

ChamberFest Cleveland invites you to spend time in Nate's World

by Mike Telin



"I've been coming to ChamberFest for a number of years, and it's always a wonderful thing to come back," bassist Nathan Farrington said via Zoom from Los Angeles. "I grew up in Columbus but I have a huge family in the Medina area so it also gives me a chance to perform for and reconnect with them."

On Saturday, June 14 at 7:30 pm at Heights Theater, Nathan Farrington will join pianist Ahmed Alom and drummer Gabriel Globus-Hoenich for a chamber cabaret from "Nate's World." The program also includes J.S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in E*, Mozart's *Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat*, and Errollyn Wallen's

Making Hay. Wallen and composer Michael Frazier will present a pre-concert conversation at 6:30 pm. A cash bar will be available in the lobby. Tickets can be purchased [online](#).

What is Nate's World? Farrington said that it grew out of the frustration he and his trio members had with the role of performers in traditional classical concerts — the genre doesn't always do the best job of acknowledging the role of the performer.

"Obviously that role is acknowledged when the audience applauds, but I felt early in my classical music training at Curtis that there was an almost religious reverence for the printed score. But the truth is that if performers are simply funnels for Beethoven's music to stay alive, that doesn't acknowledge the role performers play in that process. It's not Beethoven's genius that's on display, it's the performer's relationship with Beethoven's genius that's on display."

Farrington and his colleagues soon came to realize that they wanted to create a situation where their relationship with the music they love was on display. They also quickly discovered that the breadth of the music they love is greater than they might have admitted when they were younger.

It turns out that the music they love includes pop and jazz tunes, and Latin music, as well as the classical music that brought them to our instruments in the first place. “We don’t purport to be experts in all of these genres, but we certainly do claim to be experts at our instruments. We feel that we have a right and maybe even an obligation to explore that music. And if we do so reverently and put our best efforts into treating the music with respect, what comes out is often very creative.”



After attending Curtis, drummer Gabriel Globus-Hoenich traveled to Cuba where he fell in love with Cuban music, specifically Timba. He also spent time in Brazil before making his way back to New York City. “He realized that he wanted to develop his love for Cuban music,” Farrington said. “So he started a band called People of Earth. They’re all Latin players from around the world who grew up with that music and want to keep it in their lives.”



Farrington noted that while Globus-Hoenich was forming People of Earth he discovered the young Cuban pianist Ahmed Alom. “We’re fortunate that Ahmed is joining us in ChamberFest. He’s already playing with the biggest Latin jazz players in the world.

On Saturday, June 14 at 11:00 am at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, The Nate’s World trio will present a family-friendly concert featuring classical favorites, funky jazz, and Latin grooves.

“Gabe developed the show — that’s his specialty. He’s worked with over 30,000 New York City school students. And it’s always a wonderful pleasure to be able to offer something different, but inspiring, that will connect young people to the incredible programming at ChamberFest, which I think is its most special role — the identification of young talent.”

Wherever they perform, the Trio makes an effort to introduce younger musicians to Nate’s World philosophy. “Perhaps our most meaningful work happened a couple of years ago when Curtis presented us as part of their series. And we asked if in addition to

our performance, we could use the performance as a prompt for their students,” Farrington said.

“They gave us 20 students and we played a concert of all our own arrangements. There were opera songs, a silent movie scene that we projected and accompanied, and there were folk tunes that we wrote. I mean, the whole point of Nate’s World is that it covers the breadth of our interests.”

The trio worked with the 20 students to build their own version of Nate’s World. The caveat was that they had to develop an idea that was totally new to them. And at the end of the week, they had to present their new ideas to an audience.

“The breadth of what they came up with was exceptional and the creativity was incredible. We’ve been going back to Curtis each year to do it again. It’s just amazing to see what happens when you give students permission to be creative, Farrington said. “It’s a very different experience than the more formal chamber music that I also really enjoy as a part of my musical life.”

Farrington noted that creating Nate’s World was a process that began when Gabriel Globus-Hoeniche, pianist/composer Teddy Abrams, and bassoonist/composer Harrison Hollingsworth invited him to be part of a workshop. “Everybody was expected to provide ideas and we spent the week working on them. It was terrifying to me. I had no idea what to do. And frankly I didn’t contribute much the first time that we did it.”

As time went on, the bassist asked himself, “Am I just going to sit there working on everybody else’s stuff or am I going to throw my own idea in the ring? What was so neat about it was how generous everyone was in trying to make the other people’s ideas really work. And it was the first time I’d ever been asked to compose. Certainly it was the first time I’d ever been asked to arrange. And all of a sudden my role from the bottom and the back of an ensemble completely changed. It gave me a chance to pick up the guitar for the first time and to interact with some of the opera arias that I heard my father singing when I was young.”

Click [here](#) for more information about Nate’s World.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 9, 2025

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