



University of North Texas
College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Wednesday, April 22, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

Dean's Camerata
Allen Hightower, conductor

with Grand Chorus
and Symphony Orchestra

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's Lobgesang

Soloists

Emma Davis, soprano | Chandlar Head, soprano
Piero Centurion, tenor

- Lobgesang (1840) Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
(1809–1847)
1. Sinfonia:
 - a. Maestoso con moto - Allegro
 - b. Allegretto un poco agitato
 - c. Adagio religioso
 2. Alles, was Odem hat / All that has life and breath (Chorus)
 3. Saget es, die ihr erlöset seid – Er zählet unsre Tränen / Sing ye praise, all ye redeemed – He counteth all your sorrows (Recitativo and Aria)
 4. Sagt es, die ihr erlöset seid / All ye that cried unto the Lord (Choir)
 5. Ich harrete des Herrn / I waited for the Lord (Duet with Choir)
 6. Stricke des Todes / The sorrows of death (Aria)
 7. Die Nacht is vergangen / The night is departed (Choir)
 8. Nun danket alle Gott / Let all men praise the Lord (Chorale)
 9. Nun sing' ich mit meinem Liede / My song shall be therefore thy mercy (Duet)
 10. Schlusschor. Ihr Völker, bringet her dem Herrn / Ye nations, offer to the Lord (Final Chorus)

Program five hundred eighty-nine of the 2025–2026 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Texts and Translations

2. Alles, was Odem hat

Chorus, text after Psalm 150, Psalm 33,
Psalm 145

Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn!
Halleluja, lobe den Herrn!
Lobt den Herrn mit Saitenspiel,
lobt ihn mit eurem Liede.
Und alles Fleisch lobe
seinen heiligen Namen.
Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn!

Lobe den Herrn

Soprano and Choir,
text after Psalm 103

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele,
und was in mir ist,
seinen heiligen Namen!
Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele,
und vergiß es nicht,
was er dir Gutes getan!

3. Saget es, die ihr erlöst seid

Recitativo, text after Psalm 107 and
Psalm 56

Saget es,
die ihr erlöst seid durch den Herrn,
die er aus der Not errettet hat.
Aus schwerer Trübsal,
aus Schmach und Banden,
die ihr gefangen im Dunkel waret.
Alle, die er erlöst hat aus der Not.
Saget es!
Danket ihm, und rühmet seine Güte!
Er zählet unsre Tränen
in der Zeit der Not.
Er tröstet die Betrübten
mit seinem Wort.
Saget es!
Danket ihm, und rühmet seine Güte!

2. All that has life and breath

Chorus, text after Psalm 150, Psalm 33,
Psalm 145

All that breathes, praise the Lord!
Hallelujah, praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord with your strings, Praise
him with your song.
And let all flesh praise
his holy name.
All that breathes, praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord

Soprano and Choir,
text after Psalm 103

Praise the Lord, my soul,
and what is within me,
his holy name!
Praise the Lord, my soul,
and do not forget
the good things he has done for you!

3. All ye that cried unto the Lord

Recitativo, text after Psalm 107 and
Psalm 56

Say it,
ye who are redeemed by the Lord,
whom he has delivered from trouble.
From heavy affliction,
from shame and bondage,
you who were trapped in darkness.
All whom he has delivered from trouble.
Say it!
Thank him and praise his goodness!
He counts our tears
in the time of trouble.
He comforts the afflicted
with his word.
Say it!
Thank him and praise his goodness!

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4. Er zählet unsre Tränen

Aria, text after Psalm 107 and Psalm 56

Sagt es, die ihr erlöset seid,
von dem Herrn aus aller Trübsal.
Er zählet unsre Tränen.
Sagt es, die ihr erlöset seid,
von dem Herrn aus aller Trübsal.
Er zählet unsre Tränen
in der Zeit der Not.

