

A TIME *for* LIFE

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A TIME *for* LIFE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 7:30 PM

Pre-Concert Interview with Robert Kyr and Dianne Donovan, 6:30 pm
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wimberley

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 8:00 PM

Pre-Concert Interview with Robert Kyr and Dianne Donovan, 7:00 pm
 St. Louis Catholic Church Sanctuary, Austin

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 8:00 PM

Pre-Concert Interview with Robert Kyr and Dianne Donovan, 7:00 pm
 St. Louis Catholic Church Chapel, Austin

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2:30 PM

Pre-Concert Interview with Robert Kyr and Dianne Donovan, 1:30 pm
 St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Austin

Help us to protect the fullness of nature
 In which we live and move and have our being.
 Give us the breath of winds.
 Give us the flow of waters.
 Give us light.



Conspirare
 Craig Hella Johnson
 & Company of Voices

OPENING CHANTS

- See how the arched EarthModern plainsong
If the day is done.....Modern plainsong
Renew his life like a flower.....Modern plainsong

(BRIEF PAUSE IN SILENCE)

A TIME FOR LIFE Robert Kyr (b. 1952)

An Environmental Oratorio in Three Parts (2007)

Part I: Creation

- i. Prologue
- ii. Proclaiming
- iii. Arriving
- iv. Praising
- v. Trembling
- vi. Rejoicing

Part II: Forgetting

- i. Prologue
- ii. Supplication I: We Ignore your Word
- iii. Witness I: Look and Behold
- iv. Supplication II: We Devour Your Forest
- v. Witness II: Breathe and Remember
- vi. Supplication III: We Defile Your Oceans
- vii. Witness III: The Survivor

- viii. Supplication IV: We Destroy Nature
- ix. Witness IV: Howl, You Shepherds!
- x. Supplication V: We Pollute the Air
- xi. Witness V: The Joyless Land
- xii. Supplication VI: The Dying Planet
- xiii. Witness VI: The Sacred Way

Part III: Remembering

- I. Dance of Life
- II. Canticle of Life
- i. First Soliloquy
- ii. First Canons
- iii. Chorale (First Verse)
- iv. Second Soliloquy
- v. Chorale (Second Verse)
- vi. Second Canons
- vii. Third Soliloquy
- viii. Chorale (Third Verse)
- ix. Third Canons
- x. Final Chorale
- xi. Final Canons
- xii. Epilogue

A TIME FOR LIFE (2007)

Program note by the composer

One of the most urgent issues facing the world today is the ecological crisis caused by humanity's inability to live in harmony with the natural world. *A Time for Life* was originally created for the eight principal vocalists of Cappella Romana (Portland/Seattle), and it grew out of our mutual concern about the critical condition of the environment today.

A Time for Life features each singer as a soloist, a chamber musician in duos and trios, and a chorister who is part of the expansive eight-voice texture. In this sense, *A Time for Life* is a musical play and each singer is a character that performs a variety of roles. This play is enacted through music and choral choreography, in which the movement of the performers within the acoustic space is a journey that illuminates the drama and meaning of the text.

The text for *A Time for Life* was adapted from a wide range of intercultural sources that explore the relationship of humanity to nature from diverse perspectives. The work is structured in three large-scale parts, as follows:

- **Part I: *Creation*.** The nature of creation is celebrated through praising the Creator and rejoicing in the pure creative force of existence. The text was adapted from several sources: a Sioux prayer, an Eskimo song, Psalm 8, *An Akathist in Praise of God's Creation* (attributed to Metropolitan Tryphon, 1934, but possibly written by Father Gregory Petrov who died in a Soviet prison camp in 1942), and the Orthodox "Service for the Environment" written in 1961 by the monk Gerasimos at the monastery of Skete of Little Anne on Mt. Athos (Greece).

