

NIGEL KENNEDY, THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS VIOLINIST, RETURNS TO THE CLASSICS AFTER CAREER-THREATENING ACCIDENT

NIGEL KENNEDY & SYDNEY SYMPHONY PERFORM IN SYDNEY, NEWCASTLE & BRISBANE

Sydney, Thurs 22 November - A year after the accident that almost ended his career, Nigel Kennedy returns to Australia to perform works by Beethoven and Mozart with the Sydney Symphony in three cities – Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane. It marks the first Sydney Symphony performance in Queensland for 15 years and promises to be worth the wait! Kennedy's tour to Australia coincides with his new release through EMI Classics and these concerts are a unique opportunity to hear works from the album performed live with Australia's premier orchestras.

Forced by a bicycle accident to abstain from playing for several months at the end of last year, Kennedy reconnected with his family and other passions, bringing about a new perspective on life as the world's most recognizable violinist. Now 50, the celebrity musician shows no signs of slowing down, but rather the time away from the concert platform seems to have reinvigorated him both personally and musically. He recently released his first jazz album on the industry's most prestigious label, Blue Note, which make it clear that Kennedy's passion and talent for jazz rivals his classical side. Following this has been an album entitled "Polish Spirit" including works by Emil Mlynarski and Mieczyslaw Karlowicz which were suggested to him years earlier but only made meaningful after spending time absorbing the landscape and culture of Poland, now his adopted country.

After his recent ventures into new repertoire, Kennedy has felt an urge to re-record the classics particularly the Beethoven Violin Concerto, which he did early in his career. He describes the early version as slow and romantic – his new version is spirited with a mature and confident energy. "Beethoven and Mozart were two of the greatest geniuses who ever lived - but they also knew how to have a good time!" he says. With the Kennedy treatment, concertgoers are sure to agree when the famous violinist lights up the stage with the Sydney Symphony.

On an eternal quest to bring something new to music, Kennedy has divided music lovers. The punk stylings and rock'n'roll accent suggest irreverence, but it's irreverence for what he sees as formal convention, rather than for music itself. With interests that range from east European gypsy music to Jimi Hendrix, it's little wonder he's still able to infuse his performances with the inimitable Kennedy style.

"All that designer stubble and estuary English can't disguise the high-class violinist he is."

"The truth is, the world needs its Nigel Kennedys, if only to keep the stuffed shirts on their toes."
The Guardian, 2007

These days Kennedy spends half his time in Krakow, Poland with wife Agnieszka, her extended family and his jazz quintet. He works regularly with the Polish Chamber Orchestra after having notoriously burned his bridges with the London orchestras several years ago by refusing to perform without adequate rehearsal time

Despite this, Kennedy's now agreed to return to the London concert hall next spring with the Royal Philharmonic – 'they've given me two rehearsals, man,' – where his father was once principal cellist and his sister works in the office. But overall he has reduced his classical work to just three months of the year, devoting the rest to jazz gigs and composition. Thus his Beethoven/Mozart tour to Australia represents a break from the norm!

"For all the effing and blinding, the bowler boots, the two-day stubble and the Aston Villa football shirts, Nigel Kennedy is an old-fashioned softie who loves nothing better than to bring a glister to an audience's eyes."
The Guardian, 2007

Last October in London, Kennedy was hit by cyclist and smashed his left wrist, a career-threatening accident. 'I instantly knew I'd done some damage', he says. He refused immediate reset surgery, and instead found his way to the Hand Clinic at Windsor, where consultants are renowned for treating musical injuries. Four months later, he took up the violin again – a significant period of time for the highly energized musician, but it was worth the wait as he made a full recovery. 'Sometimes you can still feel something clicking in there,' he say, 'and it gets tired easier. But there's no crunching pain.'

For over 25 years, Nigel Kennedy has been acknowledged as one of the world's leading violin virtuosos and is one of the most important violinists Britain has ever produced. His virtuosic technique, unique talent and mass appeal have brought fresh perspectives to both the classical and contemporary repertoire. He is the best selling classical violinist worldwide.

Nigel Kennedy will perform in Australia with the Sydney Symphony (Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle), the Adelaide Symphony and the Melbourne Symphony. For further reading see:

<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1882886,00.html>

<http://www.nigelkennedy.com/article-9.htm>

<http://www.myspace.com/nigelkennedy>

Nigel Kennedy also appears on the cover of Gramophone Magazine, out November 2007.

CONCERT DETAILS

Repertoire

MOZART Violin Concerto No.4 in D, K218
BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto

Dates

BRISBANE

Nigel Kennedy with the SYDNEY SYMPHONY
7.30pm Sat 2 Feb and 2pm Sun 3 February
Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Bookings: Qtix 136 246 www.qtix.com.au

NEWCASTLE

Nigel Kennedy with the SYDNEY SYMPHONY
Wed 6 February
Newcastle Civic Centre
Bookings: (02) 4929 1977 www.ticketek.com.au

SYDNEY

Nigel Kennedy with the SYDNEY SYMPHONY
8pm Fri 8, Sat 9 and Mon 11 February
Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall
Bookings: (02) 8215 4600 www.sydneysymphony.com

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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