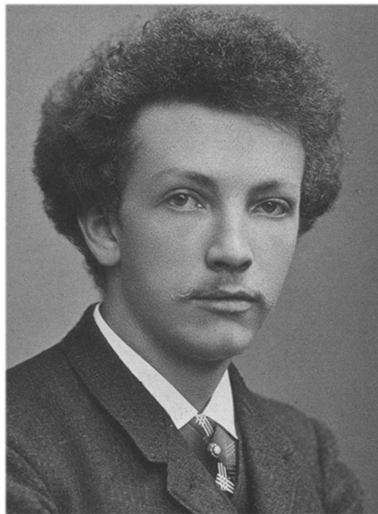




From a photograph of Richard Strauss, ca. 1884



From a portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven by Joseph Willibrord Mähler, 1803

AARON BOYD  
VIOLIN  
MIKHAIL BERESTNEV  
PIANO

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026 3:00 PM  
GREAT HALL  
ST. MATTHEW'S CATHEDRAL  
DALLAS, TEXAS



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## PROGRAM

Violin Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 18 (1887-88)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

- I. *Allegro, ma non troppo*
- II. *Improvisation: Andante cantabile*
- III. *Finale: Andante - Allegro*



Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47 ("Kreutzer") (1802-4)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- I. *Adagio sostenuto - Presto*
- II. *Andante con variazioni*
- III. *Presto*

# AARON BOYD

Violinist Aaron Boyd has established an international career as soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, recording artist, lecturer and educator. Since making his New York recital debut in 1998, he has appeared at the most prestigious venues throughout the United States, Europe, Russia and Asia. As a chamber musician, Boyd has appeared at the Marlboro, La Jolla, Rockport, Aspen and Music@Menlo festivals, and is a season artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. As a member of the Escher String Quartet for five seasons, he was a recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Martin E. Segal prize from Lincoln Center. A prizewinner in the Ecoles D'art Americaines de Fontainebleau, the Tuesday Musical Society and the Pittsburgh Concert Society competitions, Boyd was awarded a Proclamation by the City of Pittsburgh for his musical accomplishments. Vitally interested in the violin and its history, he is in demand as a lecturer on the golden-age violinists and their violins. A contributing writer to *The Strad* magazine, Boyd has also participated in the Oberlin Acoustics Workshop and the critically acclaimed "Strad3D" project. A passionate advocate for new music, he has been involved in numerous commissions and premieres in concert and on record, and has worked directly with such legendary composers as Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter and Charles Wuorinen. Boyd was a founder of the Zukofsky Quartet, the first quartet-in-residence at Bargemusic and the only ensemble to have played all of Milton Babbitt's notoriously difficult string quartets in concert. A musician of diverse stylistic interests, Boyd has also played and recorded in collaboration with jazz legend Dick Hyman, and appeared in concert on the mandolin with the renowned flutist Paula Robison. As a recording artist, he can be heard on the BIS, Music@Menlo Live, Naxos, Tzadik, North/South and Innova labels. He has been broadcast in concert by PBS, NPR, WQXR, and WQED, and was profiled by Arizona Public Television. Born in Pittsburgh, Boyd began his studies with Samuel LaRocca and Eugene Phillips and graduated from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Sally Thomas and coached extensively with Paul Zukofsky and cellist Harvey Shapiro. Formerly on the violin faculties of Columbia University and the University of Arizona, he now serves as Director of Chamber Music and Chair of Strings for the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University, and is the current President of the Dallas Chamber Music Society. Aaron Boyd performs on the "*ex Thruston Johnson*" Matteo Goffriller violin, crafted in Venice in 1700. Visit [aaronboydviolin.com](http://aaronboydviolin.com).

