

Classic rock fuels the fingers of fury

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Fiddling around: American-German violinist David Garrett, 31, launched his new album, *Rock Symphonies*, in Australia last week.

Don't be fooled by his cool demeanour. His new album may have a rockin' beat but violinist David Garrett, 31, has a soft spot for classical music.

Sally Lee spoke to him in Sydney last week.

THERE'S something noteworthy about David Garrett.

From leaving home at 17 and being expelled from the Royal College of Music in London, to walking the fashion runway as a model to pay for college, the American-German classical violinist has come a longway.

The Julliard graduate now holds the world record title for his speedy performance of *Flight of the Bumblebee* and, for him, nothing beats the classics.

“I prefer the sound of a good classical violin,” he said.

“It’s like the voice and I feel the violin has a close relationship with the colours of the human voice.

“So for me, playing an electric violin is like playing a violin with no soul.”

His latest album, *Rock Symphonies*, combines the worlds of classical and rock genres by intertwining singles by rock bands U2, Nirvana, AC/DC with classical pieces by Beethoven and Vivaldi.

But crossing over the two genres is only a “side project” for Garrett.

“For me classic rock was kind of like my second guilty pleasure and I consider myself a core classical musician,” he said.

“But I’m not trying to be a missionary and get people to fall in love with classical music.

“I’m just trying to put it on the map because people have prejudices against it because they don’t know it.”

Since picking up the violin aged four Garrett has been able to maintain his dedication and passion for classical music as he knew which road he wanted to take as a musician.

But before he left for the Julliard School in New York, Garrett’s parents sent him to London to pursue his studies as a musician.

“I hated London. I didn’t go to classes and I found them boring because my heart was set on New York and that’s where I wanted to go,” he said.

“I guess I was kind of expelled from the college in London because I didn’t go to classes and as a result they didn’t perceive me as a motivated student.

“It’s so funny looking back because there was this desperation when I was at school in New York. I did everything I could to survive which is why I did a bit of modelling to pay for college in New York.

“In the end I believe good music is the key to a good record. So whether it’s classical, rock or jazz you’ve just got to love it and I guess that’s what drives me as an instrumentalist.”

Details: david-garrett.com.