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal.

The Manhattan Transfer closed out the decade by completing a ten-year sweep (1980-1990) as the “Best Vocal Group” in both the annual DownBeat and Playboy jazz polls.

In the 1990s, the group's restless creative energy found them writing more original material (The Offbeat Of Avenues which earned them yet another Grammy for Best Contemporary Jazz Performance), and tackling seasonal standards (The Christmas Album arranged by Johnny Mandel, became one of the five best selling Christmas albums on Columbia – the label with the largest Christmas catalogue, and is an annual shopping mall favorite to this day), children's music (The Manhattan Transfer Meets Tubby The Tuba), 1950's & 1960's popular music (Tonin'), and, foreshadowing the success of “Dancing With The Stars,” different genres of swing music (Swing).

If one is judged by the company they keep, this decade found the group recording with some impressive company indeed – Tony Bennett, Bette Midler, Smokey Robinson, Laura Nyro, Phil Collins, B.B. King, Chaka Khan, James Taylor, and the original Jersey Boy, Frankie Valli.

Heading into the new millennium, with worldwide sales in the millions, Grammy Awards by the dozen, and as veterans of sold-out world tours, The Manhattan Transfer once again proved their uncanny knack for being ahead of the times by teaming up with the then relatively unknown, but future Grammy Award winning, producer Craig Street to record their tribute to the music of Louis Armstrong (The Spirit Of St. Louis).

The Spirit Of St. Louis was followed by 2003's live album Couldn't Be Hotter that “finally captured the magic of their live performances on disc” (AllMusic), 2004's Vibrate, a second foray into Christmas music (An Acapella Christmas), and an album of newly recorded symphonic versions of some of their greatest hits (2006's The Symphony Sessions).

The release of The Definitive Pop Collection, a 2-disc retrospective of the group's greatest hits, provides not only an opportunity to look back at one of the greatest bodies of work in American popular music, but also the chance to look ahead to 2008, the 35th Anniversary of a group that is restless, adventurous, limitless and, as the Philadelphia Inquirer so aptly put it, a group that “still can sound dangerous!”

In 2009, The Manhattan Transfer embarked on an epic journey through the music of Chick Corea and released The Chick Corea Songbook.

In October of 2014, The Manhattan Transfer lost its founder and friend, Tim Hauser. After more than 40 years together singing and making music, traveling the world, and sharing so many special moments... He is missed greatly. Tim lives on now through his songs and legacy as TMT continues to tour and share their music with the incredible Trist Curless now adding his voice to this remarkable legacy.

### **About Take 6**

Take 6 is the most awarded a cappella group in history, with ten Grammy's, ten Dove Awards (Gospel Music Awards), Best Jazz Vocal Group honors for seven consecutive years in Downbeat's prestigious Reader's and Critic's Poll, a Soul Train Music Award, BRE (Black Radio Exclusive) Vocal Group of the Year, two NAACP Image Award nominations, induction into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and countless other musical and humanitarian citations.

Showing the global appeal of this phenomenal group, they celebrated their 25th Anniversary last year with a World Tour including stronghold favorite markets Asia, South America, eastern and western Europe and the United States and Take 6 opened up new markets with debut tours of Australia and Canada. They receive rave reviews and overwhelming audience reception wherever they go. From New York's famed Blue Note to

the Montreux Jazz Festival, from PBS to ABC-TV specials, they remain the quintessential and pre-eminent a cappella group in the world, working harder than ever, and loving every minute of it.

Most recently, Take 6 had the honor of being the first American vocal group to perform in Cuba since diplomatic relations were restored. One of the Public Diplomacy officers wrote after the concert, "The group elicited a response I've yet to see many groups here do, and in some form helped to advance U.S. diplomacy and interests in ways that our formal process could not."

For those who have patiently waited for new music from the sextet, wait no more! The group has signed with SoNo Recording Group and will release a new album, *Believe*, in 2016 with lots of surprises. The first single, just released, is "When Angels Cry" catering to their gospel roots and just in time for the holidays.

Take 6 knows no musical bounds. Heralded by Quincy Jones as the "baddest vocal cats on the planet!", Take 6 (Claude McKnight, Mark Kibble, Joel Kibble, Dave Thomas, Alvin Chea and Khristian Dentley), is the quintessential a cappella group and the model for vocal genius. They have redefined the standards for vocal music. The sextet has recorded and/or performed with an impressive array of talent, past and present, including Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Al Jarreau, Don Henley, James Taylor, k.d. lang, Patti Austin, Randy Travis, Queen Latifah, Sheryl Crow, Branford Marsalis and BeBe & CeCe Winans. They've performed on film soundtracks including Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*, John Singleton's *Boyz In The Hood*, Warren Beatty's *Dick Tracy*, David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and the theme song to the TV series *Martin*.

Take 6 captivates the audience wherever they perform. At Walmart's 50th Anniversary celebration, alongside Celine Dion, Lionel Richie, Justin Timberlake, their rendition of the Louis Armstrong hit, *What a Wonderful World* was received uproariously and when they closed the show with Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the crowd went wild during a standing ovation. Two weeks later, at the behest of legendary producer Phil Ramone, Take 6 thrilled at the Songwriters Hall of Fame Awards performing with, and honoring, legendary singer-songwriter Ben E. King on his classic "Stand by Me." Joining such luminaries on stage as Stevie Nicks, Ne-Yo, and more, Take 6 once again brought the house down with their tribute to folk icon Woody Guthrie with *This Land Is Your Land*. More recently, they were honored to be invited to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this civil rights icon's assassination at the Medgar Evers Memorial.

Take 6 has come a long way from their days at Huntsville, Alabama's Oakwood College where Claude McKnight formed the group as The Gentleman's Estate Quartet in 1980. When tenor Mark Kibble heard the group rehearsing in the dorm bathroom, he joined in the harmonies and performed on stage with them that night. When they signed to Reprise Records/Warner Bros. in 1987, they found that there was another group with the same name as the second incarnation of the group, Alliance, so they became Take 6. Says McKnight: "Take 6 was all about a democratic process of throwing a couple of hundred names at each other and Take 6 was the one that got the most yay votes. It pretty much was a play on the Take 5 jazz standard and the fact that there are six of us in the group."

Their self-titled debut CD won over jazz and pop critics, scored two 1988 Grammy Awards, landed in the Top Ten Billboard Contemporary Jazz and Contemporary Christian Charts — and over 25 years later they are in even greater demand. They earned performances on *Saturday Night Live*, the Oscars, the Grammys, and have had the honor of performing for four sitting U.S. Presidents, and at the Democratic National Convention.

What makes the music and the group remain successful for this long? The answers are direct and simple: faith, friendship, respect, and love of music. From their exceptional live performances to their recordings, these qualities remain at the heart of the TAKE 6 phenomenon.

### **Calendar Listing for The Summit: The Manhattan Transfer and Take 6**

**Venue:** Valley Performing Arts Center  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330

**Date:** Thursday, February 9 at 8:00pm

**Tickets:** **Price:** Starting at \$38  
**In Person:** VPAC Ticket Office, located in the VPAC Courtyard  
**By Phone:** (818) 677-3000  
**Online:** [ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org](http://ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org)

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**Photos:** Click here for photos from the 2016-17 Season:  
<http://www.valleyperformingartscenter.org/press/press-photos/>