

Dr. Sasha Kasman Laude is Assistant Professor of Piano at Utah State University. A 2025 American Piano Awards finalist and prizewinner of the Honens International Competition, this season she performs with Dover Quartet and Indianapolis and Brevard symphonies. Frequently heard on NPR's Performance Today, Kasman Laude appeared with orchestras across the US and Ukraine and gave recitals at Steinway Hall, Yamaha Ginza Hall, Salle Cortot, and twelve cities across Italy. A graduate of UAB, Juilliard, and University of Michigan, Kasman Laude has given masterclasses at MIT and University of Calgary, and served on the jury of the 2024 L.A. International Liszt Competition. She has taught/performed at Southeastern, Vivace, IKIF, IKOF, and Fry Street festivals, returning this summer to USU Piano Festival and pianoSonoma.



Michael Clark is a pianist, teacher, and scholar noted for his “natural, clear, and nuanced” performances (*Piano Magazine*). An advocate for the music of Florence Price, he made the first studio recording of her [complete piano waltzes for Navona Records](#), edited the first publication of [twenty of her intermediate pieces for Hal Leonard](#), and has performed her works around the country. Clark also researches traditions of piano fingering and is the founder of [PianoTricks.net](#), an online database of fingerings and redistributions for over 1000 passages from the piano repertoire. He serves as Assistant Professor of Piano at Baylor University.



Cellist **Andrew Hayhurst** has been a member of the San Diego Symphony since 2015. He has also performed regularly with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Los Angeles Opera, and has recorded in many of Hollywood's major studios. He has performed over National Public Radio and on Los Angeles's *KMozart*. He has received awards from the University of Michigan, Yale School of Music, Colburn School of Performing Arts, and the Santa Barbara Fé Bland Foundation. He holds Bachelor's degrees in Cello Performance and Performing Arts Technology from the University of Michigan and a Master of Music from the Yale School of Music. His festival appearances include Kneisel Hall Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Geneva Music Festival, and Festival Mozaic.



Dr. Rebecca Rivera enjoys an active career as a performer and educator. As a bassoon and contrabassoon player, Dr. Rivera has recorded for several film and music projects and performed with many ensembles throughout Southern California including [Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra](#), the [Pasadena Symphony and Pops Orchestras](#) and the woodwind trio [Third Wheel](#). Dr. Rivera recently performed with Elton John at the 125th Anniversary concert for Yamaha. Dr. Rivera has performed at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Cerritos Performing Arts Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, The Orpheum and The Los Angeles Music Center. Dr. Rivera is a guest artist on *Fiesta* by Flamenco Latino guitarist Tony Ybarra. In addition to maintaining her private teaching studio, Dr. Rivera is adjunct professor of bassoon and [Chapman University](#) and a lecturer in reed-making at the [University of Southern California](#). Dr. Rebecca Rivera completed her Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in bassoon performance at the University of Southern California, studying with Rose Corrigan and Judith Farmer.



Mezzo-soprano **Cherry Duke** has performed over 60 principal roles with opera companies and orchestras throughout the US and abroad. With El Paso Opera, she has performed leading roles in several productions and served as Artistic Associate and Director of Resident Artists. In March of 2025, she was named Artistic Director for EPO. Ms. Duke has served as director of opera and professor of voice at the University of Texas at El Paso since 2015. She is a member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, National Opera Association, Opera America, American Guild of Musical Artists, and Actors Equity Association.



Paula Corbin Swalin, soprano and voice faculty at the University of New Mexico, teaches applied voice, vocal pedagogy, repertoire, and film music history. She coordinates outreach on vocal health and champions underrepresented composers, celebrating students' cultural heritage. While fostering an individualized and inclusive learning environment, she emphasizes the importance of vocal health and personal expression. Performance credits include Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, Schumann's *Spanisches Liederspiel*, Op. 74, J.S. Bach's *Johannes-Passion*, C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat*, Mozart's *C Minor Mass* and *Requiem*, Lili Boulanger's *Clarières dans le ciel*, and songs by Latin American and women composers. Her research focuses on online adult learning, women composers, and motor learning strategies. Swalin's students progress to notable post-secondary programs, perform actively, and are esteemed educators.



