COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

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

Symphony Orchestra

David Itkin, Conductor
Josefina Maldonado, mezzo-soprano

Symphony No. 1, "Jeremiah" (1942) ..... Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)
- I. Prophecy
- II. Profanation
- III. Lamentation

Josefina Maldonado, mezzo soprano

-INTERMISSION-

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55, "Eroica" (1803-1804) ..... Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
- III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
- IV. Finale: Allegro molto

Program forty of the 2026–2027 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Program Notes

Program notes By Tess Reagan, University of North Texas MA Musicology student
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Leonard Bernstein (August 25, 1918–October 14, 1990)
Symphony No. 1, "Jeremiah" (1942)

I. Prophecy
II. Profanation
III. Lamentation

By the time twenty-five-year-old Bernstein conducted the premiere of his Symphony No. 1, "Jeremiah" in January of 1944, he was already making a name for himself in musical circles. He had recently stepped in as a last-minute substitute for Bruno Walter at the New York Philharmonic, making his conducting debut with great success. Soon after, he was asked to conduct the premiere of Jeremiah with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. This performance was also an overwhelming triumph. Over the next several years, Bernstein conducted numerous additional performances of the work both in the United States and internationally.

The first two movements of the symphony are instrumental, while the third features a mezzo-soprano soloist singing text from the book of Lamentations, also called Eicha. One of five ancient scrolls included in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), the book of Lamentations is read on Tishah B'Av. On the evening of Tishah B'Av, mourning commemorates the destruction of the great temples in Jerusalem, as well as the lives lost in the massacres of Jewish communities throughout history. The poetic text, widely attributed to the prophet Jeremiah, details the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem.

For centuries, composers have been drawn to the Lamentations, incorporating or even entirely basing their compositions on the text, especially during times of unrest. Bernstein wrote that "The Symphony does not make use to any great extent of actual Hebrew thematic material," emphasizing that, "the intention is…not one of literalness, but of emotional quality." (Leonard Bernstein, Program Note, New York Philharmonic, 1944) The work is not programmatic or narrative; that is, Bernstein did not seek to follow the text word by word. Nevertheless, the poignancy of the deeply moving text is encapsulated by the work as a whole. Additionally, as Jack Gottlieb has argued, all three movements include the influence of Jewish liturgical motives, penitential modes, and free cantorial improvisation, perhaps subconsciously incorporated due to Bernstein's upbringing in the synagogue and at home. Together, the three movements make up a colossal sonata form, with each corresponding to exposition, development, and recapitulation. All begin attacca: each lead directly to the next with no break.

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The first movement, "Prophecy", sets the scene. Jeremiah pleads to his people, begging them to repent of their sins and turn back to God. The opening is to be played Largamente (slowly and broadly). The strings and timpani begin with several repetitions of an urgent eighth note pattern. A solo horn soon enters, confident and sure, emerging organically from the same pitch heard in the opening measure. The horn plays on alone, perhaps representing Jeremiah's prophetic voice as he initially warns the people of the coming destruction. Most of the movement's later melodic ideas derive from either this opening melody or the woodwind motives that follow. The influence of the High Holy Day liturgy, a part of the Amidah "standing" prayer can be heard on this opening theme. As the movement unfolds, the sweeping theme continues in the strings and winds while the return

of weighty figures in the brass, timpani, and lower voices reinforces the movement's sense of seriousness and gravity. Bernstein develops the theme through inversion, diminution, short sequences, and imitation. The texture thins as instrumental solo lines seem to lose a clear sense of direction. Yet a prayer-like brass chorale restores purpose, leading to the return of the broad string lines and weighty brass figures. The movement reaches its climax when the full ensemble finally joins together in one deafening, desperate plea. It then fades to silence, marked al niente, "to nothing."

