

Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. with music



Anne Erickson, aerickson@lsj.com 4:09 p.m. EST January 17, 2015



(Photo: AFP/Getty Images)

Khristian Dentley's faith plays into his music in a "very, very huge way."

"In my opinion, we are simply representatives of Christ wherever we go," said Dentley, who makes up one sixth of the Grammy and Dove Award-winning gospel a cappella group Take 6.

Dentley and Take 6 will take that faith-filled music to the Fairchild Theatre in the MSU Auditorium on Sunday for two free shows in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. The first show is already sold out, and tickets for the second are going quickly.

The event, called "Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest Concert," will honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

"It's an important holiday for us as a group and as a nation," Dentley said. "The other day, I went to see 'Selma,' the movie that has to do with Dr. King's life and legacy. It made me prouder to be a part of this group."

Using music to celebrate King, he says, gives hope and joy to the audience. In fact, every time he walks on the stage, Dentley feels a sense of purpose.

"My job is to put smiles on people's faces," Dentley said. "We don't know what the personal climate of our fans is. We don't know if they're coming from troubled homes or broken marriages or can't take care of their obligations. When we walk on stage, we're smiling and signing and representing the God that we serve.

"It makes people smile and forget what troubled them before they got there or gives them hope to pursue. That, to me, is the best representation of our faith."

Dentley, who sings baritone in Take 6, vividly remembers his first time singing in public. Just talking about it makes his smile so wide his face starts to ache.

"I had to have been seven years old," Dentley said. "My mom and dad were pastoring a church, and they were both musical, too."

His mom and dad were having a difficult time finding someone to lead the song "I'll Make It." Dentley enthusiastically volunteered.

"Everyone thought I was joking, because I was just a kid," he recalled. "They didn't know I had already learned the words, because I loved that song! When they handed me the music, I was right on it.

"That began my love for singing and understanding I actually had a singing voice."

Today, Dentley uses that musical gift to its fullest in Take 6, a group that's about as big as it gets in the gospel world. Aside from the Grammy and Dove awards, the group has been inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and holds a bevy of other honors.

Take 6 is often out of the country on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. They're happy to be in East Lansing this year.

"The concert we're doing will just continue the legacy of Dr. King everywhere in the world," Dentley said. "This holiday means love and equality. It's a way to remember that we are all family."

Show details: "Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest Concert" with Take 6, 5 p.m. (sold out) and 8 p.m. (tickets going fast) Sunday, Jan. 18, Fairchild Theatre in the MSU Auditorium on the campus of MSU. The show is free, but a ticket is required. Reserved seating; tickets (limit two per person) available through Friday, Jan. 16, at the College of Music Main Office at 333 West Circle Drive, Room 102, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and a very limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.lsj.com/1Ca98oY>