- **Part II: *Forgetting*.** The second part explores humanity's present inability to live in harmony with nature as "forgetting" and makes a recurrent appeal to the Creator: "...We forget who we are. Help us to remember..." *Forgetting* is structured in six sections and each consists of two parts – a "supplication" (a solo followed by canons) paired with a "witness" account (a solo aria, duo or trio). The sources for Part II are: the U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program, the Books of Jeremiah and Isaiah, the Chinook Psalter, and an Ojibway prayer, as well as the Orthodox "Service for the Environment."

- **Part III: *Remembering*.** The third part begins with *Dance of Life* followed by *Canticle of Life*. The "dance" features a double chorus singing call-and-response (three women alternating with three men), whereas the "canticle" is structured in four large arcs, each of which contains a soliloquy (solo), a set of canons, and a chorale (full, eight-voice choral texture). The text sources for Part III are: a Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Indian song, a Navaho chant, the Book of Ecclesiastes, and the Orthodox "Service for the Environment."

As a musical play, *A Time for Life* is a vast journey that begins with an evocation of the glory of Creation (Part I), juxtaposed with humanity's destructive behavior toward the environment (Part II: *Forgetting*). The potential for catastrophe is total, affecting every aspect of the ecosystem: the forests (*Supplication & Witness II*); the oceans (*III*); animal life (*IV*); the air we breathe (*V*); and the entire planet itself as plagued by corruption and abuse (*VI*). No one can escape responsibility for the condition of the earth ("My people are fools,/Senseless children/Who have no understanding"), especially those who have been ineffective as leaders ("No more will the fool be called noble,/For he speaks foolishly,/Planning evil in his heart"). The ruling classes of all nations are particularly culpable through their refusal to commit to a meaningful plan of action: "Howl, you shepherds, and wail!/Roll in the dust, leaders of the flock!/There is no flight for shepherds,/No escape for leaders of the flock./There is no escape!"

The final phase of the journey (Part III: *Remembering*) moves toward a hopeful future in which humanity restores its role of committed stewardship for the planet and thus realigns itself with the creative forces of existence. This journey is a spiritual one in which humankind remembers its true obligations, and finally "acts as one to preserve creation" (Part III: *Final Chorale*).

This spiritual awakening leads to true and sustained action, as the final arc of the journey passes through three interconnected phases: "...remembering... restoring... rejoicing..." In turn, these phases lead to gratitude for all life: "Beauty before me...behind me...below me...above me...around me...In beauty it is finished..." Within this journey, I believe that music and the arts have a crucial role to play in transforming cynicism and negativity into the life-sustaining energies of creativity. It is time to abandon our collective fascination with division and separation, and to choose the way of unity and wholeness – indeed, it is a time for life. —Robert Kyr

OPENING CHANTS

The concert opens with simple and reflective chant settings by Craig Hella Johnson to texts of inspirational Bengali poet and 1913 Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and 17th-century English metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell. The beautiful references to the natural world found in their mystical poetry are a fitting companion and prelude to Robert Kyr's larger work.

TEXTS

OPENING CHANTS

See how the arched Earth does here rise...

If the day is done, if birds sing no more, if the wind has
flagged tired, then draw the veil of darkness thick upon me,
even as thou hast wrapt the earth with the coverlet of sleep
and tenderly closed the petals of the drooping lotus at dusk.

See how the arched Earth does here rise...

From the traveller, whose sack of provisions is empty before
the voyage is ended, whose garment is torn and dust-laden,
whose strength is exhausted, remove shame and poverty, and
renew his life like a flower under the cover of thy kindly night.

See how the arched Earth does here rise...

The day is no more, the shadow is upon the earth. It is time
That I go to the stream to fill my pitcher.

The evening air is eager with the sad music of the water.
Ah, it calls me out into the dusk. In the lonely lane there is no
passer by, the wind is up, the ripples are rampant in the river.

I know not if I shall come back home. I know not whom I
shall chance to meet. There at the fording in the little boat
the unknown man plays upon his lute.

