

# YEVGENY KUTIK, VIOLINIST

*“Kutik delivers the performances  
with a blend of polished dexterity  
and genteel, old-world charm.”*

–WQXR, NEW YORK PUBLIC RADIO

*“dark hued tone and  
razor-sharp technique”*

–THE NEW YORK TIMES



[WWW.YEVGENYKUTIK.COM](http://WWW.YEVGENYKUTIK.COM)



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# YEVGENY KUTIK

With a “dark-hued tone and razor-sharp technique” (*The New York Times*), Russian-American violinist Yevgeny Kutik has captivated audiences worldwide with an old-world sound that communicates a modern intellect. Praised for his technical precision and virtuosity, he is also lauded for his poetic and imaginative interpretations of standard works as well as rarely heard and newly composed repertoire.

A native of Minsk, Belarus, Yevgeny Kutik immigrated to the United States with his family at the age of five. His 2014 album, *Music from the Suitcase: A Collection of Russian Miniatures* (Marquis Classics), features music he found in his family’s suitcase after immigrating to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1990, and debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard Classical chart. The album garnered critical acclaim and was featured on NPR’s *All Things Considered* and in *The New York Times*. Kutik’s 2012 debut album, *Sounds of Defiance*, also on the Marquis label, features the music of Achron, Pärt, Schnittke, and Shostakovich. Kutik released his third solo album, *Words Fail*, to critical acclaim on Marquis Classics in October 2016. The album uses Mendelssohn’s *Songs Without Words* as a starting point to expand upon the idea that music surpasses traditional language in its expressive capabilities, and includes two new commissions on the theme by Timo Andres and Michael Gandolfi.

Highlights of Yevgeny Kutik’s current season include his debut with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra performing Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 3, as well as debuts with the La Crosse and Tallahassee symphony orchestras, and performances with the Traverse and Berkshire symphony orchestras. Highlights of his recitals this season include performances at the University of Arizona Presents, Kean Stage, Tuesday Evening Concert Series, the Glacier Symphony & Chorale’s Festival Amadeus, and the Nantucket Musical Arts Society. Additionally, at the invitation of the International March of the Living, he will perform concerts in Warsaw and Krakow, and appear at the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony at Auschwitz in April 2018.

Deeply committed to fostering creative relationships with living composers, Yevgeny Kutik has been involved in commissioning and premiering new works. Recent highlights include the world premieres of Timo Andres’ *Words Fail* at The Phillips Collection, Michael Gandolfi’s *Arioso Doloroso/Estatico* at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, Ron Ford’s concerto *Versus* with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, and Sheila Silver’s *Six Beads on a String*, as well as the New York premiere of George Tsontakis’ Violin Concerto No. 2 at the 92nd Street Y. He has also been involved in the performances of new and rarely played works by Kati Agócs, Joseph Schwanter, Nico Muhly, and Donald Martino.

Passionate about his heritage and its influence on his artistry, Kutik is an advocate for the Jewish Federations of North America, the organization that assisted his family in coming to the United States, and regularly speaks and performs across the United States to both raise awareness and promote the assistance of refugees from around the world.

Yevgeny Kutik made his major orchestral debut in 2003 with Keith Lockhart and The Boston Pops as the First Prize recipient of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition. In 2006, he was awarded the Salon de Virtuosi Grant as well as the Tanglewood Music Center Jules Reiner Violin Prize. Yevgeny Kutik began violin studies with his mother, Alla Zernitskaya, and went on to study with Zinaida Gilels, Shirley Givens, Roman Totenberg, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Boston University and a master’s degree from the New England Conservatory and currently resides in Boston. Kutik’s violin was crafted in Italy in 1915 by Stefano Scarpella.

# PROGRAMS

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## Jewish Identity Through Music

Featuring works by Jewish composers, this program highlights a humorous and richly dynamic work by Milhaud, who took the name for the piece from a famous French night club, The Ox on the Roof, and wrote it while at a diplomatic post for the French Embassy in Brazil. It incorporates various elements of French and native Brazilian music, evoking the sounds of Carnival. Mendelssohn, who was born Jewish but baptized as a child, struggled to find a personal balance between his Jewish heritage and Christian faith. His Sonata in F was written during the summer of 1938 when he had a new wife and baby, and decided to turn his attention to chamber music. Achron was a Jewish composer and child violin prodigy. At age 25, he was invited to join the music committee of the St. Petersburg Society of Jewish Folk Music, which inspired him to compose his first “Jewish” work, *Hebrew Melody*, his most popular composition, and later, his *Hebrew Lullaby*. Swiss-born American composer Bloch’s music often reflects Jewish cultural themes combined with European post-Romantic traditions. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s Jewish heritage largely influenced his writing, and he contributed a significant amount of Jewish liturgical music.

