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Q&A: Meet the artist - Ranaan Meyer

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Photos:



The "classical garage band" Time for Three is made up of, from left, Ranaan Meyer, Zach De Pue and Nick Kendall. The trio will perform today at Community Church of Greenwood to support the Greater Greenwood Arts Council. SUBMITTED PHOTO

For the members of Time for Three, classical instruments aren't just used to produce stodgy background music.

They look beyond Mozart and Bach. Their repertoire includes mashups of electro-rockers Daft Punk and rapper Kanye West, the Beatles and Katy Perry. Referring to themselves as a "classically trained garage band," they aim to push the boundaries of what the genre can be.

Now in the midst of a residency with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Time for Three relishes the opportunity to use the violin and double-bass on everything from jazz to rock to bluegrass.

"The bottom line is we're just trying to use our imagination that sounds like more than just primitive double-bass and violins," said Ranaan Meyer, double-bass player for the band. "From our perspective, that can be a really boring show. We try not to look at our selves as the instruments, but as a band."

Time for Three will play a concert from 7 to 9 p.m. today at Community Church of Greenwood.

The members of Time for Three — Meyer, Zach De Pue and Nick Kendall — first met as students at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute for Music. They started playing together for fun, messing around with bluegrass fiddling and improvisational bass lines.

The more they experimented, the more they liked the music that was coming together.

"It was pure detoxing from our classical lives. We'd get together and have a full symphony rehearsal that would go for three hours. At the end, we just needed some time to ourselves to get together and jam," Meyers said.

Quickly, the trio started performing around Philadelphia, and then around the country. They played Club Yoshi in San Francisco, and Christoph Eschenbach's birthday concert at the Schleswig-Holstein Festival in Germany. Time for Three has been featured at NFL games and played at the Indianapolis 500.

For the past four years, the trio has been in residency with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. The experience has allowed them to play with the regular orchestra, do their own concerts and conduct community outreach to schools and groups throughout central Indiana.

Recently, they played a free show for St. John's Lutheran School on the southside. The trio's children are some of the most receptive to the type of innovation they bring to music.

"The kids were amazing: you could hear a pin drop in the room. They erupted after every so the demeanor that they appreciated what we were doing," Meyer said.

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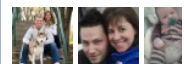
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The concert at Community Church of Greenwood, 1477 W. Main St., is in support of the Greater Arts Council. The show is free, but donations will be accepted to support the council's program.

How would you describe your approach to music?

We use the phrase that we're a classically trained garage band. What that means is, we create our music like any garage band would create it. We're together, we're in a room piecing our ideas together.

We'd get together and start throwing things together to see what would stick. The next I'd bring music that was written, but not all the way through. We'd take it and run from where we're at now, it's a combination of all of the above. Sometimes, someone will bring something 90 percent or 80 percent of the way there.

It could be performed as it is, but we're also open to adapting it. We do what's called, "Jeep" — going offroading to see. We'll be playing the music, and then one guy will take his own thing. Then we're back in that garage-band mode.

How do you try and relate to the audience?

When Nick, Zach and I, we have this sense of what's accessible to a broad audience. What are mainstream. Back in the classical age, they would have been known as folk but they're classified as rock or indie or hip-hop. We like to look back and borrow from that music of the people.

We're taking that and thinking, there would be a drum set. I'll try to create that sound, bass the way it's supposed to be played. Nick and Zach do the same for their instrument.

Is it difficult to bring them along on the vision you have for your music?

That's a natural thing for us. We're not afraid of big crowds or a lot of energy: we feed over-indulgence when we play. We think, we're such hams. We love to feed off the energy of the audience.

How has the residency with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra helped you?

Happens to be our fourth year of residence. What made this fourth year so special, we've been here for 70 days, pretty much making an appearance every month at the (Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra) and out in the community.

Everybody is so open over there. I feel like they fall in the category of the most open or far as trying new things with us.

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