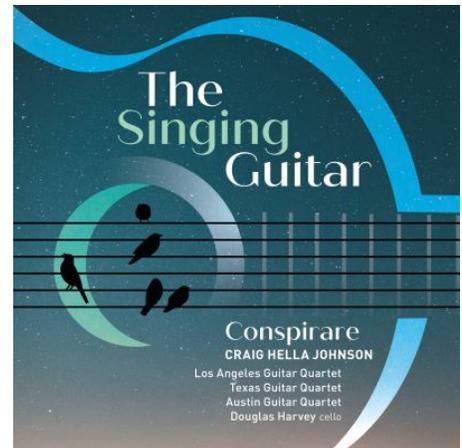




MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTIN'S CONSPIRARE RECEIVES TENTH GRAMMY® NOMINATION FOR *THE SINGING GUITAR*



AUSTIN, Texas (November 23, 2021) The Recording Academy just released nominations for the 64th annual GRAMMY® awards, and Austin-based professional vocal ensemble Conspirare, conducted by Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson, received a nomination in the Best Choral Performance category for [The Singing Guitar](#) on the Delos label.

Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson said, “I am so proud of all of the artists and collaborators who invested their souls in this recording. Deepest gratitude to composers [Nico Muhly](#), [Kile Smith](#), and [Reena Esmail](#) for writing such extraordinary compositions, that made project so incredibly special. What a delight to celebrate choral music in this category with so many esteemed colleagues and friends.”

The GRAMMY® nomination of *The Singing Guitar* is Conspirare’s tenth. Conspirare was awarded the GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for *The Sacred Sprit of Russia* in 2015. Previous nominations include *The Hope of Loving* (Best Choral Performance), *Considering Matthew Shepard* (Best Surround Sound), *Pablo Neruda – The Poet Sings*, (Best Choral Performance), *Requiem* (Best Choral Performance and Best-Engineered Album, classical), *A Company of Voices: Conspirare in Concert* (Best Classical Crossover Album) and *Threshold of Night* (Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance).

About the album:

[SoundCloud Preview](#)

[Liner Notes](#)

[Album Artwork](#)

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Pioneering underlies [The Singing Guitar](#) – Native American and Non-Native pioneer women provide the inspiration and text for the thematically connected music; the performance is a rare collaboration of the world-famous [Los Angeles Guitar Quartet](#), [Texas Guitar Quartet](#), [Austin Guitar Quartet](#), cellist [Douglas Harvey](#) and [Conspirare](#).

Center stage are Nico Muhly's [How Little You Are](#) and Kile Smith's [The Dawn's Early Light](#), contrasting the perspectives of pioneer women as they confront the daunting, beautiful landscapes of the American West and Sara Winnemucca, the first Native American woman to publish an autobiography that confronts the significant divisions in our human family. Bookending the album are Indian-American composer Reena Esmail's "[When the Guitar](#)" and Craig Hella Johnson's "[The Song That I Came to Sing](#)."

Muhly's work is scored for three guitar quartets and chorus, and has only been performed three times given the unusual combinations of artists required. Praised for her "clear, bright voice" (*New York Times*), soprano [Estelí Gomez](#) is the featured soloist, delivering some of the most poignant moments of the music.

[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.

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