5. Ich harrete des Herrn

Duet with Choir, text after Psalm 40

Ich harrete des Herrn,
und er neigte sich zu mir
und hörte mein Fleh'n.
Wohl dem,
der seine Hoffnung setzt auf dem Herrn!
Wohl dem,
der seine Hoffnung setzt auf ihn!

6. Stricke des Todes

Aria, text after Psalm 116, Ephesians 5:14,
Isaiah 21

Stricke des Todes hatten uns umfassen,
und Angst der Hölle hatte uns getroffen,
wir wandelten in Finsternis.
Er aber spricht: Wache auf,
der du schläfst,
stehe auf von den Toten,
ich will dich erleuchten!
Wir riefen in die Finsternis:
Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?
Der Hüter aber sprach:
Wenn der Morgen kommt,
so wird er doch Nacht sein,
wenn ihr schon fraget,
so werdet ihr doch... wieder kommen
und wieder fragen:
Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?
Die Nacht ist vergangen!

4. He counteth all your sorrows

Aria, text after Psalm 107 and Psalm 56

Say it, ye who are redeemed
from the Lord out of all tribulation.
He counts our tears.
Say it, ye who are delivered
from the Lord out of all tribulation.
He counts our tears
in the time of trouble.

5. I waited for the Lord

Duet with Choir, text after Psalm 40

I waited for the Lord,
and he bowed down to me
and heard my supplication.
Blessed is he
who puts his hope in the Lord!
Blessed is he
who puts his hope in him!

6. The sorrows of death

Aria, text after Psalm 116, Ephesians 5:14,
Isaiah 21

The cords of death had encircled us,
and the fear of hell had befallen us,
we walked in darkness.
But he says: 'Awake,
you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
I will enlighten you!
We cried out into the darkness:
'Guardian, is the night almost over?
But the guardian said:
When the morning comes,
it will be night,
If you ask,
you will come again... come again
and ask again:
Keeper, will the night soon be over?
The night has passed!'

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7. Die Nacht ist vergangen

Choir, text after Romans 13:12

Die Nacht ist vergangen,
der Tag aber herbeigekommen.
So laßt uns ablegen
die Werke der Finsternis,
und anlegen die Waffen des Lichts
und ergreifen die Waffen des Lichts.

8. Nun danket alle Gott

Chorale, text after the christian hymn
'Nun danket alle Gott' by Martin Rinkart

Nun danket alle Gott,
mit Herzen, Mund und Händen.
Der sich in aller Not
will gnädig zu uns wenden,
der so viel Gutes tut;
von Kindesbeinen an,
uns hielt in seiner Hut,
und allen wohl getan.
Lob, Ehr' und Preis sie Gott,
dem Vater und dem Sohne.
Und seinem heil'gen
Geist im höchsten Himmelsthron.
Lob dem dreiein'gen Geist,
der Nacht und Dunkel schied
von Licht und Morgenroth.
Ihm danket unser Lied.

9. Nun sing' ich mit meinem Liede

Duet, text after Psalm 28, Psalm 31 and
Psalm 103

Drum sing' ich mit meinem Liede ewig,
dein Lob, du treuer Gott.
Und danke dir für alles Gute,
das du an mir getan!
Und wandel ich in Nacht
und tiefem Dunkel
und die Feinde umher stellen mir nach;
so rufe ich an
den Namen des Herrn,
und er errettet mich
nach seinen Güte.
Drum sing' ich mit meinem Liede ewig,
dein Lob, du treuer Gott!
Und wandel ich in Nacht,
so ruf' ich deinen Namen an, ewig,
du treuer Gott!

7. The night is departed

Choir, text after Romans 13:12

The night has passed away,
but the day has come.
So let us lay aside
the works of darkness
And put on the
armour of light
And take up the weapons of light.

8. Let all men praise the Lord

Chorale, text after the christian hymn
'Nun danket alle Gott' by Martin Rinkart

Now give thanks to God,
with heart, mouth and hands.
Who in all adversity
will graciously turn to us,
who does so much good;
from childhood on,
Has kept us in his care
and done us all good.
Praise, honour and glory to God,
the Father and the Son.
And his holy spirit
in the highest heavenly throne.
Praise to the triune Spirit,
who separated night and darkness
From light and dawn.
Our song gives thanks to him.