—Rabindranath Tagore

*See how the arched Earth does here
Rise in a perfect Hemisphere!
The stiffest Compass could not strike
A line more circular and like;
Nor softest Pencil draw a Brow.*

*So equal as this Hill does bow.
It seems as for a Model laid,
And that the World by it was made.*

—Andrew Marvell

Renew his life like a flower under the cover of thy kindly night.

(BRIEF PAUSE IN SILENCE)

A TIME FOR LIFE

Vocalists: S1 = Soprano I; S2 = Soprano II/Mezzo-soprano;
A1 = Alto I; A2 = Alto II; T1 = Tenor I; T2 = Tenor II;
B1 = Bass I/Baritone; B2 = Bass II.

Textual Sources: The composite text for *A Time for Life* is adapted
from the following sources: a Sioux prayer, an Eskimo song, the
Chinook Psalter, an Ojibway prayer, a Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Indian
song, a Navaho chant, the Orthodox “Service for the Environment,”
An Akathist in Praise of God’s Creation (Orthodox), United Nations
Environmental Sabbath Program, Psalm 8, Book of Jeremiah, Book
of Isaiah, Book of Ecclesiastes, and original texts by the composer.

Part I: CREATION

i. Prologue. [Instrumental]

ii. Proclaiming.

[T2:] O Lord,
You are the light of those in darkness,
And my spirit sings your praises:
Glory for calling us into being.
--{Adapted, Orthodox “Service for the Environment”}

iii. Arriving.

[T2:] O Lord,
How wonderful is your name
In all the earth!
--{Adapted, Psalm 8:1}

Glory for creating the beauty of the universe;
Glory for your eternity within this fleeting world;
Glory for each step in our life journey...
--{Adapted, *An Akathist in Praise of God's Creation*}

iv. Praising.

**[S2:] O our Father, the Sky, hear us
And make us strong.**

[T2:] Glory
For the natural world through which
We live and move and have our being.
**[T1:] O our Mother, the Earth, hear us
And give us support.**

[T2:] Glory
For the flowering earth
Filled with plants and trees.
**[A1:] O Spirit of the East,
Send us your Wisdom.**

[T2:] Glory
For the seas, vast and wide,
And all the creatures within.
**[BI:] O Spirit of the South,
May we tread your path of life.**

[T2:] Glory
For all animals and living things,
Both great and small.
**[A2:] O Spirit of the West,
May we always be ready
For the long journey.**

[T2:] Glory
For beautiful weather
And flourishing seasons.
**[BII:] O Spirit of the North, purify us
With your cleansing winds.**

[T2:] Glory
For the breath of winds
And the flow of waters.
[T2:] --{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}
[The others:] --{Adapted, Sioux Prayer}

v. Trembling.

[S1:] The great sea has set me in motion,
Set me adrift,
And I move as a weed in the river.
O the arch of sky
And mightiness of storms
Encompasses me,
And I am left
Trembling with joy.
--{Adapted, Eskimo Song}
[T2:] O Lord,
Glory to You
For the joy of moving and seeing and living.

vi. Rejoicing.

[All:] Glory
From age to age.
--{Adapted, *An Akathist in Praise of God's Creation*}

Part II: FORGETTING

i. Prologue. [Instrumental]

ii. Supplication I: We Ignore Your Word

[S1:] O God:
We ignore your Word
Serving only ourselves.
--{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}
[T2:] *We forget who we are.*
[S1+T2:] *Help us to remember.*
--{Adapted, U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program}

iii. Witness I: Look and Behold

My people are fools,
Senseless children
Who have no understanding;
They are wise in evil,
And do not know
How to do good.
I look at the earth,

