



Nathan Cole has been a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first violin section since 2002. He is an active chamber musician, teacher, and coach.

Orchestral experience

Before joining the CSO, Nathan was principal second violin at the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (2000-2002) and concertmaster at the Haddonfield Symphony (1998-2000). He also has appeared as soloist with the Lexington Philharmonic, the Bremerton Symphony, the Haddonfield Symphony, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Education

Nathan received his bachelor of music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in 2000. At Curtis, he studied with Pamela Frank, Felix Galimir, Ida Kavafian, and Jaime Laredo.

Awards and honors

While a student at Curtis, Nathan was the founding first violinist of the Grancino String Quartet, which won the 2000 Barnett Competition in Chicago. The ensemble made its Carnegie Hall debut in Weill Recital Hall in 2002. In 2004, Nathan won second prize at the International Violin Competition of Sion-Valais as well as the special prize for best performance of the commissioned work by Ludovic Thirvaudoy.

Of note

Nathan's website is a rich resource for violinists – and all music lovers. Included are performance insights, practical advice and articles on technique, stories about his musical experiences, including his lessons with legendary violin great Felix Galimir, and a gallery of photos, mostly his own. To learn more, visit www.natesviolin.com.

oriented, which is natural when you have more auditions or performances to play and want to do well.

It was my choice to be the best I could be, so I began to practice in a more organized way. I've found that when you're working to be the best that you can be, it just feels the best. Along the way, you'll also find there are so many people who want to help. It's a very open, sharing, and listening group.

Nathan Cole

Violin

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

I really can't remember a time without music. Both my parents are musicians — flutists. My father is the flute teacher at the University of Kentucky, and his father played flute in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Growing up, I always associated music as something people did together. I didn't associate it with stress or, even, excitement. I just assumed it was something everyone did, and it seemed very normal.

I started playing the violin when I was four. There were lots of Suzuki teachers in Lexington, so I just started studying and went through all the method books. Like many beginning Suzuki students, I started playing with a wrapped Cracker Jack box and a coat hanger bow. I learned songs and familiar TV and movie themes, including the theme to *Superman*, one of my favorites! I also played group recitals with other students, and I always felt there were no limits to how far I could go.

At first, I never really liked practicing. Still, I didn't have a good idea of anything else I would pursue. I had other interests, of course. I played sports, but there were people who were bigger and stronger, and others who were quicker. There weren't many violinists, however, so I always thought it was something I would do. Eventually, I also came to realize that practicing could be playful and experimental.

I was 15 when I decided I wanted to play in an orchestra. At the time, I was in a summer program and heard the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. They played Dvořák's *New World Symphony* and I thought, *"This is great. Everything they play is perfect. They never miss anything. I want to be in a group like that."* Now that I am, I shudder to think what people in the audience are expecting.

I got discouraged when I realized that once I left Lexington the chances would increase that I wouldn't be the best. That's when my focus shifted from: *I want to be the best, to: I want to be the best that I can be* — and that's actually the tougher of the two goals.

I started meeting kids who played a lot more, and who played pieces I hadn't played. I kept meeting better and better players. That was important and needed to happen, but it was frustrating. I definitely started scheduling more of my time and took more ownership of my work. I also became more results-

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