9. My song shall be therefore thy mercy

Duet, text after Psalm 28, Psalm 31 and
Psalm 103

Therefore I sing with my song forever,
Your praise, O faithful God.
And thank you for all the good
you have done for me!
And I walk in night
and deep darkness
and the enemies around me pursue me;
I will call on
the name of the Lord,
and he will save me
according to his goodness.
Therefore I sing with my song forever,
Your praise, O faithful God!
And when I walk in the night,
I will call on your name, forever,
O faithful God!'

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10. Schlusschor. Ihr Völker, bringet her dem Herrn

Final Chorus, text after Psalm 96, Psalm 105 and Psalm 150

Ihr Völker! Bringet her dem Herrn
Ehre und Macht!
Ihr Könige! Bringet her dem Herrn
Ehre und Macht!
Der himmel bringe her dem Herrn
Ehre und Macht!
Die Erde bringe her dem Herrn
Ehre und Macht!
Alles danke dem Herrn!
Danket dem Herrn
und rühmt seinen Namen
Und preiset seine Herrlichkeit!
Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn!
Halleluja, lobe den Herrn!

10. Ye nations, offer to the Lord

Final Chorus, text after Psalm 96, Psalm 105 and Psalm 150

O ye nations! Bring honour and power
to the Lord!
Ye kings! Bring honour and power
to the Lord!
Let the heavens bring honour and
power to the Lord!
Let the earth bring honour and power
to the Lord!
All give thanks to the Lord!
Give thanks to the Lord
and praise his name
And praise his glory!
All that breathes, praise the Lord!
Hallelujah, praise the Lord!

Program Notes

Written by Sarah Addison, University of North Texas Ph.D. musicology student.
Edited by Brian Anderson, Ph.D., University of North Texas Senior Lecturer of
Music History Pedagogy.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* occupies a singular place in nineteenth-century music. Neither symphony nor oratorio, neither purely secular nor conventionally sacred, the work resists easy categorization. Mendelssohn himself called it a "*symphony-cantata after words of the Holy Bible*," signaling his intention to unite instrumental symphonic writing with vocal proclamation into a single expressive arc. During his lifetime, *Lobgesang* was among his most popular and widely performed works. Yet over time it has remained one of his least familiar large-scale compositions, in part because of its unusual form and its long-shadowed relationship to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

After Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (1824), there were no widely influential, large-scale symphonic works that integrated chorus as an essential structural element until Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* in 1840. Earlier sacred symphonies, cantatas, and oratorios existed, but they were not operating in the post-Beethoven symphonic tradition in the same way. Mendelssohn himself clearly understood *Lobgesang* as engaging with Beethoven's precedent, and critics at the time immediately made the comparison, for better or worse.

Lobgesang has often been compared unfavorably to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but such comparisons miss Mendelssohn's distinct aims. Beethoven's symphony expands instrumental form until voices become a dramatic necessity. Mendelssohn, by contrast, uses instrumental music as preparation; a prelude that sets the spiritual stage for vocal proclamation. His model is not only Beethoven, but also Bach and Handel, whose sacred works fuse music, text, and belief into unified expression.

The immediate occasion for *Lobgesang* was a civic celebration. In 1840, the city of Leipzig marked the four-hundredth anniversary of Johannes Gutenberg's invention of printing with movable type. Mendelssohn, then conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and one of Europe's most celebrated musicians, was commissioned to provide music for the festival. Printing was understood not merely as a technological achievement but as a moral and spiritual one: the means by which light, knowledge, and the Word of God had been disseminated to humanity. The metaphor of light overcoming darkness which was central both to Christian theology and Enlightenment thought shapes the entire work.