It is waste and void;
Look and behold: many are dying,
Even the birds fly away!
Look and behold:
Our gardens are deserts.
--{Adapted, Jeremiah 4: 22-26}

iv. Supplication II: *We Devour Your Forest*

[T2:] O Creator:
We devour your forest,
Turning land into pavement.
[S1:] *We forget who we are.*
[Ensemble:] *Help us to remember.*

v. Witness II: *Breathe and Remember*

Our garden was so diverse:
Plants from so many families,
So many colors, fragrances.
Basil, mint, lavender,
God help me to remember;
Raspberry, Apple, Rose,
God fill my heart with love;
Dill, anise, tansy,
Holy winds blow through me;
Rhododendron, zinnia,
May my prayer be beautiful.
O God, may my remembrance
Be as incense to thee,
As I breathe and remember
The ancient forests of earth.
--{Adapted, Chinook Psalter}

vi. Supplication III: *We Defile Your Oceans*

[S1:] O Creator:
We defile your oceans,
Harming and killing sea life.
[T2:] *We forget who we are.*
[Ensemble:] *Help us to remember.*

vii. Witness III: *The Survivor*

Woe to those who call evil good,
And good evil;
Who change darkness into light,
And light into darkness;
Who change bitter into sweet,
And sweet into bitter!
Woe to those who are wise in their own sight,
Who deprive the just man of his rights.
--{Adapted, Isaiah 25:20-25}
No more will the fool be called noble,
For he speaks foolishly,
Planning evil in his heart.
But the noble man plans noble deeds
And by noble deeds, he survives.
--{Adapted, Isaiah 32: 5-8}

viii. Supplication IV: *We Destroy Nature*

[T2:] O Creator:
We destroy nature,
Extinguishing animal life.
[S1:] *We forget who we are.*
[Ensemble:] *Help us to remember.*

ix. Witness IV: *Howl, You Shepherds!*

Howl, you shepherds, and wail!
Roll in the dust, leaders of the flock!
There is no flight for shepherds,
No escape for leaders of the flock.
There is no escape!
--{Adapted, Jeremiah 25: 34-38}
“Woe to those who mislead
And scatter the flock of my pasture;
You have not cared for them,
And you will suffer for your evil deeds,
For your evil heart.”
--{Adapted, Jeremiah 23: 1-4}
Howl, you shepherds, and wail!
Roll in the dust, leaders of the flock!
There is no flight for shepherds,
No escape for leaders of the flock.
--{Adapted, Jeremiah 25: 34-38}

x. Supplication V: *We Pollute the Air*

[A1:] O Creator:

We pollute your air,
Spreading death and disease.

[T2:] *We forget who we are.*

[Ensemble:] *Help us to remember.*

xi. Witness V: *The Joyless Land*

The earth is laid waste;
Stripped and barren.
The world is polluted
Because of its inhabitants,
Who have broken too many laws.
They who dwell on earth turn pale,
And only a few good people are left.
Silent, the cheerful timbrels;
Ended, the cry of jubilation;
Still is the dancing harp.
Broken down is the city of chaos:
Every joy has left the land.
--{Adapted, Isaiah 24: 3-20}

xii. Supplication VI: *The Dying Planet*

[T2:] O Creator:

Your planet is dying
From our corruption and abuse.

[A1:] *We forget who we are.*

[Ensemble:] *Help us to remember.*

xiii. Witness VI: *The Sacred Way*

O Creator:

Look at our brokenness.
In all creation,
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.
We are divided
And must come back together again
To walk as one in wholeness.
O Creator,
O Sacred One:
Teach us love, compassion, and honor,

So we may heal the earth.
So we may heal each other.
--{Adapted, Ojibway Prayer}

Part III: REMEMBERING

I. *Dance of Life*

A time for all seasons

Under heaven:

A time to live
And a time to die;
A time to plant
And a time to harvest;
A time to rend
And a time to sew;
A time to hurt
And a time to heal;
A time to seek
And a time to lose;
A time to embrace
And a time to reject;
A time to remember
And a time to forget;
A time to cry
And a time to laugh;
A time to love
And a time to hate.