Mendelssohn: Violin Sonata in F Major

Bloch: Violin Sonata No. 1

Achron: *Hebrew Lullaby*

Achron: *Hebrew Melody*

Milhaud: *Le Boeuf sur le toit*

Castelnuovo-Tedesco: “Figaro” from

Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

## Theme and Variations

The Theme and Variations form has been a vital style of expression for many composers from as far back as the 16th century. This program focuses on two monumental works in the violin repertoire that both utilize Theme and Variations: Shostakovich’s Violin Sonata and Beethoven’s Sonata No. 10. Both pieces were composed late in each composer’s life and are extraordinarily dramatic in two wildly contrasting ways — inward, defiant, and exasperated versus beautiful, calm, and philosophical. Messiaen’s early wedding gift to his wife, the beautiful *Thème and Variations*, contrasts with the fiendishly difficult and flashy set of variations by the Polish virtuoso, Wieniawski. Arvo Pärt’s celebrated work, *Fratres*, rounds out the program with tranquil variations on a six-bar theme.

Messiaen: *Thème and Variations*

Shostakovich: Violin Sonata, Op. 134

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres*

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96

Wieniawski: Theme and Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 15

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## SELECTED CONCERTOS

(Full list available upon request)

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in D minor &

Schnittke: Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano

Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp minor, Op. 129

George Tsontakis: Violin Concerto No. 2

Joseph Schwantner: *The Poet’s Hour* – Soliloquy for Violin and String Orchestra

Milhaud: *Le Bœuf Sur le Toit*, Op. 58 (Cinema Fantasy for Orchestra)

Glazunov: Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 82

Bruch: Scottish Fantasy in E-flat Major, Op. 46

Michael Gandolfi: new commission for Yevgeny Kutik (forthcoming)

## Censorship as Preservation in Nazi Germany

The Nazi Reichsmusikkammer, or State Music Bureau, worked furiously to eliminate and ban music produced by composers considered “degenerate” — not just Jewish music, but also atonal, Jazz, swing, and anything with remotely familial Jewish roots. Richard Strauss was installed as president of the Reichsmusikkammer for two years, although many argue Strauss did this to protect his Jewish grandchildren and also to ensure that banned music by composers such as Mahler and Mendelssohn survived the Nazi reign. He was later dismissed from the post because of an intercepted letter critical of Nazi racial profiling. This program unifies Strauss’ luscious and romantic Sonata (1887) with prominent works by four composers whose music was banned by the Reichsmusikkammer: Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Mahler. The various ways in which these four composers antagonized the Nazis are exemplified in their respective pieces. With hope, this program will highlight the resilient and perennial power of art to fight tyranny and oppression.

Mendelssohn: Violin Sonata in F Major

Stravinsky: *Duo Concertante*

Schoenberg: Fantasy for violin and piano, op. 47

Mahler: “Adagietto” from Symphony No. 5  
(arr. R. Wittinger)

Richard Strauss: Violin Sonata in E-flat Major,  
Op. 18

## The WWI Years (1914-1918)

This program provides a snapshot of Europe and its music-making between 1914-1918, in the shadow of the “war to end all wars.” Sibelius’ *Sonatina* (1915) reflects his reminiscing about being a twelve year old violin virtuoso. Szymanowski turned to Greek mythology to write *Mythes* (1915), three extremely difficult pieces that push the boundaries of traditional technique and violin playing. Czech composer Janáček was fascinated by the emotional intensity of native folk music. His impressive *Sonata* alternates between folk music and intense outbursts. As he himself said about the war, “...in the 1914 *Sonata* for violin and piano I could just about hear sound of the steel clashing in my troubled head...” Milhaud composed *Poeme Juif*, a set of songs for voice about Jewish life, in 1916, exploring both practical and mystical elements of the tradition, all with his trademark use of linear tonality and harmony. This setting has been arranged for violin. Respighi’s brilliant and virtuosic *Sonata in B minor* concludes the program, in which the composer seems to harken back to the lusciously Romantic late 19th century. Considering it was written in 1917, one can’t help but see Respighi looking back upon a more innocent time.

Sibelius: Violin Sonatina, op.80

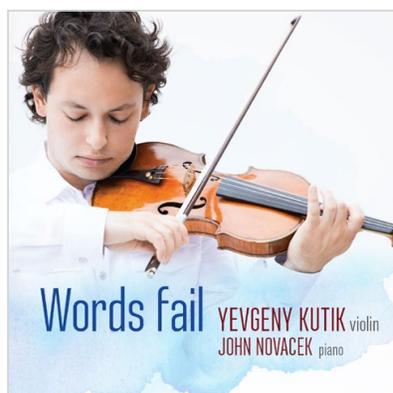
Szymanowski: *Mythes*

Janáček: Violin Sonata

Milhaud: *Poeme Juif*

Respighi: Violin Sonata in B minor

RECENT  
RELEASES:



“...rich,  
sweet tone.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES



## YEVGENY KUTIK: THEME AND VARIATIONS

PHOTO BY COREY HAYES

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*“Kutik presented an elegantly phrased, sensitive interpretation that balances passion with nuance.”* –THE NEW YORK TIMES



PHOTO BY COREY HAYES

## YEVGENY KUTIK: CENSORSHIP AS PRESERVATION IN NAZI GERMANY

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