Mendelssohn composed *Lobgesang* alongside a more explicitly occasional piece, the *Festgesang*, performed outdoors in Leipzig's marketplace. But *Lobgesang* was conceived on a far grander scale. Its premiere took place in the Thomaskirche, where Johann Sebastian Bach had served as Kantor a century earlier. This setting was not incidental; Mendelssohn envisioned a work that would bridge concert hall and church, instrumental symphony and sacred cantata, modern composition and historical tradition.

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Structurally, *Lobgesang* unfolds in two unequal but interdependent parts performed without interruption. The opening is a three-movement *Sinfonia* for orchestra alone, functions as an extended prelude, introducing the musical ideas and atmosphere of anticipation. The much longer second part, is an extended cantata in nine movements for chorus, soloists, and orchestra, setting biblical texts primarily drawn from the Psalms, Isaiah, Romans, and Ephesians. Rather than functioning as a finale appended to a symphony, the cantata expands the ideas from the *sinfonia* into a full spiritual and expressive journey, giving weight and meaning to what the orchestra prepared.

The work opens with one of Mendelssohn's most arresting gestures: a solemn, unaccompanied call in the trombones. This motto, austere and monumental, functions as a unifying thread throughout the entire composition. Mendelssohn himself explained that the idea behind the work was the verse "*Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn*" (Let everything that has breath praise the Lord) and the opening bars suggest that the instruments themselves begin this act of praise before a single word is sung.

The motto expands into a broad *Maestoso con moto*, answered by the full orchestra in a kind of call and response. This leads directly into the first *Allegro*, a vigorous sonata-form movement energized by dotted rhythms derived from the opening fanfare. The music presses forward with urgency, alternating between brilliant orchestral *tutti*s and more lyrical passages led by the woodwinds. Throughout the movement, fragments of the opening trombone idea reappear, woven into transitions and development sections, subtly reminding the listener of the larger purpose underlying the symphonic argument. The movement closes with a return to the grandeur of the opening, preparing the listener for what follows.

The second movement, *Allegretto un poco agitato*, functions in place of a scherzo. Lightly scored and rhythmically buoyant, it unfolds in a lilting compound meter that evokes a gently restless character. Strings sing a flowing, song-like melody, punctuated by pizzicato accompaniment and delicate wind writing. At its center the winds unfold a serene, hymn-like chorale, briefly suspending the motion before the opening material returns in altered form. Rather than offering clear-cut contrast, the movement continually interrupts itself, creating a sense of anticipation rather than resolution.

The *Adagio religioso*, the final instrumental movement, makes explicit what has only been hinted at before. Its very tempo marking signals a devotional character. A long, expressive string melody unfolds with simplicity and restraint, supported by warm harmonies and subtle dissonances that add quiet tension. Mendelssohn avoids a dramatic climax here. Instead, the music breathes with measured calm, forming a bridge between the symphonic opening and the vocal proclamation to come. Near the end, a gentle recollection of earlier material brings the instrumental section to a close, as if drawing a deep breath before words finally enter.

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The second part of *Lobgesang* transforms the instrumental preparation of the opening *Sinfonia* into sung proclamation. Rather than unfolding as a dramatic narrative with characters, this portion of the work traces a spiritual journey shaped by biblical texts: from praise, through darkness and uncertainty, toward illumination and thanksgiving. Mendelssohn organizes the vocal movements so that each stage grows naturally out of the last, creating a continuous arc rather than a sequence of isolated numbers.

The cantata opens with a monumental chorus, "Alles, was Odem hat" ("All that has life and breath"). The trombone motto heard at the very beginning of the work returns, now joined by full chorus and orchestra. What began as wordless sound is finally given text. Mendelssohn alternates broad, ceremonial statements with animated contrapuntal writing, producing a sense of collective exaltation that feels both solemn and radiant. This opening establishes praise as the foundation of the entire work.