The second movement, "Profanation", begins with a Scherzo theme in mixed meter loosely based on traditional cantillation motives used in Sabbath chanting. The theme is first played by the flute and clarinet while the piccolo doubles short fragments. The oboe and contrabassoon then repeat the theme, while the bass clarinet sporadically doubles the line. Pizzicato strings further emphasize the quick changes in meter. The first grouping attempts to respond, but the brass impatiently assert themselves. The movement depicts dramatic conflict and may represent the corruption of the people of Jerusalem as they turn on one another in pursuit of control, power, political protection, and wealth. Brisk meter changes, complex rhythmic passages, unique orchestral effects (including the use of the woodblock and mutes in the brass), and sudden shifts in texture and volume all contribute to the movement's controlled-and-rampageous-yet-exhilarating mood. The first section is repeated before a descending passage is passed throughout the ensemble. A sudden wall of sound plows into the audience as the ensemble presses forward through repeated eighth notes. The snare drum plays "on the rim" as the blaring theme, now in the brass, attempts to claw its way to the fore. A more relaxed, lyrical theme appears, yet the more argumentative theme does not back down, and the movement ends in an almost celebratory, swirling frenzy before coming to a sudden halt.

The final movement offers a plea and a prayer in the aftermath of destruction. The "liturgical cadence" that appears within this movement is derived from the kinnot, or "dirges." These dirges are chanted during observances mourning the lost Temple. The Hebrew text sung by the mezzo-soprano consists of excerpts

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from Lamentations (1.1–3, 1.8, 4.14–15, and 5.20–21). In these passages, Jeremiah describes the city as once filled with people, a princess now reduced to a widow and forced laborer, left alone, weeping, with tears rolling down her cheeks. He cries out to the Lord, asking for the restoration of Jerusalem's relationship with Him. Two horns begin the finale, sounding the same pitch first heard in the solo horn at the opening of the symphony. This time, however, the character of the call has changed. Exhausted, the horns give way to the mezzo-soprano, who voices their grief. The ensemble supports the vocalist's mournful, recitative-like passages. When the singer finally pauses, the flute initiates a change in mood. The atmosphere becomes calm and peaceful as the strings sustain pure, open intervals of thirds, fifths, and sevenths. Heaven seems to open as the upper strings and trumpets play alone before the ensemble joins together. These intense and tranquil passages alternate before the vocalist sings softly, one last time, "Hashivēnu Adonai ēlecha…" Translated from phonetic Sephardic Hebrew, the text means, "Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord..." This plea for restoration signifies hope even in the midst of despair. The strings conclude quietly in the tonality of E. The opening theme played by the horn at the very beginning of the work had created tonal suspense between E and E-flat, which now, in retrospect, seems almost undoubtedly to have represented Jeremiah's prophecy of what was to come.

Although the third movement ends quietly, it does not provide complete peace or resolution. In 1977, Bernstein said of the ending, "The faith or peace that is found at the end of Jeremiah is really more of a kind of comfort, not a solution. Comfort is one way of achieving peace, but it does not achieve the sense of a new beginning" (Boosey and Hawkes Score, 1943). Interestingly, Bernstein's father, to whom he dedicated the symphony, had suggested adding a fourth movement, as is customary in most symphonic works. Such a movement might have provided the sense of renewal or resolution that the existing ending withholds. Yet that addition might have undermined Bernstein's intention. As the final chord lingers and gradually fades, Bernstein denies the resolution a fourth movement might have offered, leaving listeners to wrestle with their own emotions and the possibility of a new beginning.

Bernstein composed Jeremiah as the Second World War ravaged Europe, particularly affecting Jewish communities. In November of 1989, journalist Jonathan Cott asked Bernstein about his faith. Bernstein replied, "We must get back to faith and hope and belief—things we're all born with. But unfortunately, we're also born thinking we're the center of the universe. And of all the traumas, that one is the biggest and most difficult to get rid of." (Dinner With Lenny, 67. Oxford, 1989) Jeremiah captures the anguish and conviction of a prophet who continued to speak his truth despite public ridicule and humiliation. In that spirit, the work invites reflection on the courage that is required to remain faithful to one's own personal beliefs with conviction and resolve while recognizing each other as human beings who share this earth.