Canadian violinist **Yumi Cho** is a graduate of the five-year dual degree program between Barnard College/Columbia University and The Juilliard School. She received her B.A. with honors in Economics and Environmental Science and her M.M. in Violin Performance under the tutelage of Ronald Copes, Naoko Tanaka and Dorothy DeLay. She has also studied with Pamela Frank at The Peabody Institute and Tom Johnson, a former member of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Her music festival credits include the Verbier, Lucerne, International Holland Music Sessions, La Jolla SummerFest, Cascade, Stuttgart, Britten-Pears, Music Academy of the West, IMS Prussia Cove, Carnegie Hall Professional Workshop, Pacific, New York String Seminar and Aspen festivals.



Pianist **Zachary Deak** has appeared in recital as soloist and chamber musician in the United States, France, Morocco, Portugal, Moldavia and the United Kingdom. The recipient of numerous awards, Zachary received the Hopkinson silver medal at the prestigious Chappell Medal Piano Competition in London in 2012. A graduate of the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris and the Royal College of Music in London, Zachary received his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California. Zachary is currently Assistant Professor of Piano and Musicology and Director of Keyboard Studies at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.



A native of Corpus Christi, TX, **Stephen Cunningham** serves on faculty at Valley City State University as Assistant Professor of Voice and Director of the Opera Ensemble. He has performed lead roles with Minnesota Opera, Florentine Opera, La Musica Lirica, Opera Orvieto, Journey North Opera Company, the Kurt Weill Honorarium, Twin Cities Community Outreach Opera, Mill City Summer Opera, the University of Minnesota Opera Program, Oklahoma State University Opera Program, and the University of North Texas Opera Program. He has also performed as soloist with Kenwood Symphony Orchestra, St. Rita Catholic Church Performance Series, Graceland University, Valley City State, and the University of Minnesota Summer Community Choir. In the summer of 2024, Stephen performed the role of Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Novafeltria, Italy with La Musica Lirica, as well as stage directed the program's opera scenes. Over the last four years, he has served on the faculty at La Musica Lirica and has performed the title roles Falstaff and Gianni Schicchi, and La Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Benoit in *La Bohème*, and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*. Stephen premiered the roles of Prince Abdul and The Captain in *Sister Carrie* with Florentine Opera. Additional roles include The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Jimmy in *Mahagonny Songspiel* with the University of Minnesota, Don Annibale in *Il Campanello*, Secretary of Defense in *The Manchurian Candidate*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, as well as the titles roles in *Gianni Schicchi* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Stephen was a young artist with Mill City Summer Opera where he understudied the roles of Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Sulpice and Hortensius in *La Fille du Regiment*. He has workshopped numerous new operas including *The Shining*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, and *Doubt* with Minnesota Opera, as well as *Sister Carrie* with Florentine Opera.

Stephen has also worked with numerous choral and orchestral ensembles. He has sung the baritone solo in Beethoven's 9th with Kenwood Symphony Orchestra and Sonomento Choral Ensemble in Minneapolis, MN and had the opportunity to perform a number of romantic arias in performances with Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra. Stephen performed in a "Pushkin and Music" concert for the Russian Seasons Society of Minnesota. He has also served as soloist with many universities including ensembles under the direction of Dr. Kathy Romey, Dr. Matthew Mehaffey, Dr. Z. Randall Stroope, Dr. John C. Seesholtz, Dr. Jerry McCoy and Dr. Alan McClung. In 2009, Stephen "laid down the law as the ghost of Samuel" (Dallas Morning News, Cantrell) in Handel's *Saul* with the University of North Texas ensembles under the direction of Graeme Jenkins.

Stephen holds a DMA from the University of Minnesota, a MM in performance and pedagogy from Oklahoma State University, and a BMA from the University of North Texas.

