



# Maths in the media

## On the couch with Queensland's *Courier Mail*

Peter Pleasants\*

The Queensland *Courier Mail*'s weekend magazine section *QWeekend* has a regular one-page feature called *On the Couch* with a picture of a celebrity and their answers to a list of questions. Here are the responses to the same question on consecutive weekends in January this year:

- January 12–13: Ana Marina, female lead in *Phantom of the Opera*. 'The hardest thing I've ever done was ... try to understand maths. I never really succeeded.'
- January 19–20: Nigel Kennedy, the world's best fiddler. 'The hardest thing I've ever done was ... maths.'

Quite a coincidence. What does this tell us about the state of our discipline, especially since mathematical and musical talents are often thought to go together? At least Nigel Kennedy's difficulty can't be laid at the door of the Australian educational system.



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\*The University of Queensland