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**AUSTIN'S PREMIER VOCAL ENSEMBLE CONSPIRARE RECEIVES THE GRAMMY
AWARD FOR BEST CHORAL PERFORMANCE
FOR *THE SACRED SPIRIT OF RUSSIA***

**THE GOLDEN GRAMOPHONE GOES TO CONSPIRARE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
CRAIG HELLA JOHNSON**

Austin's own Conspirare took home its first Grammy award today at the 57th annual Grammy awards. The professional vocal ensemble conducted by artistic director Craig Hella Johnson won in the category of Best Choral Performance for its CD *The Sacred Spirit of Russia* on the Harmonia Mundi label. The award for Best Choral Performance is given to the conductor. This is Craig Hella Johnson's first Grammy award as well.

This was Conspirare's sixth Grammy nomination. Previous nominations were in 2006 for *Requiem* (Best Choral Performance and Best Engineered Album, Classical), 2008 for *Threshold of Night* (Best Choral Performance and Best Classical Album), and 2009 for *Company of Voices: Conspirare in Concert* (Best Classical Crossover Album).

More Detail

Under Johnson's direction, Conspirare also performed *The Sacred Spirit of Russia* in live concert in January of 2013, when the recording was made in Austin at St. Martin's Lutheran Church, a space noted for its cathedral-like acoustics. Of that concert, Paul Robinson wrote for *La Scena Musicale*: "[Conspirare sings] with total command of both the language and the style of the music ... a jaw-dropping introduction to a rich tradition of inspiring and uplifting music ... unusual and deeply satisfying musical nourishment."

Vladimir Morosan, a leading expert in Russian liturgical music and consultant to Conspirare for the performances and recording, wrote in *Orthodox Arts Journal*: "Although many Russian composers ... wrote more or less complete settings of the Divine Liturgy, on a typical Sunday in parishes of the Russian tradition one is not likely to hear the works of just one composer. The practice, rather, is to sing an eclectic mix of settings by various composers. This was the approach used to build the program [recorded] by Conspirare ... Several works on this program are North American (and perhaps world-wide) premieres, brought to life some hundred years after their

composition ... The result [is] a stellar lineup of extraordinarily rich and beautiful sacred choral music.”

For more information on Conspirare and upcoming shows visit www.conspirare.org.

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