The tone shifts towards testimony, proclamation, and inward reflection in "Saget es, die ihr erlöst seid – Er zählet unsre Tränen," ("Sing ye praise, all ye redeemed – He counteth all your sorrows") a movement combining recitative and aria for tenor. Here Mendelssohn introduces a more declarative style, urging proclamation rather than reflection while the orchestra supports the vocal line with steady rhythmic motion. The chorus, "Sagt es, die ihr erlöst seid," (All ye that cried unto the Lord) continues this theme of proclamation. Here the collective voice takes up the message introduced by the soloist, transforming personal testimony and shared witness while maintain the work's devotional tone.

A deeper emotional turn arrives with "Ich harrete des Herrn" ("I waited for the Lord"), a duet for two sopranos with chorus. This movement is among the most serene and inward-looking passages of the entire work. the vocal lines intertwine gently above a softly rocking accompaniment, expressing patience and trust rather than certainty. The music unfolds with a calm assurance, offering a moment of repose before darker material emerges.

A sharp emotional rupture follows in the tenor aria "Stricke des Todes" ("The sorrows of death"), which marks the cantata's darkest moment. Here, Mendelssohn strips away earlier warmth. The harmony tightens, rhythms become urgent, and the orchestral writing grows tense and restless. The voice sounds pressed and anxious, conveying fear and confinement. From this turmoil emerges one of the most dramatic sequences in the work: the Watchman scene. Over trembling strings and unstable harmonies, the tenor repeatedly asks, "Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?" ("Watchman, will the night soon pass?"). The question is left hanging, asked again and again without response. The unanswered question becomes the emotional and spiritual low point of the entire work.

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The answer arrives with clarity when a soprano voice enters with “Die Nacht ist vergangen” (“The night is departed”). At this moment, the music undergoes a sudden transformation. The key brightens, the texture opens, and the chorus bursts forth with the declaration “So lasst uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis” (“Let us cast off the works of darkness”). This is the spiritual turning point of *Lobgesang*: darkness gives way to light, uncertainty to affirmation. The music no longer questions but proclaims. From here forward, the work moves steadily toward gratitude and communal praise. Mendelssohn reinforces this sense of arrival by introducing the chorale “Nun danket alle Gott” (“Let all me praise the Lord”) a hymn widely known to his audience. First presented simply, it is soon expanded into a rich orchestral and choral statement, linking private devotion with public worship.

The final movements draw together all the musical and spiritual threads of the work. A duet for soprano and tenor, “Nun sing’ ich mit meinem Liede” (“My song shall be therefore thy mercy”), expresses personal thanksgiving, while the closing chorus “Ihr Völker! bringet her dem Herrn” (“Ye nations, offer to the Lord”) returns to the collective voice. Mendelssohn’s contrapuntal writing grows increasingly energetic, culminating in a powerful fugue. In the final measures, the opening trombone motto reappears exactly as it began, now crowned by full chorus and orchestra. Instrumental and vocal praise merge into a single voice, completing the journey from sound to word, from anticipation to fulfillment. The work ends not in quiet reflection, but in confident affirmation; a proclamation of light, faith, and communal thanksgiving.

Biographies

Allen Hightower is a seventh generation Texan, and resides in McKinney, Texas with his wife, Dr. Kristin Hightower and their two daughters Caroline and Julianne. As the director of Choral Studies at the University of North Texas, Allen leads the master’s and doctoral programs in choral conducting, and oversees a comprehensive choral program of eight ensembles. Allen serves as the conductor of the UNT A Cappella Choir, and the UNT Grand Chorus which collaborates annually with the UNT Symphony Orchestra in performances of major choral-orchestral works. As a member of UNT’s Early Music faculty, he leads the vocal ensemble *Vox Aquilae* and its artistic partner the UNT Baroque Orchestra.

Since arriving at UNT in 2016, the A Cappella Choir has received invitations to perform for the Texas Music Educators Association in 2020, the National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in 2021 and 2025, and the Southwestern Division of ACDA in 2022 and 2026. *Vox Aquilae* and the UNT Baroque Orchestra were featured at the January 2022 conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization. In June of 2025, the A Cappella Choir won First Prize at the Marktobendorf 19th International Chamber Choir Competition as part of an international tour of the Czech Republic, Germany, and Austria.

