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Peter Blackstock

ACL Fest 2016 review: Nakia joins Barton Hills Choir on a new stage



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© September 30, 2016 | Filed in: **ACL Fest 2016**

Nakia teams up with the Barton Hills Choir at the Austin City Limits Music Festival in Zilker Park Friday, Sept. 30, 2016. JAY JANNER / AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Moved from their usual Tito's tent spot to the new Austin Kiddie Limits area this year — an appropriate swap for a children's group — the Barton Hills Choir helped get Friday started at the Austin City Limits Music Festival with a big assist from local R&B singer Nakia.

The former contestant on "The Voice" benefited from the backing of about 50 more voices, about half of whom spilled into the grass just in front of the stage. If the new location is less grand than the spacious setup with risers that they enjoyed in the tent, there's an intimacy amid the AKL grove of trees that lent itself well to the vibe of the five-song set.

The choir, which features fifth and sixth graders from Barton Hills elementary under the direction of Gavin Tabone, started with Simple Minds' "(Don't You) Forget About Me" and closed with Sam Cooke's "Twistin' the Night Away," filling the middle with buoyant versions of Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," the Beatles' "Octopus's Garden" and David Bowie's "Golden Years."

Nakia, wearing an "Austin Chubby Limits" T-shirt and fresh from taking part in last night's sold-out All ATX benefit concert at ACL Live, gave the kids a strong focal point around which to center their uplifting vocals and smooth choreographed moves. "Give it up for these kids, y'all!" he exclaimed after the Bowie number, which was the highlight of the short set. "It's so much fun singing with them."

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Nakia and the Barton Hills Choir dig into a little #davidbowie #goldenyears #ACLFest

A video posted by Peter Blackstock (@blackstock360) on Sep 30, 2016 at 11:01am PDT

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