



The Forum

Serving Margate
and Coconut Creek

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Violinist hops genres and cities but pines for Margate

Daniel Bernard Roumain gets excited when he talks about Margate. He speaks faster and more excitedly and says things two and three times for emphasis because of the love he has for the hometown he returns to every few months. Without Margate, he said, he would not be the successful musician he has become — though it took him a long time to admit it.

Roumain played with the Vancouver Orchestra at the Winter Olympics on Feb. 14, and the next night played to a 10,000-person strong crowd at a festival with techno and hip hop innovator DJ Spooky — a duality he said is exactly what he wanted his life to be. Over the last decade, he has played with and composed for orchestras all over the country, written music for television and continues to teach at his college alma mater, Vanderbilt University.

This month Roumain will release his second album, "Woodbox Beats and Balladry," which continues to bring together his love of both classical and hip hop music, much of which he has performed with his band, DBR and The Mission.

From the first track, "Spacehips Over Haiti," to the last, "My Country," which is his take on the classic "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," he said it encompasses his journey as a Haitian-American composer, from working simultaneously at Luther Campbell's Skywalker Records and the Florida Philharmonic to the piece he is currently composing for the New World Orchestra.

How does growing up in Margate play into your career?

Everybody is from somewhere. For a long time, I told people I was from Miami or Fort Lauderdale or South Florida because I didn't think Margate was good enough. But if it weren't for Margate Boulevard, and Margate Elementary and 441 and the Swap Shop, were it not for the public school system of Broward County, I would never have become a musician.

Why was the school system



TALENT Violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain considers growing up in Margate to be a key part of getting him from childhood to being a nationally renowned musician. SUBMITTED PHOTO

important to you becoming a musician?

We moved from Chicago to South Florida — there were no music programs in the suburbs of Chicago at the time.

What was it like moving from Chicago to Margate?

As a black man, my father in the 1970s was told not to look at Margate. He was told to look at Delray or Pompano. And there were problems in Margate. When we moved into the house my parents own now, the neighbors put together a petition that said, 'We don't think you should live here.' I remember my neighbors put up fences within days of us moving

in. But I [also] remember very dear friends who didn't agree with that. So I'm a man who wears that Margate medal on my chest.

What made you choose Vanderbilt for college?

I was well trained at Dillard School of the Arts. I made it into the New York School of the Arts but we couldn't afford it. I didn't want to go to Vanderbilt, though. I was working for Skywalker Records; I was doing grunt work, but I worked there. I was also doing grunt work for the Florida Philharmonic. I worked in the ticket office selling subscriptions. It was one of my first big jobs, and it was

a big deal because the orchestra rehearsed in the same building.

Were those good experiences for you?

Oh yeah, I was allowed to watch the orchestra rehearse. I sat in with Yitzhak Pearlman... I had a good life. I was making like \$240 a week, or every two weeks. I thought I was making good money. I was in hip hop and in classical music. But my father made me go to Vanderbilt. I didn't like it but he said, 'Just stay for a semester and see what you think.' So I stayed and I fell in love with it.

There are a lot of people in South Florida who grow up

wishing they were from somewhere else. You have the opposite feeling about Margate and Broward County though, right?

I owe my success literally to Margate. I think that for young people who are in Margate right now, who are questioning, 'Man, why am I here?' I just want to reassure them that where they are right now is a wonderful and potent mix of great city parks, near but not too close to the ocean, great food, wonderful music, and a real and vibrant art scene — even more than when I was there. I think Margate has a good sense of its own morality; it wasn't always that way, but I think it has come to terms with itself.