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As a teacher and conductor, Dr. Hightower has visited 30 states, Asia, and Europe. His students hold positions of leadership as choral conductors in public schools, colleges and universities, and churches and community choirs throughout the United States.

Prior to his appointment at UNT, Dr. Hightower held the Weston Noble Endowed Chair in Music at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where he served as conductor of the renowned Nordic Choir and artistic director of *Christmas at Luther*. As Luther's Director of Choral Activities, he gave leadership to a choral program that included four conductors, six choirs, and over 530 singers. Under Dr. Hightower's direction, the Nordic Choir performed at the 2014 North Central Division of ACDA, recorded six compact discs, made annual concert tours throughout the United States, and toured Europe on two occasions.

From 2000-2010, Dr. Hightower served as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Sam Houston State University. During his tenure, the SHSU Chorale toured Europe, performed for the 2007 National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, the 2010 Southwestern Division of ACDA, and the 2003, 2006, and 2010 conventions of the Texas Music Educators Association. His high school teaching career included tenures at Klein High School in Spring, Texas and at Odessa Permian High School in Odessa, where he led the PHS *Kantorei* and Satin Strings in performance at the 1996 TMEA convention.

Outside of his work in the academic setting, Allen has served as the Artistic Director of the Houston Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra, leading an annual concert series of choral-orchestral masterworks. As a deeply committed church musician, he has served Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in Texas, California, and Minnesota. Allen currently serves on the music staff of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas where he leads the Gloria Dei Youth Choir involving well over 100 student singers as part of a comprehensive children's and youth choir program of almost 400 young musicians. He has served as the Church Music Vice-President of the Texas Choral Directors Association. Dr. Hightower was as an Adjunct Professor of Conducting at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Hightower served as the interim Chorus Director of the Houston Symphony Orchestra preparing the Chorus for conductors such as Juraj Valčuha, Itzhak Perlman, Matthew Halls, and Jeannette Sorrell. Allen is the Artistic Director of the Plano Civic Chorus, a large community-based ensemble presenting four concerts annually and frequently serving as the chorus for regional orchestras including the Plano Symphony and Richardson Symphony orchestras.

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As a conducting student of the Texas choral legend Bev Henson, Allen earned his undergraduate degree in music education and piano from Sam Houston State University. He went on to earn a master's degree in choral conducting from the Eastman School of Music where he was a student of Baroque scholar Alfred Mann, and a master's degree in orchestral conducting from Baylor University, where he served as assistant conductor to Stephen Heyde and accompanist to Donald Bailey and the Baylor Chamber Singers. Allen earned his doctorate in conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he served as assistant conductor to Donald Neuen. Hightower pursued additional orchestral conducting studies with Jung-Ho Pak at the University of Southern California, additional choral conducting studies with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College, and choral-orchestral conducting with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival. After winning first prize in the graduate division of the American Choral Directors Association's Conducting Competition in 1997, Allen served as assistant to Paul Salamunovich, conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

The 2025-2026 season marks Maestro **David Itkin's** 21st season as Music Director and Conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic, and his 18th year serving as Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of North Texas College of Music, where his recent performances have included Mahler Symphony No. 6, the Verdi Requiem, Bruckner Symphony No. 7, Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Puccini's *Turandot*, Verdi's *Otello*, Puccini's *Tosca*, and Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Following a distinguished 17-year tenure, Maestro Itkin was named Conductor Laureate of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in July 2010. Previously Mr. Itkin served as Music Director & Conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Artistic Director and Conductor of the McCall Summerfest in McCall, Idaho, and as Music Director of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), the Kingsport Symphony, the Birmingham Opera Theatre, and the Lucius Woods Music Festival (Wisconsin).

