

Violinist David Garrett rocks the GSR

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Metromix Reno producer
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He walked through the crowd at **Grand Theatre** inside the Grand Sierra Resort like a rock star.

His long, blonde hair and scratchy beard is typical of a **lead singer** on an international tour.

But instead of raging about sex and drugs, David Garrett classes it up, and lets his 1772 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin do the singing.

The German rock violinist received a standing ovation from the packed - and mostly Art-Town crowd on Saturday night, taking a classically beautiful instrument and rejuvenating it with cover songs from Paul McCartney, Michael Jackson, Nirvana, Billy Joel and Coldplay among others.

Garrett's classically-trained style matched with a born-to-rock creativity/curiosity resulted in a brilliant and jubilant sound.

After practically every song, about 25 in all, it was hard not to raise my eye brows, shake my head and said "Wow."

Reading about Garrett and his "Rock Symphonies" tour, I expected him to play "**Smells Like Teen Spirit**" by Nirvana and "**Smooth Criminal**" by Michael Jackson, but I was unsure if he'd dip into his classical arsenal.

Well, he did, and the 31 year old with sagging skinny jeans, a chain wallet and a hipster black dress coat brought to life some classics that he learned as a child and in his teens while studying at Royal College of Music in London and Juilliard School in New York.

Garrett recreated Ludwig van Beethoven's "No. 5" and "No. 7," and also dipped into Arcangelo Corelli, an Italian violinist and composer from the 17th century, as well as Muzio Clementi and Wolfgang Mozart.

The strength of the show was Garrett's versatility as he covered classic rock (**Paul McCartney: Live and Let Die**), modern rock (**Coldplay: Viva La Vida**), R&B (Justin Timberlake: Cry Me A River) and country ("**Dueling Banjos**," where he actually picks at the violin).

Despite the large venue, Garrett made the show personal. He said while studying at Juilliard, one of the ways impress women was to sit them down and play a romantic set.

Garrett's manager picked a young lady near the front row and escorted her to a seat aside from Garrett, who then lulled her with romantic soothing that comes only from a classic violin.

He wasn't trying to court her, I'm sure. Garrett likely has his pick with the single ladies.

Artown Executive Director Beth Macmillan introduced Garrett, and said that while Garrett's a tremendous talent, "**He's also very easy on the eyes.**"

Garrett's encore was "We Will Rock You" by Queen. He hinted that he possibly would make his third trip to Reno on a future tour.

I'll be waiting with "**Open Arms.**" Journey, oh by the way, would be a great addition to the set.