



University of North Texas Symphony Orchestra and Grand Chorus

David Itkin, Conductor
Allen Hightower, Director, Grand Chorus

Molly Fillmore, soprano
Megan Gackle, mezzo-soprano
William Joyner, tenor
Stephen Morscheck, bass

Wednesday, April 26, 2023
7:30 pm
Winspear Hall
Murchison Performing Arts Center

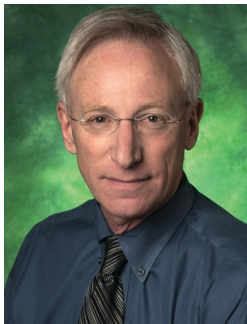
PROGRAM

Symphony No. 9 in D minor,
Opus 125 (1824).....Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso
- II. Molto vivace
- III. Adagio molto e cantabile
- IV. Finale

Molly Fillmore, soprano
Megan Gackle, mezzo-soprano
William Joyner, tenor
Stephen Morscheck, bass-baritone

Grand Chorus composed of:
Concert Choir, Jessica Nápoles, conductor
University Singers, Kristina MacMullen, conductor
A Cappella Choir, Allen Hightower, conductor



*Eight hundred seventy-seventh program of the 2022–2023 season
Photography and videography are prohibited*

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) **Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Opus 125 (1824)**

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer who combined the Viennese classical traditions established by Mozart and Haydn with his own personal style and creativity, helping to usher in the growing Romantic sentiments of the early nineteenth century. He learned music at a young age, receiving instruction first from his father (on piano and violin), then from court organist Giles van den Eeden (keyboard and theory) and a relative named Franz Rovantini (violin and viola). His general education ended after elementary school (typical of children in his hometown of Bonn at the time), but by the time he was twelve years old he was being trained in composition by the court organist Christian Gottlob Neefe, and acting as his deputy when Neefe left Bonn for short trips. Neefe openly described his young student as a “youthful genius” who “would surely become a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart if he were to continue as he has begun.”

Beethoven moved to Vienna late in 1792, undertaking composition lessons with Joseph Haydn for about a year before moving on to another instructor, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, one of the best counterpoint teachers in Vienna. Meanwhile, he also established himself as a pianist and composer in the city, and, once he began touring in 1796, around Europe. This is also about the time that Beethoven began to go deaf—an ailment that at first he tried to ignore until the early 1800s when he had to embrace the inevitable loss of his hearing. He ultimately decided not to let the disability affect or define him (as he famously intimated to his brother in a letter discovered after his death), but rather pushed ahead with his musical career, continuing to compose and perform until his death.

Beethoven's training in the classical tradition is exhibited in his compositional style early in his career. However, his personal afflictions—deafness certainly, but also other personality and temperamental qualities—plus the changing tides of a musical culture shifting from refinement, stability, and clarity to internal reflection and emotional depth, meant that Beethoven was increasingly progressing into a more personal musical style. While he composed in a wide variety of genres (concertos, string quartets and quintets, chamber works for wind instruments, and piano sonatas to name a few), it is his symphonies that are often placed at the forefront of his oeuvre. The Third Symphony (“Eroica,” 1803) and the Fifth (1808) are favorites of orchestras and audiences alike, but it is his last, the Ninth, that truly stands out for his ability to combine traditional elements and individual personality into a tour-de-force of musical grandeur.

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Premiering on May 7, 1824, *Symphony No. 9 in D minor* was the final—and, some argue, greatest—of Beethoven's symphonies. Also known as the Choral Symphony, this monumental work was immediately noteworthy for its use of a chorus in the last movement. Subsequent composers such as Gustav Mahler likewise included voices in their symphonies. But in the early nineteenth century, this choice was unprecedented because the symphony was understood to be a solely instrumental genre. The text he set was from the 1785 poem "An die Freude" ("Ode to Joy") by Friedrich Schiller, which evokes the Goddess of Joy ("Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity") and speaks likewise to the joy brought about through hope, unity, and fellowship. Beethoven was captivated by the poem with its themes of brotherly love and unity, and there is evidence that he attempted to set it to music as early as the 1790s. His notebooks from 1808 and 1811 include remarks about possible settings, and by 1812 he had decided to use it within a symphony. He proceeded to work on what would become the Ninth Symphony for the next twelve years.