A time to give
And a time to take;
A time to destroy
And a time to create;
A time for action
And a time for thought;
A time for war
And a time for peace;
A time to mourn
And a time to dance;
A time for silence
And a time for music—

A time for life
And only life.
--{Adapted, Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8}

II. *Canticle of Life*

i. *First Soliloquy*

[A1:] O Lord:
Help me to remember who I am,
Guide me to preserve your creation.
Lead me to greater life.
--{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}

ii. *First Canons*

[Ensemble:] Help me to remember who I am...

iii. *Chorale, First Verse*

[All:] Remember, remember the circle of the sky:
The stars and the brown eagle,
The supernatural winds
Breathing night and day
From the four directions.
--{Adapted, Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Indian Song}

iv. *Second Soliloquy*

[T2:] O Creator:
Guide us to preserve your creation.
Help us to protect the fullness of nature
In which we live and move and have our being.
Give us the breath of winds.
Give us the flow of waters.
Give us light.
--{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}

v. *Chorale, Second Verse*

[All:] Remember, remember the great life of the sun:
Breathing on the earth,
Falling upon earth,
Bringing out life from the earth—
Life covering the earth.
--{Adapted, Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Indian Song}

vi. *Second Canons*

House made of dawn.
House made of evening light.
House made of the dark cloud.
House made of male rain.
House made of dark mist.
House made of female rain.
House made of pollen.
--{Adapted, Navaho Chant}

vii. *Third Soliloquy*

[A1:] O Master:
Help us to remember
The holiness of your creation.
Guide us to preserve
The majesty of nature.
--{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}

viii. *Chorale, Third Verse*

[All:] Remember, remember the holiness of life:
The running streams and dwellings,
The young within the nest,
A hearth for sacred fire,
The holy flame.
--{Adapted, Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Indian Song}

ix. *Third Canons*

Restore my feet for me.
Restore my legs for me.
Restore my body for me.
Restore my mind for me.
Restore my voice for me.
--{Adapted, Navaho Chant}

x. *Final Chorale*

O Holy One:
Give peace to all nations
And understanding in all things,
So we may act as one
To preserve your creation.
--{Adapted, Orthodox "Service for the Environment"}

xi. *Final Canons*

Rejoicing may I walk.

Rejoicing, with abundant dark clouds, may I walk.

Rejoicing, with abundant showers, may I walk.

Rejoicing, with abundant plants, may I walk.

Rejoicing, on a trail of pollen, may I walk.

--{Adapted, Navaho Chant}

xii. *Epilogue*

May it be beautiful before me.

May it be beautiful behind me.

May it be beautiful below me.

May it be beautiful above me.

May it be beautiful all around me.

In beauty it is finished.

Beauty before me...

Beauty behind me...

Beauty below me...

Beauty above me...

Beauty around me...

T2: Remember...

--{Adapted, Navaho Chant}

ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

Craig Hella Johnson, *Artistic Director & Conductor*

Rick Gabrillo, *Assistant Conductor*

COMPANY OF VOICES

SOPRANO

Abigail H. Lennox (SI)

Nina Revering (SII)

ALTO

Emily Lodine (AI)

Elizabeth Petillot (AII)

TENOR

Carr Hornbuckle (TI)

David Farwig (TII)

BASS

Paul Max Tipton (BI)

Glenn Miller (BII)

