

THE  TIMES  
**Playlist**

## Nigel Kennedy's Polish Weekend

▶ Though it's a long way from his beloved Aston Villa, Poland is where Britain's most entertaining violinist now spends more than half his life. The 53-year-old Nigel Kennedy is married to a Pole and has developed almost as great a fondness for Polish culture, especially the jazz scene. He can't really speak the lingo ("only enough to get a beer, and sympathy from both sexes," he says) – but that hasn't stopped him from becoming a charismatic, if quixotic, music director of the Polish Chamber Orchestra, and a fervent champion of some pretty esoteric Polish violin concertos.

And now he brings a taste of Poland to London. Nigel Kennedy Polish Weekend is nothing if not unorthodox. One eagerly anticipated event will be a screening of the celebrated 1973 England v Poland football match (celebrated in Poland, that is; England lost, and failed to qualify for the World Cup). But this piece of antique soccer action will be supplied with a live musical soundtrack improvised on the spot by Kennedy and his group. Another bunch of virtuosi will be honouring the 200th anniversary of Chopin's birth by playing new riffs on nocturnes and polonaises by Poland's greatest composer. There will also be orchestral music as well as everything from jazz and klezmer (a hybrid East European folk music) to what Kennedy describes as "Polish semi-techno".

But the wonderful thing about any event involving the perpetually boyish fiddler is that nobody really knows what will happen. Expect plenty of laddish wisecracks from the maestro, a few sessions of stonking jamming and some meltingly beautiful violin playing.

**Richard Morrison**

*Southbank Centre, London SE1 ([www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk) 0844 847937), today until Mon*



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