

USU Symphony Orchestra  
Sergio Bernal, Music Director

# A Farewell Concert



Sasha Kasman Laude, faculty soloist  
Robert Schumann Piano Concerto  
Spring Symphony  
Wednesday, April 17, 2024 | 7:30 pm  
Daines Concert Hall

## Program

### ROBERT SCHUMANN, Piano Concerto (1845)

Sasha Kasman Laude, faculty soloist

1. Allegro affettuoso
2. INTERMEZZO. Andantino grazioso
3. Allegro vivace

### ROBERT SCHUMANN, Symphony No. 1 “Spring” (1841)

1. Andante un poco maestoso - Allegro molto vivace
2. Larghetto\*
3. SCHERZO. Molto vivace
4. Allegro animato e grazioso

## Farewell Message

As I conclude my teaching career at the university, I wish to thank the students, faculty, administrators, and staff of the music department and the college for a wonderful 23 years! Every single day, I have been inspired by your love of music. Thank for your friendship and collegiality that made directing the USU Symphony Orchestra and teaching Theory and Composition a part of my life I will always treasure!

Since 2001, I have been blessed by the opportunity to actively engage in the cultural life of the university and build bridges with the community. In this upcoming season of life, I look forward to enjoying more shared time with my loved ones – both here and in Colombia – while continuing to follow my lifelong passion of fostering social development through music.

My deepest gratitude goes to the families of our students for having entrusted me with their education in such an important stage of their development. And, of course, many thanks to *you*, our audience, for allowing the orchestra and me to resonate with you!

— Sergio Bernal

# Musician Highlights

## Sasha Kasman Laude

Pianist Sasha Kasman Laude's playing is praised by critics as "powerful and vivid" (Palm Beach Arts Review) and having "such an abundance of intelligence that it can only be described as relentless" (Ludwig Van Toronto). Kasman Laude appears as a guest artist and teacher at the invitation of such festivals as International Keyboard Institute and Festival, Southeastern Piano Festival, Utah State University Summer Piano Festival, Kyiv International Summer Academy (Ukraine), Busan International Music Academy (South Korea), and PianoCity Milano (Italy). She has given solo recitals at such major venues as Steinway Hall in New York City, Yamaha Ginza Hall in Tokyo, Salle Cortot in Paris, and Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa. In 2019, she was named a Young Artist-in-Residence of National Public Radio's Performance Today, hosted by Fred Child. Her playing and interviews have been broadcast on NPR stations nationwide. Kasman Laude's recent engagements include performances for the Birmingham Chamber Music Society, *Eisendrath* Series of Ann Arbor (MI), *InConcert* Series of Apalachicola (FL), International Keyboard *Odyssiad*® & Festival, *Vivace* International Music Festival, and *pianoSonoma*, as well as soloist appearances with the Dayton and Ann Arbor symphony orchestras and Luminous Voices Ensemble.

Kasman Laude has triumphed in numerous international competitions. Most recently, she became a finalist in the 2022 *Honens* International Piano Competition (Canada). She has been a soloist with over a dozen symphony orchestras in the USA and abroad, including the Juilliard Orchestra and Calgary Symphony, and has appeared seven times with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. She has worked under the batons of maestros including Jeffrey Kahane, Neal Gittleman, Gregory Vajda, Jeffrey Milarsky, Yaniv Attar, Christopher Confessore, Jacques Cohen, Mykola Dyadura, Nazar Yakobenchuk, and Natalia Ponomarchuk. Kasman Laude is an advocate and experienced performer of contemporary music, premiering works of living composers Stewart Goodyear, Marc Migó, Nathan Daughtrey, Zachary Detrick, and Eric Mobley. In addition to her vibrant solo playing, Kasman Laude is an enthusiastic chamber musician and has collaborated with such distinguished players as Martin Beaver, Blake Pouliot, the Viano, Aeolus, and Fry Street String Quartets, and the New York Chamber Players. She and her father Yakov Kasman have been an internationally-touring piano duo for fourteen years.

