

## worldmusic



Mohenjo Daro's Zach Mechlem (right) helped organize this weekend's World Music Fest at the Southgate House.

#### RODNEY WILSON CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

Sometimes the state of living in a place like Cincinnati can feel culturally insulated – same faces, same places day in and day out.

Despite this being an age of globalization, the unchanging chain of franchise restaurants on the way to work can make you long for an experience that challenges the daily norm.

For anybody wishing to take an international vacation, but who can't really travel like a globe-trekker, there is the first annual World Music Fest.

This is an event that will transport even the most landlocked of Midwesterners away from gray, autumnal skies and to worldwide locales as far-flung as Brazil, Ireland, Africa and more.

#### FILLING THE VOID

"This was basically a dream of mine for quite a while," says Zach Mechlem, initiator and one of the organizers of the World Music Fest. "The festival is a grassroots effort by musicians, a passion between musicians and the community."

#### JUST THE FACTS

**WHAT:** World Music Fest 2007

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27

**WHERE:** Southgate House, 24 E. Third St., Newport

**PRICE:** \$10 advance, \$12 at the door

**PARKING:** Several pay lots around Newport on the Levee, including the Levee garage (\$3-\$5)

**CONTACT:** 859-431-2201, [www.southgatehouse.com](http://www.southgatehouse.com) or [www.worldmusicfest.org](http://www.worldmusicfest.org)

As a member of Mohenjo Daro, an Indian and Middle Eastern fusion trio that's been performing around the area for 12 years, Mechlem is more than qualified to pursue this dream.

"We performed at World Jam in '99 and 2000, which was put on by the same people who put on Jammin' On Main," Mechlem says. "And two years it met with pretty bad weather. They did it in October, and the first year it rained out, the second year it was about 40 degrees outside – we still performed the second year, but it was miserably cold. That pretty much did

it for World Jam; they never had one after that.

"But as the years went by, it dawned on me that, wow, nobody's really picked up the ball here and done a world music fest locally," he continues. "There's been a lot of ethnic and cross-cultural events, but nothing that collected a ton of people and bands from all different ethnic backgrounds to perform together under one roof – that was something we wanted to achieve. Now, it's not a mass festival that takes two or three days or whatever, but it's a start for us, to bring as many bands as we could to the Southgate House, which has three stages – they have three floors there, and we're putting four or five bands on each floor."

#### A UNIFIED VIEW

Some Cincinnatians might be surprised to learn that many globally diverse cultures are represented in the Queen City – in fact, the lineup for the World Music Fest is drawn almost exclusively from entertainers who call this region home.

"It involves a total of 14 local

Inaugural music festival at Southgate presents sounds from around the globe



Selector plays at 11 p.m. in the Lounge.

## WORLD MUSIC FEST SCHEDULE

### LOUNGE

- 8 p.m. Mayan Ruins (progressive world)
- 9 p.m. Ceol Mhor (Celtic)
- 10 p.m. Acarya (world fusion)
- 11 p.m. Selector (reggae)

### PARLOUR

- 8:15 p.m. Cincinnati Klezmer Project (Israeli folk)
- 9:15 p.m. Mohenjo Daro (Indian and Middle Eastern fusion)
- 10:15 p.m. Made in Brasil (Brazilian)
- 11:15 p.m. Healing System (world and jazz fusion)

### BALLROOM

- 8:30 p.m. Gaiananda (tribal and belly dance)
- 9:30 p.m. Baoku and The Image Afro-Beat Band (Afro-beat)
- 10:30 p.m. Sogbety Diomande (West African drum and dance)
- 11:30 p.m. Salsa Caliente (Latin)
- 12:30 a.m. Samba Parade with Mestre Tuzinho (samba)

world music acts from mostly Kentucky and Ohio," Mechlem says. "We are looking to branch out next year on a more regional basis, maybe Tristate. This year there was no submission process, it was more of an invite situation."

Mechlem's goal for the festival was to provide a more unified presentation of all of the world music Cincinnati has to offer.

"It's kind of scattered, more focused on specific groups," he says of Cincinnati's international music community.

"There is a very large Latin and Hispanic community here in this area, and that's well represented with CincyLatino Fest. And there's a Celtic scene - there's the Celtic Festival," he continues. "But a lot

of other ethnicities don't get a lot of attention. Like Baoku, who does Afro-beat and Nigerian drum and dance. And we also have Sogbety Diomande coming in from Mansfield, Ohio, who does a West African drum and dance thing as well. I guess there's not a whole lot of festivals that even represent that."

Folks who come out for the World Music Fest will be treated to a wide variety of sounds from many different cultures.

"This is kind of like someone being able to come and turn on a world music station for a night (and) hear a big mix of everything come together instead of just these groups focused on one culture," Mechlem says.