

# British classical violinist plays rock and jazz too

interview by P.J. Groeneveldt

Musician Nigel Kennedy of Brighton, England, is touted by the press as "one of Europe's foremost violinists." In a telephone interview from New York City, he outlined his experiences and plans. He started his career at the age of seven by winning a scholarship in piano to the Yehudi Menuhin School, an institution founded for exceptionally musical children.

"Piano is the best instrument for little blokes," says Kennedy. "It is self-sufficient, it allows you to play an entire piece of music with harmony rather than just a meaningless

do with me," Nigel Kennedy jokes. "There are so many classical recordings made each year, it's a slim chance you have of winning."

Also coming up is an album featuring the works of both Bartok, a twentieth-century classical composer, and the jazz great Duke Ellington. Kennedy explains this seemingly odd pairing: "The Ellington was more connected (to the Bartok piece) than anything else I looked at. They debuted at Carnegie Hall the same year, they are both based heavily in folk heritage, and the harmonic mastery in each is brilliant."

Nigel Kennedy first became interested in jazz through his stepfather's extensive collection of jazz recordings. This interest continued at school and was encouraged by Menuhin, who introduced the young Kennedy to jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli.

As Kennedy is active in both classical and jazz music, there will be inevitable comparisons to Wynton Marsalis, trumpet player and winner of Grammy awards in the same two fields.

"Jazz is very much like classical," Kennedy maintains. "The performer's relationship with the audience is the most important thing. Originality is in demand, you don't want to be like everyone else — the one hundredth violinist in a line of great violinists. There is too much similarity among classical musicians."

When asked if personal style and method of sound production were vastly different between the two genres of music, Mr. Kennedy pointed out that a different sound is appropriate for each individual work performed, classical or jazz. "You would want a different sound for Mozart than for... say, Bartok. Or Brahms. Each piece should have an individual approach."

Kennedy names Miles Davis as the most influential composer alive today. "Miles Davis has given more to twentieth-century

music than any other. Classical and jazz music today are consciously complicated, but he's not hooked to overcomplication; his aims are laser sharp."

Nigel Kennedy has not yet performed with Miles Davis, although Kennedy finds the idea interesting. "The closest I got to him (Davis) was two feet — then the elevator closed."

Kennedy's EMI recording contract covers not only classical and jazz, but rock as well. He is concentrating now more on rock than on jazz. "It's difficult to say where classical music is going, and at the moment jazz has become stagnant," Kennedy says. He is now working on his second rock album (the first, titled *Let Loose*, has not yet been released in Canada), as well as continuing to develop his classical repertoire and touring.

"Rock is easier now, there is more acceptance," claims Kennedy. "A lot of rock musicians think classical music is a lot of shit, and there are classical musicians who say rock is just a bit of noise. I think that as a musician, it is your job to be sensitive. Sensitivity stops prejudice. Sensitive people judge on quality

rather than on preconceived ideas. Since I achieved success first in the classical field, they (classical musicians) can't turn around and say I'm no good now, just because I play some rock music."

Although he is not overly concerned with gaining riches, Nigel Kennedy is aiming for commercial success with his popular music, and he makes no apology. "Commercial success means communication. A lot of people think commercial success means musical compromise, but it doesn't. If you don't care what the people think, why bother playing for anyone?" He cites Peter Gabriel and Prince ("geniuses in today's music") as examples.

Not yet a victim of rock star syndrome, in which touring becomes boring and repetitive and town names meaningless, Kennedy has hopes of visiting "every ice-hockey stage in North America" and perhaps catching an Oilers game while he is in Edmonton.

Nigel Kennedy performs this Friday and Saturday, October 30 and 31st, with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra under Uri Mayer, 8 pm at the Jubilee.

**"If you don't care what the people think, why bother playing for anyone?"**

melody line. The beginning sound is good also, not the squawk you first get on the fiddle."

Kennedy began to squawk on his own fiddle soon after he started school, due to the positive influence of Menuhin.

