

Orchestra to play with head conductor

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The College of Music will feature the NT Symphony Orchestra with a new head conductor tonight.

David Itkin, NT's Symphony Orchestra Conductor, will conduct his first symphony, which also marks the first day of "Daniel Pearl Music Days."

"Daniel Pearl Music Days" will feature concerts at NT and many more around the world to honor and remember the journalist who died in 2002 while writing in Pakistan.

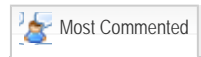
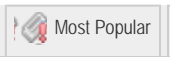
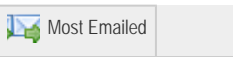
Itkin started conducting about 35 years ago and began professionally conducting about 21 years ago.

"This is the first school symphony orchestra I have ever conducted," Itkin said.

Ragan Whatley, a music education senior, plays the viola in the orchestra and has been playing for more than seven years.

"I think he is more demanding than our last conductor," Whatley said. "He's focused more on technical things, but I also think he is treating us like professional orchestras with higher musicians."

Itkin also conducts the Las Vegas Philharmonic in Las Vegas, the Abilene Philharmonic and the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.

"I just moved here in June from Little Rock. It is a big change, but I am enjoying the orchestra and conducting students," Itkin said.

Itkin has visited 44 states and 15 countries in his career and has recorded with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and guest conducted the San Diego Symphony.

Itkin's job at NT includes conducting the symphony orchestra and teaching conducting students.

"I work with students from a freshman level to those who are getting their master's and doctoral degrees," Itkin said.

The Symphony will open the season with Orchestra Berlioz's Les nuits d'ete with Jennifer Lane as mezzo-soprano, Barber's Overture to The School for Scandal, Op. 5 and Dvoak's Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70.

The concert will begin at 8 p.m. in the Winspear Performance Hall of the Murchison Performing Arts Center. Tickets will be \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, non-NT students, children, NT faculty and staff, and groups of 10 or more and free for NT students with an ID.

"Throughout the year, the students and I will get to know each other," Itkin said. "This concert is the first glimpse of what we will be together as a group."

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