Ludwig van Beethoven (December 17, 1770–March 26, 1827)
Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55, "Eroica" (1802–1804

I. Allegro con brio
II. Marcia funebre. Adagio assai
III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace
IV. Finale. Allegro molto

Beethoven initially dedicated his Third Symphony, "Eroica", to Napoleon, calling it "Bonaparte." Although Beethoven did have reservations about the former French military commander, he was inspired by what seemed to be Napoleon's support of freedom, justice, and progress. However, after Napoleon crowned himself Emperor of France in May of 1804—a month before the first private performance of the Eroica—a furious Beethoven removed the dedication. In its place, he wrote, "Heroic Symphony composed to celebrate the memory of a great man," and rededicated to piece to his patron, Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz. Many suggestions have been made as to who the heroic, "great man" is: the symphony's inspiration may have been Prince Lobkowitz, or perhaps Lobkowitz's friend who had recently died a hero. Others claim that the "hero" is Beethoven himself. While Beethoven had developed a certain resilience throughout his early career he struggled mightily with hearing loss and depression. In 1802, he penned Heiligenstadt Testament, an unsent letter to his brothers that simultaneously functions as a will and as a letter to humanity. The document, found after Beethoven's death, outlines the crisis he faced as he grappled with the loss of his hearing and his overcoming the crises for the sake of music.

Regardless of whether the "hero" is indeed Beethoven, the symphony is regarded by modern scholars as the beginning of Beethoven's 'heroic' style. This style is characterized by innovative harmonies and rhythms, dramatic contrasts, unapologetic excitement, and daring, expansive developmental sections. The work combines triumphant melodies and self-assured marches with moments of profound grief. Eroica is often cited today as Beethoven's most influential work; many scholars consider the symphony evidence that the symphonic genre could move beyond the traditional conventions of the Classical era. This modern attitude was not universal at the outset. At the 1805 public premiere of the Eroica Symphony in Vienna, the audience's reception was notably divided. Although some in attendance embraced the piece as incredibly innovative, others were more hesitant or outright critical. For some, the symphony was far too long, and its "innovations" that modern listeners celebrate seemed more like bizarre abnormalities.

The first movement, Allegro con brio, illustrates this emerging "heroic" style through its expansive structure and its elaborate transformation of a seemingly simple theme. The movement is written in sonata form. Its development and coda, however, are unusually long compared to the exposition and recapitulation. Two resolute quarter note statements begin the piece before

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the lyrical, not yet heroic primary theme is introduced by the cellos. In bars six and seven, the dissonance of three descending chromatic notes, "E-flat, D-natural, C-sharp" foreshadows the drama and tension that is to come in remainder of the symphony. The movement's triple meter contributes to the theme's danceable, amiable, pastoral nature as the rest of the exposition unfolds. In the lengthy development, the theme is dramatically opposed and questioned; not only is the theme fragmented, but Beethoven introduces new material in the key of E minor. As the recapitulation is about to begin, the ensemble notably decrescendos, creating space for a lone horn to play the theme before the remaining ensemble members confidently join in, all together. Even in Beethoven's time, listeners often believed that the horn player had mistakenly entered two measures early, and scholars have investigated the entrance, seeking to ensure that the part was not copied in error. Beethoven's sketches, however, include the horn entrance exactly as it appears in the finished score, two measures early, confirming that the eccentric entrance was indeed intended. By the end of the movement, the heroic theme has reasserted itself with renewed confidence, far removed from its initial pastoral character. The determined, final statement of two E-flat major chords at the very end of the coda recalls the opening, ultimately unifying the movement despite its many unexpected innovations.