Movement 1: Allegro ma non troppo

Unlike the classical-era symphonies preceding Beethoven's later works, the themes in the first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, are not clearly delineated from each other. Instead they grow organically, often from short motives (much like his famous Fifth Symphony with its iconic four notes). Several motivic themes or phrases are introduced together, creating a thematic section from which Beethoven generates new pathways to explore throughout the symphony. Still, he does follow the typical outline of a first movement—the sonata-allegro form—with its exposition (with two main thematic sections and a "closing" section), development, and recapitulation.

The orchestra grows out of the void, with the softest of entrances in the strings and horns. This "primordial awakening" builds gradually until the full orchestra breaks through with the first theme: a downward skipping melody that is sharp and foreboding. This culminates in a series of fortissimo chords and short trumpet and timpani fanfares. The introductory long chords return and the skipping theme repeats, taking time now to develop one of its central elements: a four-note staccato motive that will become the basis for the main theme featured throughout the movement. The second thematic section begins with a contrasting lyrical theme first heard in the woodwinds. It lilts sweetly along while the strings build agitatedly underneath. This section grows like the first, building off of previous elements and introducing new ones, allowing the material to organically develop. Gradually the lilting theme gives way to the four-note motive—this time with the long note at the beginning—that is tossed around the orchestra. The orchestra builds in excitement and a series of sixteenth-note runs in the strings leads into the closing section of the exposition. This begins with a winding motive constantly interrupted by a fanfaric, dotted (jerking) rhythm that soon develops into its own theme. The orchestra builds upon this theme to a grand forte, but suddenly diminishes unexpectedly to a whisper. The "primordial" chordal opening emerges, and the movement transitions into the development.

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This middle section is where the composer can play with the various themes he has introduced in the exposition. Beethoven works here with three main themes and motives: the downward skipping theme, the four-note staccato motive (one long note with three short), and the jerky motive from the closing section. These are all elaborated and altered as the section continues. The relatively free and chaotic nature of the development is broken by loud fortissimo chords in the full orchestra over timpani rolls, signaling the beginning of the recapitulation. Traditionally, the recap is a mere repeat of the exposition, but Beethoven's exceeds this expectation with several changes. Most notably, the "primordial" opening is now a bombastic fanfare under which the first downward skipping theme struggles to compete. This eventually calms down into the second theme. In each of these thematic sections, Beethoven keeps the familiar melodies and their structures while constantly shedding new light on each element. After an extended version of the closing thematic section, the movement enters into an elaborate coda—essentially acting as a second development as it works through many of the previous themes again. In its second half, the horns begin a soft, sweet version of the main theme based on the four-note motive that is echoed throughout the orchestra. This finale builds with excitement and the movement ends with a unison statement of the main theme.

Movement 2: Scherzo

Beethoven defies the traditional symphonic format by placing the dance movement second instead of third. He chose to write a scherzo, which is similar to the minuet in design and meter, but faster and quirrier. It has a typical ABA form, with the scherzo dance framing a central contrasting middle portion called the trio. The scherzo dance (A) is itself in two distinct sections, beginning with a fast-paced, triple-meter driving melody in D minor. The dance builds, leading to a few lyrical phrases before quieting to a whisper and pausing briefly. The entire first section is repeated and after the pause, the dance continues hesitantly with a few additional spurts until it finally rests on a fermata G chord. The second half of the scherzo begins with the same fast pace as the first, with the melody in the woodwinds over pizzicato strings. Interspersed timpani hits and lyrical melodic lines soaring above interrupt occasionally. This half is also repeated before another fermata, this time on the dominant A chord, signals the beginning of the transition into the trio.

The trio (B) shifts meter from the triple into duple and the pace quickens to a presto. This central section is dominated by two main themes. The first is a buoyant rising and falling melodic line (introduced by the woodwinds) whose beginning foreshadows the "Ode to Joy" theme of the fourth movement. The second is a lush lyrical theme first heard in the strings. These play off each other, building and combining throughout the section. There is also an obbligato line that persistently runs underneath the first theme throughout the trio: first in the bassoon, then in pizzicato strings, then oboe, and finally back to the bassoon. Following a transitional section in which all of these new themes are played together, the trio ends with a fermata (now back in D minor) and the scherzo dance (A) is repeated in its entirety.

