

MAVERICK PUNK VIOLINIST NIGEL KENNEDY RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA FOR A NIGHT OF BACH AND ELLINGTON WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Sydney Opera House, concert hall: 25 Feb – 1 Mar
Royal Theatre, Canberra: 4 Mar
Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane: 6 Mar

"I've been listening to jazz ever since I had it on underneath my pillow at the Menuhin School." - *Nigel Kennedy*

The Brighton-born, army boots-wearing, Aston Villa-supporting violinist Nigel Kennedy returns to Australia in February and March to take on jazz with a unique evening of tunes by Bach and Ellington accompanied by the Sydney Symphony.

Although best known across the world for his virtuosic violin recordings including a version of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* which sold over 2 million copies and earned him a place in the Guinness Book of Records as the best-selling classical album of all time, it is his passion for jazz which has formed a major part of Kennedy's recording and performance output over the past few decades.



Kennedy's affection for jazz started at an early age. It was while studying with violinist Yehudi Menuhin that he was introduced to the great jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli. "Yehudi and Stephane were at the height of their powers when I got to hang out with them as a kid," says Kennedy. "One day I'd see Grappelli getting ready for a gig with his brandy and a spliff; on another it would be Menuhin with his muesli and his wife combing his hair."

At the age of 16, Kennedy reached a significant turning when Grappelli invited him to appear alongside him at New York's Carnegie Hall. At the time, Kennedy was being heavily courted by classical recording executives, and his teachers at the Julliard School of Music warned him that if he played in public with Grappelli, his classical career would be finished.

"I remember being backstage, with a bottle of whisky, trying to rationalise my decision," says Kennedy. "Eventually I got so pissed that I thought 'sod it' and went out there. What was I supposed to do? Spend the rest of my life regretting that I didn't play at Carnegie Hall with Stephane Grappelli?"

Kennedy's love for jazz never waned and in 2006 he realised a personal dream when he released an album on the acclaimed jazz label Blue Note, titled *Blue Note Sessions*.

And now, following his 2008 sell-out performances with the Sydney Symphony, Kennedy is again arming himself with 1735 Guarneri violin (worth in the millions) for a return visit to Sydney plus performances in Canberra and Brisbane.

Over the past 10 years, Nigel Kennedy's recordings and collaborations with artists shows the depth of his creative output and the breadth of genres he covers, from his album featuring improvisational recordings of Jimi Hendrix compositions 'The Kennedy Experience' and his recording of 'The Doors Concerto' through to his work with his jazz quintet in Krakow and his various classical recordings.

For more information, contact:

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CONCERT INFORMATION

NIGEL KENNEDY: AN EVENING OF BACH AND ELLINGTON WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE, CONCERT HALL

Thu 25 Feb, 8pm
Fri 26 Feb, 8pm
Sat 27 Feb, 8pm
Mon 1 Mar, 7pm

Tickets from \$35
Sydney Symphony box office: 8215 4600 or sydneysymphony.com

ROYAL THEATRE, CANBERRA

Thu 4 Mar, 8pm

Tickets from \$49
Ticketek: 132 849 or ticketek.com.au

QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Sat 6 Mar, 8pm

Tickets from \$89
Qtix box office: 136 246

*Nigel Kennedy is also performing with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra on 11, 12, 13 Feb