

Published Feb 3, 2011

Published Thursday February 3, 2011

Violin virtuoso David Garrett really rocks

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WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER



Violinist David Garrett

David Garrett enjoys crossing over.

The violinist's latest album, "Rock Symphonies," makes classical music out of some classic rock riffs by Nirvana, Metallica, Aerosmith and others.

Some are natural fits, such as "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin, while others seem strange, but end up excellent.

"Vivaldi vs. Vertigo" riffs off both the composer and U2, and the two blend together seamlessly.

"Crossover is such a wonderful way to reach out to new audiences," Garrett said on the road to a concert in Portland. "It's a wonderful way to build a bridge."

His tour also brings him to Omaha next week, where he'll play older material as well as selections from "Rock Symphonies."

The album started with a list of more than 100 songs, but it was whittled down. He made demos of at least 60 of them, including Queen's "Bicycle Race."

"It turned out fine, but it wasn't really perfect," Garrett said.

Only 11 songs made the final cut.

Garrett said he starts each song by composing the parts on a violin, naturally.

"If the violin part doesn't work, the rest isn't going to help. It's the first thing I think about," he said. "Next, I start with the orchestra before I do the band. There is more of a connection between the violin and the band, and that bridges the two together, so that has to be done perfectly."

In concert, Garrett uses a violin made in 1772 by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini.

"It's the chosen one for this tour," he said.

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