Faith DeBow, rehearsal pianist

STRING ENSEMBLE

VIOLIN

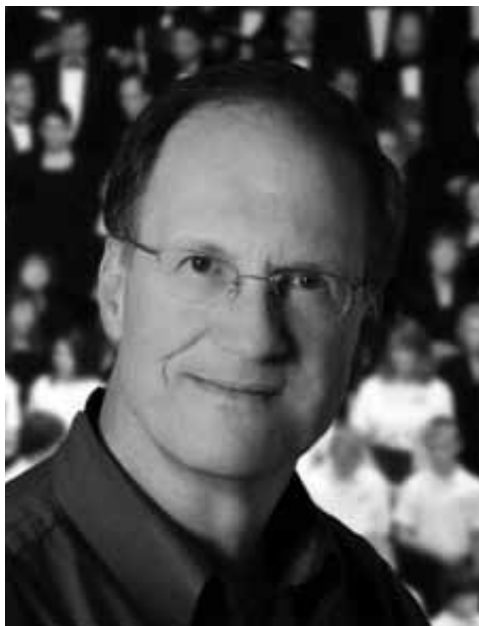
Stephen Redfield

VIOLA

Suzanna Giordano Gignac

CELLO

Myron Lutzke



ABOUT ROBERT KYR

Robert Kyr (b. 1952) is a composer, writer, and filmmaker. He has created twelve symphonies, three chamber symphonies, three violin concerti, chamber music, and a wide range of works for vocal ensembles of all types. He has received commissions from numerous music organizations including Chanticleer (San Francisco), Cantus (Minneapolis), San Francisco Symphony Chorus, New England Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony, Yale Symphony, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, New West Symphony (Los Angeles), Third Angle (Portland), California EAR Unit (Los Angeles), Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, Yale Camerata, Oregon Repertory Singers, Cappella Nova (Scotland), Revalia (Estonia), Putni (Latvia), Moscow State Chamber Choir (Russia), Ensemble Project Ars Nova, Back Bay Chorale (Boston), Harvard Glee Club, Radcliffe Choral Society, and San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra among others.

Kyr's music has been commissioned through many foundations and organizations, including Paul G. Allen Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, Scottish Arts Council, Canada Council, Estonian Choral Society, Nagasaki Peace Museum, Telarc International, Chase Foundation (Boston), New England Foundation for the Arts, Hopkins Arts Center (Dartmouth), Oregon Regional Arts and Culture Council, Oregon Humanities Center, and Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities.

Three compact discs of Kyr's music are currently available through New Albion Records: "Violin Concerto Trilogy" (NA 126); "Unseen Rain" (NA 075), and "The Passion according to Four Evangelists" (NA 098). In addition, his music has been featured on several compilation discs including "Celestial Light: Music by Hildegard von Bingen and Robert Kyr" (Telarc CD 80456), "The Fourth River: The Millennium Revealed" (Telarc CD 80534), and "Strange Attractors: New American Music for Piano" (Albany Records CD TROY 231).

Kyr holds degrees from Yale (B.A., 1974), University of Pennsylvania (M.A., 1978), and Harvard (Ph.D., 1989). He has held teaching positions in composition and theory at Yale, UCLA, Hartt School of Music, Aspen Music School, and the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was the Director of Compositional Studies. Currently, he is Professor of Composition and Theory at the University of Oregon School of Music, where he has developed new models for teaching composition. In addition to teaching, Kyr directs the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium, the Music Today Festival, the Pacific Rim Gamelan, and the Vanguard Concert and Series. Robert Kyr can be contacted at rkyl@uoregon.edu.



ABOUT CONSPIRARE

The word “conspirare” derives from the Latin “con” and “spirare” translated as “to breathe together.”

Conspirare was founded in 1991 as the New Texas Festival to present a summer classical music festival in Austin, Texas. Since then, the organization has grown rapidly to become an internationally recognized, professional choral organization that combines outstanding vocal artistry with innovative programming. Led by founder and artistic director Craig Hella Johnson, Conspirare is comprised of two performing ensembles and an educational program. A chamber choir (“Conspirare”) of extraordinarily talented singers from around the country is presented in an annual concert series in Austin, other Texas communities, and locations in the U.S. and abroad. The Conspirare Symphonic Choir of both professional and volunteer singers performs at least one large choral/orchestral work annually. The Conspirare Youth Choirs is an education and performance program for singers ages 8-16, who learn and perform in two separate ensembles, Kantorei and the Conspirare Children’s Choir.