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Movement 3: Adagio molto e cantabile

The Adagio molto e cantabile is the slow movement of the symphony. The form of slow movements is the least standardized of the four, with versions spanning the symphonic repertoire written in sonata form, “aria-like” ABA forms, theme and variations forms, and even free forms. Beethoven’s takes an overall ABABCA form, with each iteration of the A and B themes having some level of variation when they return, and a woodwind chorale interlude (C) occurring before the final section.

The opening A theme appears as a very slow, lyrical melody in the strings, taking the title instruction—which translates as “very slow and songlike”—quite literally. Each of the phrases is echoed by the woodwinds. Unlike other movements, the secondary theme (B) does not contrast with the primary one, but rather complements it with another lyrical melody. This one moves at a slightly faster pace (it is marked *Andante moderato*, or “at a moderate walking speed”), and is introduced by the second violins and violas. The A theme returns in the first violins, this time in an ornamented fashion. The woodwinds still provide the echoes as before. The B theme is relatively unchanged when it returns, but is now in the woodwinds and the key has shifted to G Major. This passage leads gracefully into the woodwind (plus horns) chorale (C) underscored by pizzicato strings, in the key of E-flat. The A theme returns for one final, extended, rendition with a shift back to B-flat Major, where the slow melody appears in the woodwinds over moving strings. A short fanfare breaks through the serenity twice, and the movement ends quietly in a series of hushed repeated chords.

Movement 4: Presto

The form of the final movement, Presto, is famously complicated and disputed. It contains elements for both theme and variations and fugues, and some scholars have even attempted to describe it as a sonata-allegro form or a cantata. Regardless, identifying it with any given “standard” format requires the acknowledgment of caveats and exceptions for areas that do not fit within the chosen system. Thus it is perhaps easier (and more enjoyable) to follow the movement with the simple idea that it is centered around the “Ode to Joy” theme, from which we hear several variations, some fugues and, ultimately, some outstanding instrumental and vocal musicality all around.

The introduction begins with a sudden clang and a frantic running melody in the winds. The strings respond with an equally foreboding melodic line and the two sections proceed to trade phrases back and forth. Following this are reminiscences of the previous movements: the “primordial awakening” of the first movement, the scherzo dance, and the songlike melody from the third. The third movement theme morphs into a pseudo-start of the “Ode to Joy” melody: it begins in the woodwinds, but is halted by the strings after just half a phrase and the orchestra cadences brightly to end the introduction.

PROGRAM NOTES

The “Ode to Joy” theme begins in truth as a hushed whisper in the string basses. It is heard twice, before moving into the first variation, where the violas and cellos take over and the bassoons provide an obbligato. The second variation sounds much like the first, but with violins on the melody. In the third variation the woodwinds and brass join the strings, taking over the melody with a heavily chordal texture. The section comes to a close with a short interlude, then rushes headlong into the next section with the frantic melody from the beginning.

Suddenly the bass soloist breaks through (“O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!”), beginning his recitative calling the musicians to “more cheerful songs.” The chorus echoes his cries (“Freude, Freude!”) and the bassist sings the first verse (Variation 4, “Freude, schöner Götterfunken”). The chorus echoes with the second half of the verse (“Deine Zauber binden wieder”). The fifth variation contains the second verse, sung by the four soloists together (“Wem der große Wurf gelungen”), followed by another echo in the chorus (“Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele”). The sixth variation follows the same pattern as the fifth with the third verse of the poem (“Freude trinken alle Wesen”), though the solo group is much more fugue-like. The section ends grandly with a fortissimo fermata on “vor Gott!”

After a brief pause, the orchestra begins the seventh variation: a dainty march led by the piccolo. The march continues into variation eight, where the tenor soloist begins the fourth verse (“Froh, froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen”). As before, the chorus joins for a repeat of the verse's second half, this time underneath the soloist. What follows is an instrumental fugue on the Joy theme (Fugue 1), in which the melody is passed around the orchestra, overlapping and being restated in various guises. It ends in a series of heavy repeated chords that gradually calms until only the horns are left. However, the momentum builds back and the chorus bursts through with the ninth variation, a grand restatement of the first verse (“Freude, schöner Götterfunken”).