During past seasons Maestro Itkin's career has taken him to 45 U.S. states and 15 countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, including concerts and recordings with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Transylvania State Philharmonic, the Slovenska Filharmonija, the San Diego Symphony, and the Seoul Philharmonic. Other guest conducting appearances include concerts with the Colorado Philharmonic, the Annapolis Symphony, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Illinois Symphony, the Delaware Symphony, the New Hampshire Symphony, the Cheyenne Symphony, and the Indianapolis, Baltimore, and Reno Chamber Orchestras. During the Summer of 2006 Maestro Itkin appeared once again with the Slovenska Filharmonija in Ljubljana, Slovenia, conducting the opening concert of the 14th World Saxophone Congress.

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His books, *The Conductor's Craft* [2021] and *Conducting Concerti* [2014], have received wide acclaim. Leonard Slatkin "highly recommended" *Conducting Concerti* as "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro," and Samuel Adler wrote of *The Conductor's Craft*, "a real breakthrough aid for anyone studying or teaching conducting at any level." Mr. Itkin's memoir, *Right Back Where I Started* was published in July 2025 by the University of North Texas Press and is now available on Amazon. The audiobook, narrated by the author, is available at [audible.com](https://www.audible.com).

Emma Davis is a soprano from Des Moines, IA. She is a first-year Master's student in Vocal Performance studying with Dr. Stephen Morscheck. In 2023, she graduated from the University of Northwestern in St. Paul, Minnesota with degrees in Vocal Performance, Music Composition, and Film. She studied voice with Carol Eikum and composition with Dr. Josh Bauder.

In 2025, Emma performed the soprano solo in Brahms' *Deutsches Requiem* with the Two Rivers Chorale in collaboration with the Edina Chorale and Wayzata Symphony directed by Hannah Schendel. She also self-produced and performed in a production featuring staged scenes from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* oratorio, followed by *The Telephone* by Menotti. Recently, Emma made her UNT opera debut as the evil sorceress herself in Handel's *Alcina*. This coming June, she will be in South Carolina singing the role of Micaëla in Bizet's tragic opera, *Carmen*, as well as various other solos as a part of the Varna International Music Academy and Muzika! Festival.

Chandler Head has performed the roles of Rosalinde from Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, Lauretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Sherry in the world premiere of Lisa Despain's *That Hellbound Train*, Suor Angelica in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and has been featured as a soloist in oratorio works such as Mendelssohn's *Elijah* internationally. Chandler holds degrees from Eastern New Mexico University, Texas Tech University and is currently a doctoral student at the University of North Texas. Along with performing, Chandler is passionate about voice research and teaching a studio of talented students.

Piero Antonio Centurion is a lyric tenor born in Santiago, Chile, and raised in Little Elm, Texas. He has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Singers, Dallas Chamber Choir, and The Dallas Opera, including appearances in *Don Carlo*. A featured soloist, he will perform *Lord Nelson Mass* with the Plano Civic Chorus and appear with Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church this season. He studies under Dr. Snider and completes his bachelor's degree this May while continuing to perform throughout the DFW area.

Grand Chorus Personnel

composed of:

A Cappella Choir

Allen Hightower,
conductor

University Singers

Marques L. A. Garrett,
conductor

Concert Choir

Jessica Nápoles,
conductor

Soprano

Lauren Abell
Faye Barber
Ellen Beene
Mattison Beezley
Julianna Carden
Victoria Cerda
Rachel
Cunningham
Emma Davis
Kayla Flores
Autumn Forgey
Andrea Gomez
Anya Guidry
Emma Gulovsen
Isabella Hassell
Julia Houting
Mia Jamison
Cadence Jansen
Ellyse Joseph
Kassie Kaluf
Caroline Konkle
Rebecca Lang
Alena Law
Kris Nearhood
Anabelle Parra
Kaitlyn Rivera
Alyssa Schelski
Angie Smith
Sandy Strittmatter
Adriana Sweet
Sophia Sweny
Alex Vale
Maryn West
Emberly Whitley