Conspirare produced its first commercial recording, *through the green fuse*, in 2004 on the Clarion Records label. A second CD, *Requiem*, also on Clarion, was released in 2006 and received two Grammy® nominations (Best Choral

Performance and Best Engineered Album, Classical). A third recording, *Threshold of Night*, was released worldwide on September 9, 2008 on the Harmonia Mundi label, Conspirare’s first title for the distinguished recording company. *Threshold of Night* received two Grammy nominations, Best Choral Performance and Best Classical Album. In October 2008, in cooperation with Austin’s public television station KLRU, Conspirare filmed a PBS television special, “A Company of Voices: Conspirare in Concert,” that was broadcast nationally in March 2009 and is available on both CD and DVD.

Conspirare has performed at New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. In 2005, the organization received the “Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence,” presented by Chorus America. As one of the select choruses in the country to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for its American Masterpieces initiative, Conspirare presented “Crossing the Divide: Exploring Influence and Finding Our Voice.” The four-day festival in January 2007 featured a distinguished gathering of composers and conductors, performances of three world premieres, and a gala closing concert with a choir of 600 singers. In July 2008 Conspirare represented the United States at the Eighth World Symposium on Choral Music in Copenhagen, joining invited choirs from nearly forty countries.

The Conspirare ensembles’ 2009-2010 season consists of 25 performances of eight different programs, in Austin, Wimberley, Fredericksburg, San Antonio and Victoria. In February 2010 Conspirare will be a special guest choir at the annual convention of the American Choral Directors Association/Eastern Division in Philadelphia.

Conspirare
Craig Hella Johnson
& Company of Voices



ANDREW YATES

ABOUT CRAIG HELLA JOHNSON

Renowned as one of the most influential voices in choral conducting in the United States, Craig Hella Johnson brings a depth of knowledge, artistic sensitivity and imagination to his programs. As founder and Artistic Director of Conspirare, Johnson has assembled some of the finest singers in the country to form a world-class, award-winning organization committed to creating dynamic choral art.

In addition to his work with Conspirare, Johnson also serves as Music Director Laureate and Conductor of the Victoria Bach Festival, an annual event that draws musicians and critical praise from around the country. Of Johnson's performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Mike Greenberg of the *San Antonio Express-News* wrote: "Through all the amazing ebbs and flows of dynamics, the radiant balances, the seamless connection of episodes, the theatrically astute tempo relations, the unified structural arc, the music shone forth with organic naturalness. Nothing sounded fussed over. Everything just sounded right."

Johnson served as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Texas in Austin (1990-2001), where he led the graduate program in conducting. He was artistic director of San Francisco-based Chanticleer (1998-1999) and has served as guest conductor with the Austin Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Santa Fe Symphony, Chicago's Music of the Baroque, and the Berkshire Choral Festival. In September 2009 Johnson travelled to Taiwan to conduct the Taipei Male Choir.

Praised by audiences and critics, Johnson's programs are hailed as thought-provoking musical journeys. One unique aspect of Johnson's programming is his signature "collage" style: through-composed programs that marry music and poetry to seamlessly blend sacred and secular, classical and contemporary. In 2006 he was engaged to create a special peace-themed collage program for the North Central ACDA convention. He was also engaged by the St. Olaf Choir to create and conduct a collage program during a five-week residency with the choir in spring 2007.

A composer and arranger, Johnson is an editor with G. Schirmer Publishing. He is working on a choral series featuring specially selected composers as well as some of his original compositions and arrangements. His works are also published by Alliance Music Publications. Also an accomplished vocalist and pianist, he released his first solo CD, "Thorns on the Rose," in 2008 on the Booker Music label.

Johnson's distinctive style and commitment to the choral art led him to be honored with several awards including 2008 induction into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame and the 2009 Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal, given by Chorus America.

A native of Minnesota, Johnson studied at St. Olaf College, the Juilliard School, and the University of Illinois and earned his doctorate at Yale University. As the recipient of a National Arts Fellowship, Johnson studied with Helmuth Rilling at the International Bach Academy in Stuttgart, Germany.

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