Another brief pause occurs, and the tone becomes darker as the tenors and basses begin an extended slow interlude with the fifth verse of the poem (“Seid umschlungen, Millionen”). The verse ends ethereally, and the energy returns with Fugue 2, begun by the altos and sopranos entering with previous, but different, texts (verses five and one, respectively). From now on, no new texts are used. Instead the chorus and soloists revisit previous verses, mixing and matching phrases as the fugues become more intertwined and complicated. The voices eventually come back together to end the section on “ein lieber Vater wohnen”.

A new fugue (Fugue 3) begins after a pause, starting in the tenor and bass soloists (“Freude, Tochter aus Elysium”). The chorus joins, then takes over with the text “Deine Zauber binden wieder,” beginning a back-and-forth between the soloists and chorus that ends with the ethereal voices of the solo group on “wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.” The pace quickens rapidly, and the coda begins. The voices—all together now—give a monumental rendition of the fifth verse which, finally, culminates in the grand finale with “Freude, schöner Götterfunken” (“Joy, bright spark of divinity!”).--Emily Hicks under the direction of Benjamin Brand

TEXT/TRANSLATION

Bass Solo

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!
Sondern laßt uns angenehmere
anstimmen und freudenvollere!

Basses

Freude, Freude!

Bass Solo: Verse 1

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Chorus

Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Solo Group: Verse 2

Wem der große Wurf gelungen,
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele

Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle

Weinend sich aus diesem Bund.

Chorus

Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele

Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle

Weinend sich aus diesem Bund.

Bass Solo

Oh friends, no more of these sounds!
Let us sing more cheerful songs,
More full of joy!

Basses

Joy, Joy!

Bass Solo: Verse 1

Joy, bright spark of divinity,
Daughter of Elysium,
Fire-inspired we tread
Thy sanctuary!
Thy magic power reunites
All that custom has divided;
All men become brothers
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.

Chorus

Thy magic power reunites
All that custom has divided;
All men become brothers
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.

Solo Group: Verse 2

Whoever has created
An abiding friendship,
Or has won
A true and loving wife,
Yes, all who can call at least one
soul theirs,
Join in our song of praise!
But any who cannot must creep
tearfully
Away from our circle.

Chorus

Yes, all who can call at least one
soul theirs,
Join in our song of praise!
But any who cannot must creep
tearfully
Away from our circle.

TEXT/TRANSLATION

Solo Group: Verse 3

Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur;
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,

Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott!

Chorus

Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,

Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott!
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott,
vor Gott, vor Gott.

Orchestra: March

Tenor Solo: Verse 4

Froh, froh, wie seine Sonnen, seine
Sonnen fliegen
Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen,
Wie ein Held zum Siegen,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn.

Chorus

Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen,
Wie ein Held zum Siegen,
Freudig, freudig, wie ein Held zum
Siegen.

Orchestra: Fugue 1

Solo Group: Verse 3

All creatures drink of joy
At nature's breast.
Just and unjust
Alike taste of her gift;
She gave us kisses and the fruit of
the vine,
A tried friend to the end.
Even the worm can feel contentment,
And the cherub stands before God!

Chorus

She gave us kisses and the fruit of
the vine,
A tried friend to the end.
Even the worm can feel contentment,
And the cherub stands before God,
And the cherub stands before God,
Before God, before God.

Orchestra: March

Tenor Solo: Verse 4

Gladly, gladly, like the heavenly
bodies, like the heavenly bodies,
Gladly like the heavenly bodies,
Which He set on their courses,
Run, brothers, your course,
Run, brothers, your course,
Joyful, like a hero to victory,
Like a hero to victory,
Run, brothers, your course.

Chorus

Run, brothers, your course,
Joyful, like a hero to victory,
Like a hero to victory,
Joyful, joyful, like a hero to victory.

Orchestra: Fugue 1

TEXT/TRANSLATION

Chorus

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Chorus: Interlude, Verse 5

Seid umschlungen, Millionen.
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!
Seid umschlungen, Millionen.
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!