The second movement is a funeral march with a fugato in the middle. Taken at a slow tempo, Adagio assai, its somber C minor mood contrasts sharply with the opening movement. The march prominently features the woodwinds. After only a few measures, the oboe enters, repeating the melody first introduced by the violins. The bassoons, clarinets, oboes, and flutes continue to weave together appropriately sorrowful passages with intense dynamic contrast. Meanwhile, the strings alternate between a supporting triplet pattern and their own expressive lyrical passages. An ascending line in the basses leads to the entrance of a light, airy melody in C major. Although the addition of the trumpets and timpani quickly change the character of the melody, the lyrical theme soon returns. Staccato triplets are passed throughout the ensemble, and a triumphant fanfare-like call ends the section. The plodding minor funeral march returns briefly before Beethoven launches into an intense fugato, first led by the violas. Staccato sixteenth notes remain filled with wrath and fury, even as the glimmer of a more optimistic line appears in the horns. Variations on the processional march lead into stuttering sotto voce (hushed) fragmentations of the same material. The march ends with one final emphatic accent, followed by the familiar triplet figure in the basses that had appeared at the very beginning of the movement.

The third movement, Scherzo, breathes new life into the symphony after the funeral march. Similarities between Beethoven's only full-length ballet, the 1801 Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus (The Creatures of Prometheus) op. 43, and Eroica appear throughout the symphony. Scholar Constantin Floros has likened the ballet's "Tragica scene" and "Giucosa scena" to Eroica's transition from the second movement to the third movement. In the ballet, these two scenes

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occur as the dead Prometheus is brought back to life. Likewise, the Scherzo's sudden energy and vitality sharply contrast with the preceding funeral march. Beginning at a brisk Allegro vivace with repeated pianissimo staccatos in the strings, the melody is introduced in the dominant before the ensemble joins together in a jubilant presentation of the theme in the tonic. After an intense crescendo, the orchestra suddenly comes to a halt. Yet without skipping a beat, the horns continue into the trio, even as the others remain silent! Although this entrance does recall the lone horn's "erroneous" entry in the first movement, this moment seems much less like a mistake. The horns confidently play on for over thirty measures, accompanied only briefly at cadences. The trio's three horns evoke ideas of the hunt, warfare, or even a romanticized, mythical idea of hunting as aristocratic, unpredictable, and adventurous. The strings and winds exchange a smooth legato passage, before the horns return a more mellow version of their call. After this section is repeated, the staccato scherzo returns. In a brief coda, the winds interject with a swelling "D-flat, D-natural, E-flat" motif. These three pitches are an inversion of the same three pitches that appeared in bars six and seven of the opening movement. Although the motif briefly reintroduces a sense of tension, the scherzo concludes in E-flat major, preserving its jubilant and heroic character.

In the finale, Beethoven manages to tie together a series of variations into a cohesive whole. Written in an adapted rondo-variation form, the movement opens without hesitation. A ferocious sixteenth-note passage in the strings leads quickly leads from the agitated G-minor to a self-assured and triumphant fermata in E-flat major. The finale also invites comparison with Prometheus. In Greek mythology, Prometheus fashions mortal beings from clay, and scholars have interpreted the gradual building out of the theme at the beginning of Eroica's finale as a musical representation of that very process. Beethoven begins with only the theme's bass line, played by delicate pizzicatos in the strings. The strings are interrupted by forceful interjections by the rest of the ensemble. These interjections quickly subside, however, as if the strings remind their fellow musicians that the situation at hand requires a certain level of decorum and politeness. Or perhaps these humorous and surprising interjections convey Prometheus' wit: he was regarded as sharp and cunning: a trickster. The winds and brass yield, and two variations of the theme follow, expanded as the lower strings interact with the upper strings before the woodwinds present the lively main melody. Any remaining doubts about the relationship between Beethoven's ballet Prometheus and Eroica are cast aside: the melody is a direct quotation from the finale of the ballet. It resounds in full, joyous orchestration.

Beethoven's commitment to variation becomes even more explicit in the remainder of the movement. After a modulation to C minor, a fugal section ensues, growing increasingly tumultuous as additional instruments enter in staggered succession. When the lighthearted theme returns, it is re-shaped once more by a complex flute passage and the ensemble's hefty, contrasting triplets. A march-like rendition in G minor follows, giving way to a succession of

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dramatic transformations. These lyrical, fugal, and martial variations each seem to outperform each other. After an expressive poco andante variation is introduced by the oboe, it seems as if the long-awaited heroic conclusion has arrived at last. Instead, Beethoven turns unexpectedly to material that is hushed and chilling, even uncanny. Just as this strange new character begins to take hold, a sudden, unabashed coda erupts. Energetic ascending passages and the fierce hammering home of the brilliant E-flat major chord heroically conclude the symphony.