Kennedy's recording of Elgar's Concerto for Violin in B minor (with the London Philharmonic Orchestra) was designated Best Classical Recording at the British Record Industry Awards ceremony, and named 1985 Gramophone Record of the Year.

"It (the award) certainly wasn't anything to

## Cole shows Imagination

Richie Cole  
*Pure Imagination*  
Concord

review by Mike Spindloe

Much the same as rock and roll, jazz has its few superstars plus a huge number of players who languish in perpetual obscurity. When it comes to contemporary saxophonists, Richie Cole is a member of the latter group, but on the evidence of his latest album, *Pure Imagination*, this shouldn't be the case for long.

Cole's playing is more in the tradition of greats like Charlie Parker, an acknowledged influence, or Benny Carter than contemporary acts like David Sanborn and Branford Marsalis. He seems equally comfortable demonstrating his considerable technical prowess or turning in a fine vibrato during the more relaxed moments. Perhaps a harkening to the greats is valid due to the kind of music Cole is playing rather than his sound, but Cole sounds equally at home with each of the various styles represented on *Pure Imagination*, challenging but not overtaxing his

limits as a player.

Diversity is the key word here. This thoroughly enjoyable set of nine tunes runs the gamut from blues to bop to Latin to just plain mellow, the only constant being the accomplished alto blowing of Cole and fine support from his "beat" instrumentated group.

Vic Jurusz provides excellent interplay on guitar, harmonizing with Cole on several occasions as well as stepping out a few times. As a rhythm section and more, Ed Howard on bass and Victor Jones on drums prove equal to the wide ranging demands of the set.

The selections featured a range from "The White Cliffs of Dover", dating back to the Second World War and a hit for Glenn Miller, a couple of blues tunes penned by Cole, "Flying Down to Rio", which first appeared in a 1933 Fred Astaire movie, done with a Latin swing feel, and "Starburst", a revision of a tune from an earlier album.

Overall, *Pure Imagination* is highly imbued with just that, and is recommended for those who enjoy the unique sound of the saxophone as a solo instrument.

## WRITING COMPETENCE PETITIONS: NOTICE TO STUDENTS

This notice is intended for students who have not met the University's writing competence requirement and whose deadline for meeting that requirement occurs January 1, 1988. Students who do not pass the writing competence test by their deadline will have their registrations cancelled prior to the start of classes unless granted an extension by the GFC Writing Competence Petitions Committee (WCPC).

**If your deadline is January 1, 1988** and you plan to register in the Winter term or in a subsequent session, you may petition the WCPC in November provided that you are currently registered and have written the writing competence test at least once.

Students are urged to seek advice on preparing their writing competence petitions. Such advice can be sought from the **Student Ombudsmen**, Room 278, Students' Union Building (432-4689). The **Student Adviser's Office** (300 Athabasca Hall) is offering information seminars on preparing petitions; call 432-4145 for dates and times or for an information pamphlet.

The regulations and procedures used by the GFC Writing Competence Petitions Committee are available in either of the above-noted offices.

Petitions must be **received** in the University Secretariat, 2-5 University Hall, **by Thursday, November 5, 1987, 4:30 p.m.**

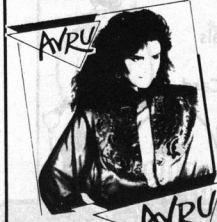
### WORD PROCESSING AND TYPING

#### STUDENT RATES



**STUDENTS IN ACTION**  
**#212, 8631 - 109 ST.**  
**433-0046**

### WHY PAY RETAIL PRICES???



Wholesaler's Warehouse Open  
To The Public  
Buy Direct and SAVE!

100% Cotton Blouses...from **3<sup>99</sup>**

100% of solids, prints, flannels  
Great with jeans

Co-ordinating Skirts....from **3<sup>99</sup>**

Edmonton's largest selection of SILK

SEQUIN DRESSES from \$150 compare at \$800

Wide selection of current fall fashions at

unbelievably low prices.

AVRU INTERNATIONAL

TRADING

LTD.

12105-120 AVE.

455-2511

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9-5  
Sat. 10-5