Brüder! Über'm Sternenzelt
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.
Brüder! Über'm Sternenzelt
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Brüder! Über'm Sternenzelt
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.
Brüder! Über'm Sternenzelt
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muß er wohnen.
Über Sternen muß er wohnen.

Chorus: Fugue 2

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!...
Freude, schöner Götterfunken...

Soloists and Chorus: Fugue 3

Freude, Tochter aus Elysium...

Coda: Finale

Seid umschlungen, Millionen...

Chorus

Joy, bright spark of divinity,
Daughter of Elysium,
Fire-inspired we tread
Thy sanctuary!
Thy magic power reunites
All that custom has divided;
All men become brothers
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.
Thy magic power reunites
All that custom has divided;
All men become brothers
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.

Chorus: Interlude, Verse 5

You millions, I embrace you.
This kiss is for all the world!
You millions, I embrace you.
This kiss is for all the world!

Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father

Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.

Do you fall in worship, you millions?
World, do you know your Creator?
Seek Him in the heavens!
Above the stars must He dwell.
Above the stars must He dwell.

Chorus: Fugue 2

You millions, I embrace you...
Joy, bright spark of divinity,

Soloists and Chorus: Fugue 3

Joy, daughter of Elysium...

Coda: Finale

You millions, I embrace you....

BIOGRAPHIES

Molly Fillmore, professor of voice at the University of North Texas and chair of the Division of Vocal Studies, made her Metropolitan Opera debut in their newest *Ring Cycle*, and also appeared at the Met in a principal role in *Satyagraha*, both of which were released on DVD and audio recording. Other solo engagements include San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington National Opera, the Spoleto Festival, and over twenty roles with Cologne Opera, Germany. She was a soloist with the Boston Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Utah Symphony, at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, and the Kennedy Center, among others. Her 2021 album of songs by Juliana Hall, including a new song cycle for which Molly Fillmore wrote the texts, received a Critic's Choice designation from Opera News. She has produced and directed several operas in the summer to bring performance opportunities to UNT student-singers, and she has additional professional stage directing credits.

Hailing from Tampa, Florida, mezzo-soprano **Megan Gackle** is a first-year DMA student in vocal performance with an emphasis in choral conducting. She received her master's in vocal performance in 2019 from Baylor University where she also completed her undergraduate degree in choral music education in addition to Florida State University. She made her Carnegie debut at the Kurt Weill Concert Hall in 2019 after winning the Semper Pro Music Competition. Megan has performed a variety of operatic roles including Eunice (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), the title role of Oreste (*Oreste*), Queen Hera in the premiere of *All Wounds Bleed* with the Chicago Fringe Opera and Latitude 49, Dinah (*Trouble in Tahiti*), Dorabella (*Così fan Tutte*) and Countess Charlotte Magnus (*A Little Night Music*). She is a teaching fellow here at UNT and teaches a full vocal studio. She is under the private instruction of Professor Molly Fillmore.

Tenor and associate professor **William Joyner** joined the Division of Vocal Studies of the UNT College of Music in 2014. He has been engaged by some of the world's foremost opera theaters, including Teatro alla Scala, Gran Teatro la Fenice di Venezia, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Santa Fe Opera. Mr. Joyner also has performed with the Chicago Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Born in North Carolina, William Joyner holds degrees from the Juilliard School and the Catholic University of America. He is a member of AEA, AGMA, CAEA, the College Music Society, NATS, and SAG-AFTRA.

BIOGRAPHIES

Stephen Morscheck maintains an active performing schedule that has recently included the title role of Elijah in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Champaign Urbana Symphony Orchestra, and the bass solos in J. S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include performing the role of Jesus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the St. Louis Bach Society, and Raphael in Haydn's *The Creation* with East Texas Symphony Orchestra. Other appearances have been with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Costa Rica Philharmonic, Festival de Saint-Denis, Laudate Deum Chamber Choir of Lausanne, Switzerland, and Music of the Baroque in Chicago. Opera engagements have been with Dallas Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Liceu Opera Barcelona, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Spoleto Festival USA, Teatro Real Madrid, and Washington National Opera. Mr. Morscheck is a professor of vocal studies in the College of Music at the University of North Texas, Denton.