Alto

Hope Arrazola
Abi Bahng
Jennifer Barnett
Carolyn Childrey
Nadia Cloud
Megan Cornejo
Kathryn Davidson
Nadia De Oliveira
Marianna
Delgadillo
Julianna Estrada
Maddie Frost
Abigail Garner
Grace Glaser
Riley Higgins
Ty Holcomb
Trinity Houser
Isa Jovanovic
Ris Kemp
Abigail Lewis
Danika Locey
Elena Menasco
Karson O'Neal
Connie Ruiz de
Vinaspre
Bowie Savoie
Ed Schultz
Margi Skinner
Sofia Torbello
Jennifer Watson
Naomi Warren
Maddie White

Tenor

Luke Barsun
Jakob Burnham
Piero Centurion
Mason Clarkson
Christian Eddington
Landry Escobedo
Alek Gonzalez
Davide Gucciardi
Dong Hyun Kang
Sam McGlamery
Wyatt McNeely
Alexis Mendoza-
Sánchez
Robby Napoli
Nick Navarro
La'Casion Newton
Will Parris
Ian Pfaffenberger
Jay Quinn II
Justin Reece
Andrew Riedel
Austin Russ
CJ Stanley
Alex Stroud
Romero Vargas
Rustin Verret
Tyler Warwas
Elijah Williams
Jackson Whitmire

Bass

Christian Anderson
Ian Baez Matos
Evan Barnes
Eli Barreto
Ben Bassett
Landon Beaty
Jade Breitstein
Colin Busch-Kennedy
Isaac Carlin
Matt Carlson
Ely Eckles
Andrew Eggers
Gabriel Emig
Silas Franklin
Marques L. A. Garrett
Matt Glass
Christopher Gray
Aydric Griffin
Jimmy Hademenos
Collin Huffman
Jaden Jackson-
Cooper
Jaden Johnson
Preston Johnson
Ashton Landry
Joshua LaPrade
Luke Lawless
Zachary Ligh
Eric Martinez
Ethan Matous
Connor McLeod
Reece Mooney
José Nava
Bryan Perez
Demetrius
Robinson Jr.
Sean Roossien
Colman Scheibmeir
Rowan Simmons
Connor Sturgeon
Jaedon Trevino
Marc Villaceran
Milo Warrior
Noah Wyckoff

Symphony Orchestra Personnel

David Itkin, director

Violin 1

Ming-Wei Hsieh ‡
Pablo Cerdas
Ethan Dunn
Patis Intaramaha
Hyunjung Kim
Michelle Martey
Oscar Morales
Travis Pota-Birkhoff
Phoebe Tang
Eleanor (Szu Yun) Wang
Hongrui Wang
Yu Xie

Violin 2

Seokhwan Choi †
Marlon Barrios
Mitchelle Cabrera
Olivia Corporon
Ella Curb
Lucas Furtado
Monica Limberg
Ziyang Lyu
Arsenio Peña
Chloe Svadlenka
Peng Yi

Viola

Leonardo Sobral †
Yupeng Cai
Shanya Chynwat
Margot Elder
Jose Fiorentino
Qianqian Fu
Brittney Geurink
Cameron Halsell
Madi Price
John Sharp
Samuel Yi
Ziyan Zeng

Cello

Xiyan Liu †
Claire Cabral
Julia (Jiho) Choi
Maddy Dykhouse
Maya Huber
Mansur Kadirov
Minching Lin
Ethan Nelsen
Chase Teague
Paul Trainor

Bass

Ruben Borges †
Wyatt Gaugler
Zoe Harris
Savannah Hilterbrandt
Jason (Kuan-Chieh) Lo
Catherine Willis
Xuan Xu

Flute

Shane Salinas †
Michael Salm

Oboe

Alexander Kang †
Madeline Lee Aranki

Clarinet

Megan Dewalt
Ayuna Sumi †

Bassoon

Landon Murr
Donovan Neal †

Horn

Andrew Bennett
Justin Beyer †
Eva Gomez
Sebastian Ruiz

Trumpet

Jacaleb Shepard
Joseph Williams †

Trombone

Noah Davies †
Nick Cavallo
Dillon Smith

Timpani

Jack Spelman

‡ Concertmaster
† Principal