Biographies

The 2026–2027 season marks Maestro **David Itkin**'s 22nd season as Music Director and Conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic and his 19th 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's Symphony No. 6, Verdi's Requiem, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Puccini's *Turandot*, Verdi's *Otello*, Puccini's *Tosca*, and Janáček'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 and Conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Artistic Director and Conductor of the McCall Summerfest in McCall, Idaho, and Music Director of the Lake Forest Symphony in Chicago, the Kingsport Symphony, the Birmingham Opera Theatre, and the Lucius Woods Music Festival in Wisconsin.

During past seasons, Maestro Itkin's career has taken him to 45 U.S. states and 15 countries across 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.

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 third book, *Right Back Where I Started*, was published in spring 2025.

Personnel List

Violin 1
Ming-Wei Hsieh ‡
Seokhwan Choi
Andrew Trevino
Patis Intaramaha
Ethan Dunn
Pablo Cerdas
Oscar Morales
Ava Cossé
Kewei Xu
Chien Chou
Ziyang Lyu
Cijing Zuo

Violin 2
Lucas Furtado †
Mitchelle Cabrera
Sophie Thiessen
Phoebe Tang
Hongrui Wang
Ray Hsu
Marlon Barrios
Chloe Svadlenka
Karen Gerardo Castrejon
Arsenio Pena
Travis Pota-Birkhoff
LinTing Tseng

Viola
Madilynn Price †
John Sharp
Ziyan Zeng
Angel De Hoyos
Aiden Shannon
Brittney Geurink
Qianqian Fu
Thomas Yupeng Cai
Joab Chan
Jose Fiorentino
Samuel Yi
Kseniya Klyukina
Juan Mendoza

Cello
Ren-Jer Jong †
Shae Cliften
Madeline Dykhouse
Maya Huber
Xinran Zhang
Chase Teague
Griffin Jones
Jonathan Scoggins
Claire Cabral
Paul Trainor
Michael Tynes
Emiko Wong

Bass
Ruben Rodriguez Borges †
Savannah Hilterbrandt
Xuan Xu
Jacob O'Toole
Catherine Willis
Joseph La Marca
Sarah Nell Chase

Flute
Anna Johnson *[a]
Kaitlyn Maresca[a]
Ella Peirce [a] *(Piccolo)*
Natalie Zeles #[b]
Kaitlyn Ritter[b]

Oboe
Brett Boyer *
Alex Kang[a]
Madeline Aranki #
(English horn on a)

Clarinet
Amber Lo *[a]
Julia Daniels[a]
Jakob Lumadue #
(E-flat clarinet on a)
Leah Price[b]
Riley Mazziotta[a] *(Bass clarinet)*

Bassoon
Landon Murr *[a]
Grace Moon #
Donovan Neal
(Contrabassoon on a)

Horn
Jasmine Perry-Grice *
Caleb Harold *(assistant)*
Sarah Gamble[a]
Justin Beyer #
Eva Gomez

Trumpet
Nicholas Moglia *[a]
Annalise Rosati #[b]
Esther Jo *(assistant on a)*
Ryn Jenkins[a]
Connor Williams[a]

Trombone
Christian Estades *[a]
Britton Fugazzi[a]
Joseph Viviano[a]

Tuba
Loghan Runnakko *[a]

Harp
IsabellaGrace Ebo[a]

Keyboard
Jiaxin Ou[a]

Percussion
William De Martini[a] *(Cymbals)*
Rune Hale[a] *(Snare drum, woodblock)*
Molly Rivera[a] *(Bass drum)*
Jonathan Williams *(Triangle)*

‡ Concertmaster
† Principal
* Principal on Bernstein Symphony No. 1
# Principal on Beethoven Symphony No. 3
[a] Bernstein Symphony No. 1 only
[b] Beethoven Symphony No. 3 only
No letter = both works