A native of Moscow, Kasman Laude began her musical studies with her parents, acclaimed pianists and pedagogues Yakov and Tatiana Kasman. She continued studying with her father at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and went on to earn an MM degree from the Juilliard School, studying with Robert McDonald. In the spring of 2023,

Kasman Laude received a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan, where she studied with Logan Skelton, won the school concerto competition, and received the School of Music, Theater, and Dance's top graduation honor, the Earl V. Moore Award.

In the fall of 2023, Kasman Laude joined the faculty of Utah State University's Caine College of the Arts as Assistant Professor of Piano in the Department of Music. She has previously lectured and given masterclasses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Calgary, Lee University, Bowling Green State University, and Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. She is regularly invited to adjudicate and give masterclasses for local and state competitions and organizations, including the most recent Utah Music Teachers Association state conference. She is passionate about music outreach and has given over one hundred educational performances in schools and community venues in large part as a Fellow of *PianoArts, Inc.* Kasman Laude's teaching emphasizes stylistic clarity rooted in academic study and values the expressive traditions of the Russian school, as well as a deep awareness of pianistic health based in the Taubman approach and Alexander technique.

## Sergio Bernal

An outstanding Latin American conductor, composer, and teacher, Sergio Bernal is the Director of Orchestral Studies and a Professor of Music at Utah State University. His conducting activity has earned him international recognition as a "tasteful technician with a more than technical gift for connecting with a score's essence." His guest engagements include appearances with the *Simón Bolívar* Orchestra of Venezuela, the *Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal de Caracas*, the National Symphony Orchestra and the National Opera of México, the *Orquesta Filarmónica de Montevideo*, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Bogotá Philharmonic, the Torun Chamber Orchestra and Szczecin Opera of Poland, the W.A. Mozart Philharmonic of Rumania, the Eugene and New Mexico Symphonies, and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. From 2012 to 2018, he conducted the international *Via dei Concerti* Festival Orchestra and Choir in five concert tours throughout Italy, France, and Spain.

A strong believer in the power of music as a catalyst for social change, Mr. Bernal worked for a decade at *El Sistema* in Venezuela, the country's groundbreaking system of youth and children orchestras, bands, and choirs. There he served as music director of the Mérida Symphony Orchestra, was a permanent guest conductor and artistic advisor of orchestras nationwide, conducted in a South American tour of the *Orquesta de Juventudes de los Países Andinos*, and developed an orchestral conducting instructional

video to be used by *El Sistema* in Venezuela and other Latin American countries.

Since his arrival to Utah State University in 2001, Sergio Bernal took the USU Symphony Orchestra to important levels of achievement. His innovative programming attracted national attention in projects such as the 2010 fully staged production with the Utah State Theatre of the Shakespeare/Mendelssohn *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a production subsequently emulated by other theatre companies and symphony orchestras using Mr. Bernal's performance edition. Frequently involving international and faculty guests in its concerts, the USU Symphony Orchestra performed with Austrian conductor Christoph Campestrini (*Vienna Hofmusikkapelle*), mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford (Metropolitan Opera), *Deutsche Grammophon* recording artist Pacho Flores (trumpet), and Berlin Philharmonic bassist Edicson Ruiz. Recently featured faculty guests included Rebecca McFaul (violin), Jeiran Hasan (Flute), Bradley Ottesen (viola), and Robert Davis (guest speaker). Among the orchestra's collaborative concerts were Mahler's Third Symphony with the Cache Children's Choir and Women of the USU Choirs, Beethoven's Ninth with the American Festival Chorus, and Mahler's Fifth and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* with the University of Utah Philharmonia. Fully-staged productions included *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Utah State Theatre), *The Magic Flute* and *Elixir of Love* (USU Opera), *Sleeping Beauty* with (Cache Civic Ballet), and *Appalachian Spring* (Martha Graham Dance Company – for whom Aaron Copland wrote the music in 1944).

As a composer, Mr. Bernal explores the popular and folk idioms from Ibero America and likes to do so in works for soloist and orchestra. His two concerti are written for prominent Venezuelan soloists and have received performances in the US, Argentina, and Venezuela. They are *Arcano*, dedicated to classical and folk violinist Eddy Marcano, and *Andares*, a trumpet concerto dedicated to the 2006 *Maurice André* Competition winner Pacho Flores.