# MIKHAIL BERESTNEV

A Cathedral Arts Artist-in-Residence since 2022, pianist Mikhail Berestnev has been praised for his "flawless technique, constant inspiration and superb sonority" (Belgian *La Libre Magazine*) and as "an astonishingly gifted pianist...equally at home as a soloist and collaborative pianist" (Theater Jones). He has appeared with the Sydney Symphony, Brazilian Symphony, Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia, Fort Worth Symphony, San Angelo Symphony, Meadows Symphony and the Greater North Texas Youth Orchestra. Mikhail has performed with orchestras and as a recitalist at the Grand Hall of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory and International Music House in Moscow, the National Concert Hall in Dublin, Flagey Theater in Brussels, the Sydney Opera House, Palau de la Música Recital Hall in Barcelona, the English Hall at St. Petersburg Music House, the Eisemann Center for Performing Arts and more. His collaborations include work with Grammy Award-winning violinist Matt Albert, Avery Fisher Grant recipient violinist Aaron Boyd, concert pianist Andrei Ponochevny, Dallas Symphony violinists Eunice Keem and Lydia Umlauf, French hornist David Cooper, concert violinist Hubert Pralitz, the Seraphim Piano Trio (Melbourne, Australia), São Paulo City String Quartet (Brazil), Julius String Quartet (U.S.) and with the Meadows Distinguished Artist-in-Residence violinist Emanuel Borok. His awards at prestigious international piano competitions include the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia (Fourth Prize and Special Prize), the BNDES International Piano Competition in Rio de Janeiro (Silver Medal and Special Prize), the National MTNA Competition in New York (Third Prize), the Eric Sorantin Young Artist Award, the Judith Solomon Piano Award in Chamber Music, the Harold von Mickwitz piano award, the Dmitri Shostakovich National Junior Competition, the Voronezh Central Music School National Competition, Stanislav Neuhaus International Piano Competition and the International Delphic Games Competition (Gold Medal). Mikhail holds degrees from the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, where he studied with Irina Grebenkina, Andrei Khitruk, Alexei Skavronsky and Vladimir Tropp; from Texas Christian University with Tamás Ungár; and from Southern Methodist University with Joaquín Achúcarro.

# NOTES

Richard Strauss is known today for his orchestral works, his operas, and his songs. He burst on the scene at the end of the 19th century with a series of vibrant orchestral works and became one of the leading conductors of his day. But Strauss was also an accomplished pianist and violinist, and it shows in the idiomatic virtuosity of the Violin Sonata he composed in 1887. The composer was only 23 at the time, but he already had behind him a substantial body of abstract instrumental music, including two symphonies, two concertos, two piano trios, a piano quartet, a string quartet, and a cello sonata, as well as dozens of songs. The Violin Sonata was completed just before Strauss began his first burst of tone poem creations – *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, and *Macbeth* – and it often presages the densely woven, highly interactive texture of those works, although it would be just as apt to remark that the tone poems continue the instrumental brilliance of the earlier abstract pieces. The nobly aspiring outer movements of the sonata remind us that E-flat was also to be the key of Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life), as it was of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. Consummately crafted, they have a refined sparkle that overcomes the dark intrusions with confident energy. Strauss had already come to regard sonata form as a "hollow shell," but one that he filled here with characteristic enthusiasm and sophistication. The first movement shifts meter freely for different themes, and even has the two instruments playing in different meters at one point. The Finale begins with a hushed prelude for the piano,

before launching the energetic main theme, which is closely related to the opening (and the emphatic closing) of the first movement. It is emotionally and technically turbulent, but relatively stable harmonically and metrically until Strauss shifts into the triple-meter variant in C-flat foretold by the piano introduction. The Violin Sonata was composed the year that Strauss first met the soprano Pauline de Ahna, whom he would later marry, and it's not hard to hear suggestions of romantic ardor in the lush lyricism of the work. This is particularly true of the spellbound, long-breathed Improvisation, the *Andante cantabile* middle movement, which proved so popular that Strauss allowed it to be published separately. (From an article by John Henken for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.)



"Sonata for piano and violin obbligato written in a concertante style, almost a concerto, composed and dedicated to his friend, R. Kreuzer, member of the Conservatory of Music in Paris, first violin of the Academy of Arts, and of the Imperial Chamber, by L. van Beethoven."

