

# Symphony raised to new heights



CONCERT REVIEW

**By Edward Reichel**

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**UTAH SYMPHONY, CONDUCTOR  
MATTHIAS BAMERT, VIOLINIST  
JENNIFER FRAUTSCHI, Abravanel  
Hall, Sept. 11, additional perfor-  
mance Sept. 12, (801-355-2787)**

The Utah Symphony opened its new season Friday night with guest conductor Matthias Bamert, one of the better conductors to stand on the podium in Abravanel Hall.

Opening with the symphony's traditional all-Beethoven program, Bamert from the start showed his consummate artistry in the way he handled the orchestra.

And every time that Bamert has conducted the Utah Symphony, it has sounded like a different orchestra — the playing is on a higher level with the musicians being able to show what they really are capable of.

The orchestra played with precision and clarity throughout the evening, thanks to Bamert's careful attention to detail.

With his fine sense of texture and coloration, the Swiss-born conductor raised the bar

on the symphony's playing right from the initial chords of the overture to "The Creatures of Prometheus," with which the concert began.

Using a fairly large orchestra for this early work, Bamert managed to elicit a wonderfully nuanced reading with the orchestra playing with articulation and refinement.

That was also the case with the Fifth Symphony that closed the concert. Conducting without a score, he gave a luminous account of this familiar work that was bold, dynamic and compellingly dramatic.

Bamert's tempos tended to be on the brisk side, but that worked to his advantage. It made the symphony come alive in a way that hasn't been heard here in quite some time.

This was certainly the best performance of the Fifth heard in Abravanel Hall.

The soloist this weekend is Jennifer Frautschi playing Beethoven's sole Violin Concerto. One of the most magnificent concertos of the

19th century, Beethoven's is the concerto with which all other major violin concertos have to be compared.

Frautschi has been hyped quite a bit as a rising star, but at Friday's concert she failed to live up to that.

While she does possess technical skills, her playing was one dimensional since she lacks musicality — at least in this work.

Throughout the concerto, Frautschi's playing showed that the Beethoven piece is a little beyond her abilities at this point in her career. Maybe in a few years she'll be better equipped to handle it more musically. Right now it's just beyond her grasp.

Her playing was rough around the edges, and the fluid lines were ragged.

There were also quite a number of wrong notes, and at times she wasn't together with the orchestra. It was actually Bamert and the orchestra that saved this performance.

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