A native Colombian, Bernal studied on a full scholarship and stipend with Lorin Maazel, Günther Herbig, Erich Leinsdorf, and Eleazar De Carvalho in the Yale University/Affiliate Artists Conducting Program. He holds conducting degrees from Yale University and the University of Michigan (where he studied with Gustav Meier), a PhD in Composition from the University of Utah, and a B.A. in Music from the *Aaron Copland School of Music* at Queens College of CUNY. He received additional conducting training at the Aspen Music Festival and the Tanglewood Music Center. In 1986, he apprenticed with the late Maestro Eduardo Mata at the Dallas Symphony and subsequently worked as Mr. Mata's assistant in recording projects of the Ibero American symphonic repertoire.

# USU Symphony Orchestra

**Flute:** Rebecca Olpin, Ali Hulse

**Oboe:** Amberlee Manzo-Fullmer, Libby Stewart

**Clarinet:** Josephine Roderer, Amy Swasey

**Bassoon:** Carolyn Bodily, Luke Pfeil

**French Horn:** Joel Yoder, Juliann Butler, Mary Ann Smith, Eric Lee

**Trumpet:** Mason England, TJ Anderson

**Trombone:** Wyatt Prescott, Conner DeMoux, Michael Shipley

**Timpani/Percussion:** Tristan Wardle, Michael Hylton

**Violin 1:** Carissa Devenport (concertmaster), Emma Thackeray, Hannah Stacey, Hughes Herpin-Lemonnier, Kristene Murrow, Jonathan Swank, Madeline Anderson, Bella Fausett

**Violin 2:** Ellie Evans (section leader), Rebecca Hales, Blake Matamoros, Claire Armstrong, Kailynn McCullough, Ellie Greer, Mia Bateman, Abby Wuehler

**Viola:** Brenley Mason (section leader), Brooklynn Bowen, Tessa Urie, Liz Olson, Jayme Dunn

**Cello:** Sam Moore (section leader), Andrew Jessop, Matt Huff, Ami Dutson, Joshua Swank, Raif Milligan, Aaron Kinghorn, Brynne Berry, Savannah Erekson, Joseph Loomis, Macy Lund

**Bass:** Karsen Phillips (section leader), Kylan Jones, Emma Barker, Alexander Schaffer

**Stage Manager:** Blake Matamoros

**Librarian:** Liz Olson

# PROGRAM NOTES

## ROBERT SCHUMANN, Piano Concerto

In May 1841, around the time he was also sketching his D minor symphony, Robert Schumann drafted a Phantasie in A minor for piano and orchestra. On August 13, his wife, the virtuoso pianist and composer Clara Schumann (née Wieck) gave two trial performances of this one-movement concert piece at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. She was keen about the work, commenting that “the piano is interwoven with the orchestra in the most subtle way—one cannot imagine the one without the other.” This would have encouraged Robert, who thought the future direction of the concerto laid, in part, in creating a new equal and more integrated relationship between soloist and orchestra.

Lack of interest from publishers and concert organizers led Robert to put the Phantasie aside. However, he picked it up again in the summer of 1845, when he reworked it into a concerto, adding a Rondo finale and an Intermezzo to come before, while the Phantasie, revised, became the first movement. In December, Clara, as the soloist, gave the first performance of the Concerto in Dresden, then in Leipzig a month later, to positive reviews. Since the late 19th century, it continues to be one of the most frequently performed and admired concertos.

The Concerto begins as a dramatic intrusion by orchestra and piano; the oboe then sings the tender first theme, to which the piano immediately responds. Soloist and orchestra continue in dialogue—subtly at first, more impassioned as the movement progresses, to finally, exuberance. The “fantasy” element is clearly borne by the piano part, with its rippling arpeggios and constantly evolving melodies.