History unfolds in mysterious ways. Ludwig van Beethoven dedicated his ninth Violin Sonata to the great violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer in 1805. Kreutzer was internationally renowned for his virtuosity and celebrated for a new style of violin playing, characterized by a full tone and *legato* (singing) style. But Kreutzer would be little remembered today if it wasn't for Beethoven's sonata. When Beethoven dedicated his A major Sonata to Kreutzer, the violinist wasn't told ahead of time. Kreutzer probably never performed the sonata publicly, and Hector Berlioz later reported that Kreutzer had called it "outrageously unintelligible." Beethoven's dedication to Kreutzer was made after the Sonata was completed and premiered. It was originally written for George Bridgetower, a violin virtuoso (and one of the very few men of color to have broken into European art circles), who was visiting Vienna in the spring of 1803. Beethoven and Bridgetower got along well, and when they booked a concert together (with Beethoven playing the piano), the composer rushed to finish a violin sonata he had begun the previous year. The pair premiered the sonata on May 24, 1803, with very little rehearsal and to great audience acclaim. The honeymoon came to a swift end, however, when Bridgetower made an unflattering comment about a woman that Beethoven respected (exactly what he said is unknown). Beethoven—who generally held grudges forever—was furious. He never spoke to Bridgetower again, and he changed the sonata's dedication to Rodolphe Kreutzer before its publication in 1805. Bridgetower was bitter for the rest of his life. (From an article by Laura Keller for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, 2018.)

By 1802, a cure for Beethoven's deafness, which he had tried to hide during six years of futile medical treatment, and the cruellest fate for a rising master musician, became hopeless. In the purposely astonishing Kreutzer Sonata, begun in the same year, the turbulence of his suppressed feelings erupted with full artistic force. This astounding work was a way to depict his pain and confusion. And it was also the vehicle by which Beethoven signaled to the world, and to himself, how he planned to overcome his affliction. With the Kreutzer Sonata, Beethoven launched a new kind of music that lies at the heart of his genius. The Kreutzer was a personal watershed, marking Beethoven's leap from a gifted, occasionally edgy, often innovative composer, to the revolutionary activist who rewrote the essential rules of musical art. It's also the very first work for reduced forces that bursts the modest bounds of chamber music with weighty emotional gestures that were formerly the province of opera, oratorio, concertos and symphonies for massive ensembles. In contrast to all eight of his previous violin sonatas, that begin with the piano's plain statement of the melody, key and tempo, here the soloist wanders out, naked and lost. The tempo indication, *Adagio sostenuto*, barely stirs and the score presents an immediate challenge – how the violinist, able to sound only two strings at once, is able to sustain the static opening figures of three- and four-note chords without disrupting their intense continuity. Upon the piano's sudden entrance, the mode shifts abruptly from major to minor, from which it never recovers. Beethoven was a concert pianist (and an accomplished violinist), and he provided display opportunities for guest artists at his concerts. But here, the relationship between violin and piano is complex – they both blend and conflict, suggesting a common purpose, but plunge into a frenzied competition as the piece erupts into an astoundingly stormy movement, which Beethoven described on his score as "almost like a concerto," heaving between gentle respite and exhausting, violent attacks of furious slashing figures at a delirious pace.

Perhaps nothing can top the scope and fire of the first movement. Beethoven meets this challenge brilliantly, disrupting expectations for a fitting successor to the opening frenzy, this time with a genial *Andante*, a throwback that would fit any of his prior works, comprising a placid theme with four variations of escalating complexity. It's as if Beethoven, despite his complete deafness, reassures us that his spirit remains loving and steeped in common values, and that he knows how to fulfill social expectations. The finale is also conventional – a *Rondo* in which the techniques of the first movement emerge in a brighter light. Having bared his soul, the deeply conflicted composer vows to endure, and resolves to redirect his torment toward a more constructive end. Over the next quarter century of his life, Beethoven would go on to sublimate his distress over a dire affliction to produce perhaps the greatest body of music in all of Western culture. (Adapted from an article by Peter Gutmann for *Classical Notes*, 2007.)

*Program design and notes by Jon White*