As the director of choral studies at the University of North Texas, **Allen Hightower** leads the graduate program in choral conducting, and oversees a 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, an artistic partner of 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 the Southwestern Region of ACDA in 2022. The 2022 conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization featured a video performance of UNT's Vox Aquilae and Baroque Orchestra among their juried performance offerings. 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. As Luther's director of choral activities, he gave leadership to a choral program that included six choirs and over 530 singers. Under 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, he 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. Allen has served as the artistic director of the Houston Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra, leading an annual concert series of choral-orchestral masterworks. He currently serves on the music staff of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, and is the church music vice-president of the Texas Choral Directors Association.

BIOGRAPHIES

The 2022–2023 season marks **David Itkin's** 18th season as music director and conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic, and his 15th year serving as professor of music and director of orchestral studies at the University of North Texas College of Music.

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, Slovenska Filharmonija, San Diego Symphony, and Seoul Philharmonic. Other guest conducting appearances include concerts with the Colorado Philharmonic, Annapolis Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony, Illinois Symphony, Delaware Symphony, New Hampshire Symphony, 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.

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 as music director and conductor of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), Kingsport Symphony, Birmingham Opera Theatre, and Lucius Woods Music Festival (Wisconsin).

His second book, *The Conductor's Craft*, was published in 2021 by GIA Publications, whereupon notable conductors and pedagogues wrote, "a real breakthrough for anyone studying or teaching conducting," "I love this book and will be using it in my studio," and "Bravo to Maestro Itkin." His first book, *Conducting Concerti*, was released in August 2014 to considerable critical acclaim. Leonard Slatkin called *Conducting Concerti* "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro...highly recommended," and Samuel Adler called it "an invaluable addition to the world of conducting textbooks."

Mr. Itkin's first film score (*Sugar Creek*) was recorded in 2006 by the Arkansas Symphony for the film's 2007 release. His most recent major work, *Exodus*, an oratorio, was premiered in April 2005 in Little Rock, with William Shatner narrating. *Exodus* was released worldwide on CD in 2007.

In May 2009 Maestro Itkin was awarded both an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Lyon College and the Above the Barre award by Ballet Arkansas.

In addition to his professional schedule, Maestro Itkin regularly serves as a guest conductor/clinician, including concerts with the Arkansas All-State Orchestra, Southern California High School Honors Orchestra, Maine All-State Orchestra, Las Vegas Senior Honors Orchestra, and any number of Texas all-region Honors Orchestras.

GRAND CHORUS

Soprano

Lauren Abell
Madeline Aman
Sarah Barrow
Amy Baumgardner
Matti Beezley
Danah Berry
Victoria Cerda
Olivia Cottar
Harli Daniel
Taylor Fenner
Kayla Flores
Emma Garcia
Marissa Guerrero
Danielle Harrington
Madison Juneau
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Tristino Ali
Timothy Anderson
Sam Benavidez
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Christian Anderson
Michael Ash
Jacob Augsten
Ben Bassett
Seth Bazan
Michael Binkley
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Justin Daniels
Kevork Esmeryan
Kevin Fu
Crissanti García Tamez
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Fedor Malykhin†
Hoigum Park
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Emilia Yoon
Ae-lin Youn
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Tiffany Chang
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RJ McDowell
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Garrett Hayes
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Jacob Hoch†
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Han Meng
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Taylor Francis†
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Hyungju Oh†

Clarinet

David Molina
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Erica Haast†

Contrabassoon

Molly Smit

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McKenna Hill†
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Jamey Kelley and Jessica Nápoles - Choral Music Education

Joshua Habermann - Choral Literature

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William McLean - Assistant Conductor, Dallas Symphony Chorus

Thomas Rinn - Conductor, Chorale & Conducting Class

Kenneth Sieloff - Conducting Associate, A Cappella Choir; Choral Librarian;

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*Eunice Keem, violin

Chloé Kiffer, violin

Philip Lewis, violin

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Nikola Ružević, cello

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Gudrun Raschen, double bass

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Terri Sundberg, flute

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Deb Fabian, clarinet

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David Hall, percussion

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