The brief Intermezzo has a gracious elegance. There’s a gentle theme on tiptoe but the middle section is the movement’s emotional heart, with a luscious cello melody of yearning leaps, around which the piano weaves embellishments. The tiptoe theme returns but seems to lose its way. As if a summons, the opening theme from the first movement, in a brighter version, is recalled by clarinets and bassoons; the piano responds with delicately falling chords. Suddenly, the tempo rushes forward into the finale’s exuberant rondo theme (in fact a variant of the opening melody). Lively episodes ensue, including a playful use of meters and orchestral counterpoint. In the final minutes, the piano part becomes its most fantastical and virtuosic, driving the Concerto to an exhilarating conclusion.

— Program notes by Dr. Hannah Chan-Hartley

From: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/notes/29165>

## ROBERT SCHUMANN, Symphony No. 1 "Spring"

Robert Schumann was one of the first truly great Romantics of the 19th century. Along with Berlioz, Weber, Chopin, Schubert and Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann forged a long and lasting influence on the composers of his time, as well as those that followed. And this was not only with his compositions, but also with his pen, as a respected music critic.

Schumann was born in Zwickau on June 8, 1810. He began piano lessons at age ten and later studied at the University of Leipzig. Here he became a student of Frederick Wieck, his future father-in-law. He was a gifted pianist until a finger injury ended that part of his career. He was also developing as a composer.

As David Ewen has stated, "Schumann was the only one of the great composers to cultivate one area fully before proceeding to the next." Following his compositional tract with the piano, he turned to the German Lied (Art Song). The inspiration for many of these was Clara Wieck, also a gifted pianist and the daughter of his former piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, ... who strongly opposed the idea of his daughter marrying a fellow musician. Schumann eventually took Wieck to court and was successful in gaining their right to marry. This they did on September 12, 1840. Close to 150 of the Lieder written during this time were written to express his love and feelings for his new bride.

In 1841 Schumann turned to orchestral music and in 1842 to chamber music. In both genres, he was most successful. ... Unfortunately, Schumann developed debilitating mental illness in his later years and was confined to an institution in Enderich, Germany, where he died on July 29, 1856.

Robert Schumann's First Symphony was sketched in a period of just four days, between January 23 and 26, 1841. The full score was completed on February 20 and the first performance was given on March 31 ... with Mendelssohn conducting. The title, "Spring," was given to the work by the composer, but should not lead the listener to expect a detailed program. Much as Beethoven had said about his Pastoral Symphony, the "Spring" is "More an expression of feeling than painting."

The First Symphony is cast in the traditional four movements. A fanfare in the trumpets and horns ... begins the slow introduction. A gradual accelerando then propels this introduction to the opening Allegro and the presentation of the first theme, which is derived from the fanfare itself. A second, gentler, theme is heard in the woodwinds. Following the repeat of the exposition, a robust development section then ensues. This

concludes with a massive restatement of the fanfare which leads into an imaginative recapitulation. A brisk *Animato* brings the [first] movement to a close.

As Edward Downes has written "The intimate *Larghetto* is one of the loveliest movements in all Schumann." Hans Gál writes that the movement, "a large, beautifully relaxed and expressive piece of music, has the fervor and melodic beauty of Schumann's finest songs. The string orchestra displays its most lavish sound, with divided violins in octaves singing a love song." Towards the end Schumann brings in the three trombones to prepare the transition to the third movement which follows without pause.

The third movement Scherzo is unique in two ways. First, it has two Trios, or contrasting sections, when one is the norm. Second, one of those Trios is in 2/4 time, in a movement that is most commonly in 3/4 time. The Scherzo begins with a vigorous pulsating theme remotely based on that of the *Larghetto*. There follows Trio I. This is the one in 2/4 and is quite brisk indeed. The Scherzo then returns, to be followed by Trio II, this one in the traditional 3/4. The Scherzo returns again leading to a short Coda, which utilizes both meters and brings the movement to a gentle conclusion.

The fourth movement is set in sonata form, as was the first. It begins with a magnificent flourish from the full orchestra. Two vibrant themes then inhabit the exposition and the subsequent development. It is at the end of this development that Schumann brings the movement to a pause and inserts a flute cadenza. This leads to the recapitulation and coda with its *accelerando* which brings the Symphony to a joyous conclusion.

— Stephen Larmore

From: <https://stlphilharmonic.org/images/RobertSchumann-SymphonyNo1progNotesSL021217a.pdf>