

MEDIA RELEASE

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CONSPIRARE CHRISTMAS

WITH GUEST ARTIST
ISAAC CATES & ORDAINED

conspirare



Ordained Gospel Choir to Join Grammy-winning Conspirare at Conspirare Christmas

AUSTIN, Texas (November 19, 2021) On Monday, December 6, [Conspirare Christmas](#) returns to the Long Center with Kansas City's dynamic Gospel choir [Isaac Cates & Ordained](#). The ensemble is known for their unique blend of faith, tradition, and fresh music-making. Cates and Conspirare's Craig Hella Johnson will perform and lead over 40 singers in a genre-bending night of rhythm, reflection and rejoicing. Conspirare Christmas will also be presented by the [Victoria Bach Festival](#) in Victoria, TX on December 5.

Conspirare Christmas is a concert featuring Craig Hella Johnson's trademark variety of classical, folk, pop, and seasonal favorites and this year's music is infused by the deep Gospel roots and classically trained voices of Isaac Cates & Ordained. This collaboration is Ordained's Austin debut. This concert will include [Rod Vester](#)'s new arrangement of "Down by the Riverside" created especially for Conspirare and Ordained, "Bogoroditse Devo" from Rachmanioff's *All Night Vigil*, "This Christmas", "Come Unto Him" and a soulful arrangement of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, and "The Water is Wide" with new verses by librettist [Emily Anderson](#).

As Conspirare welcomes Ordained, Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson shared, "The artists of Conspirare and I feel truly honored to welcome Ordained as our distinguished guests and dynamic collaborators. They are deeply rooted in Gospel traditions. Isaac, their gifted and inspirational leader, makes music that always comes from the heart. When we first sat down at two pianos side-by-side this past summer, I knew I was discovering a musical brother." Cates reflected, "I hope Conspirare Christmas can mark the beginning of a new era beyond COVID, beyond divisiveness, beyond seclusion, beyond being sequestered away and divided. We're very excited about making our debut here and couldn't imagine a more fun and wonderful way to do it than with the very wonderful musicians at Conspirare."



Two performances only:

Sunday, December 5 at 3:30 pm in Victoria, TX at the VISD Performing Arts Center [TICKETS](#)

Monday, December 6 at 7:30 PM in Austin, TX at the Long Center Dell Hall [TICKETS](#)

Tickets start at \$20 with additional options for "pay what you can" and student tickets available.

ABOUT OUR SPONSORS Conspirare's Season Underwriter is H-E-B. The Conspirare Christmas performance sponsor is Per Stirling. Conspirare Season Sponsors include Dialog, Blackfeather Vintage Works, Tejemos Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Hella Circle and Legacy of Sound 2. KMFA Is Conspirare's Media Sponsor and Gusto/Flavor is this season's Hospitality sponsor.

ATTENTION MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

To arrange interviews, access high-resolution images please contact Ann McNair at 512-476-5775 or amcnair@conspirare.org.

[About Conspirare](#)

Conspirare is a professional choral organization under the leadership of Craig Hella Johnson. Inspired by the power of music to change lives, this ensemble engages singers from around the world who join voices to deliver world-class, extraordinary live musical experiences and recordings. Their discography includes 13 commercial albums and 20 self-produced live albums. Johnson and Conspirare were awarded a 2014 Grammy® for Best Choral Performance for *The Sacred Spirit of Russia* album and have been nominated seven other times. Conspirare was awarded the Texas Medal of Arts in 2019. Based in Austin, Texas, they perform an annual concert series and tour in the United States and abroad.

[About Craig Hella Johnson](#)

Craig Hella Johnson is the founding artistic director and conductor of Conspirare and music director of Cincinnati's Vocal Arts Ensemble. Known for crafting thought-provoking musical journeys that create deep connections between performers and listeners, Johnson is in frequent demand as a guest conductor of choral and orchestral works. Johnson joined the faculty at Texas State as Artist in Residence in fall 2016. He is a published composer and arranger, guest conductor and educator. Johnson's first concert-length composition *Considering Matthew Shepard* was premiered and recorded by Conspirare for a 2016 CD release. Johnson's accomplishments have been recognized with numerous awards and honors. Notably among them, he and Conspirare won a 2014 Grammy® for Best Choral Performance, Chorus America awarded him the Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art in 2015, the Texas State Legislature named him 2013 Texas State Musician and in 2021 the Matthew Shepard Foundation recognized him with the Dennis Dougherty Award for Community Leadership.

[About Ordained](#)

In 2004, Isaac Cates partnered with a colleague; Anthony M. Harvey to form a small music ensemble of skilled vocalists whose musical diversity and remarkable vocal ability would set them apart as premier trendsetters in the national gospel music industry. In a short time this group of singers (known as "Ordained") has accomplished great things. Collectively, Isaac Cates and Ordained have toured Switzerland, performed for the 2019 ACDA conference, appeared in concerts and been featured alongside many incredible artists including: Trace Adkins, Lyle Lovett, Vashawn Mitchell, Rodney Bryant, Bebe Winans, Marvin Winans, Sandra Crouch, Richard Smallwood, DeWayne Woods, James Fortune, Kim Burrell, Jonathan McReynolds, Edwin Hawkins, Byron Cage, Pastor Marvin Sapp, Julian Vaughn, Tech N9ne, the late Rev. Timothy Wright, and Pastor Shirley Caesar. Ordained recently collaborated with Irish choral group, Anúna and Michael McGlynn for the Tampere vocal music festival recording the song "Maalaulu".

[Conspirare Press Kit](#) (images for download, info pdf)