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PROGRAM

Motet: Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, BWV 226 ........ J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Muusika ........................................................................................................... Pärt Uusberg (b. 1986)

Spiegel im Spiegel ........................................................................................... Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

A Wondrous Birth ............................................................................................... Georgy Sviridov (1915-1998)

Born into Weary (The Weary Blues) ........ Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Motet: Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229 ................................................................. J.S. Bach

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen ............................................................... Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)
arr. Clytus Gottwald

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Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, BWV 225 ........................................ J.S. Bach

in time of ........................................................................................................... Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

Peace like a River ................................ ................................................................. Traditional, arr. Ronald Staheli (b. 1947)

Motet: Lobet den Herrn, BWV 230 ......................................................................... J.S. Bach

Conspirare
we sing life Craig Hella Johnson & Company of Voices
The great composers of the past laid a refined and profound foundation for the new. Among them, J. S. Bach is the bedrock to which Conspirare has returned again and again. As Craig Hella Johnson says, “Bach can take a musical phrase or gesture and spin it out in endlessly-fascinating ways…Our inspiration in our own creative work comes from this kind of source. In addition to the craftsmanship and unsurpassed gift for development of ideas, there is always at the core of this a depth of expression and true freedom.”

Four of Bach’s motets provide the cornerstones for this program. The Latin motet – a short, unaccompanied choral piece for occasional use in the Roman Catholic liturgy – reached its peak in the Renaissance, with 180 motets composed by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. (The motet’s corresponding English form was the anthem.) Palestrina’s stile antico became the model of an appropriately restrained style for the Catholic Church. The Lutheran motets of Heinrich Schütz and J. S. Bach developed in a freer style, with irregular, sectional forms and German texts. They specialized in the depiction of vividly expressive scriptural selections, supplemented by stanzas of devotional poetry by authors closer to the congregation’s own time.

The Bach motets on this program all display a lively, virtuosic style accentuated by the antiphonal contrast of double choruses. “Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf” was composed for the funeral of the rector of the Thomassschule in Leipzig, where Bach was employed. The text is from Romans 8:26-27, concluding with a hymn verse by Martin Luther. “Komm, Jesu, komm” was also composed in Leipzig, probably for another funeral, to a 1684 text by Paul Thymich. “Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied” begins with Psalm 149:1-3, continues with a 1548 hymn by Johann Gramann, and concludes with a portion of Psalm 150. “Lobet den Herrn” is a setting of the entire Psalm 117.

The works mingled here among Bach’s motets include new arrangements, new discoveries, and new compositions – all exhibiting the same deep, ardent expression as Bach’s, in completely different ways. The Bach motets have an intricate architecture and fleeting, virtuosic detail, while the modern works, with their surface simplicity and placid style, require sustained and exacting virtuosity of a different sort, sometimes referring back to music even older than Bach’s.

Pärt Uusberg, a relatively unfamiliar composer compared to his older Estonian compatriot Arvo Pärt, set “Muusika” to a text by Juhan Liiv, an important and
beloved poet to the Estonian people. The text, in Uusberg's almost ironically spare setting, summarizes the mystery of the profound harmony underlying all the music of this program and of all creation.

Arvo Pärt's “Spiegel im Spiegel (Mirror in the Mirror)” combines instrumental voices using only chords (the piano's repeated, broken triads) against a stepwise melody (the cello's scale, adding a single note with each repetition). Since writing this work, Pärt has composed almost exclusively choral music.

According to the score notes for“A Wondrous Birth” by Peter Jermihov and Vladimir Morosan, composer Georgy Sviridov is well known and popular in Russia but virtually unknown in the U.S. “Sviridov is the strongest link to Russia’s monumental musical past … As a prominent member of the Soviet musical establishment, Sviridov could not openly write sacred choral music … Nevertheless, he was obviously pulled in that direction.”

Langston Hughes, a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance, published his first collection of poetry *Weary Blues* in 1926, intending the poems to be read with musical accompaniment.

The 16-part choral arrangement of Mahler’s “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” brings a new perspective to the song’s original 1901 setting for solo voice and orchestra on a text by Friedrich Rückert.

Steven Sametz’s “in time of” sets a poem by e. e. cummings, No. 16 of his 95 Poems. It was originally composed in 1995 for three orchestras and five choirs. The version Conspirare will perform today has been reworked by the composer from a scaled-down 1997 version commissioned by the San Francisco ensemble Chanticleer.

Ronald Staheli’s 1999 “Peace Like a River” seems to come full-circle back to the Bach motets in its rhythmically intricate, descriptive setting of the American folk hymn. Instead of a poetic text referring to scripture, it includes scriptural interpolations referring to the hymn.

Conspirare will continue during its next twenty years to explore the eternal connection of the old and the new. Does “the new” represent progress? Arvo Pärt offers an appropriate answer in the liner notes to the “Spiegel im Spiegel” compact disc: “I am not sure there could be progress in art. Progress as such is present in science. Everyone understands what progress means in the technique of military warfare. Art presents a more complex situation.”

-Eric Leibrock
Motet: Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, BWV 226

Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf.
Denn wir wissen nicht, was wir beten sollen, sondern der Geist selbst vertritt uns aufs beste, mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen.

Der aber die Herzen forschet, der weiß, was des Geistes Sinn sei; denn er vertritt die Heiligen nach dem, das Gott gefället.

-Romans 8:26 & 27

Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf.
The Spirit helps our weakness, for we know not what we should pray, but the Spirit pleads for us in the best possible way, with inexpressible sighing.

But he who searches our hearts knows the mind and thinking of the Spirit; for the Spirit intercedes for the saints, according to God's pleasure.

Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost, nun hilft uns fröhlich und getrost in deinem Dienst beständig bleiben, die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben!
O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit und ständig des Fleisches Blödigkeit, daß wir hier ritterlich ringen, durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen. Alleluja, Alleluja!

-Martin Luther
(Translation © 2000 by earthsongs, reprinted with permission)

Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost, nun hilft uns fröhlich und getrost in deinem Dienst beständig bleiben, die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben!

You holy fire, sweet consolation, now help us, joyful and consoled, to remain steadfast in your service; let affliction not drive us away.

O Lord, prepare us by your power and strengthen our feeble flesh, so that we here may gallantly struggle through death and life to reach you. Alleluia, alleluia!

Muusika

Kuskil peab alguskokkukõla olema, kuskil suures loodus, varjul.
On tema vägevas laotuses, Täheringide kauguses, on tema päikeses sära sees, lillekeses, metsakohinas, emakõne südamemuusikas või silmavees
kuskil peab surematus olema, kuskil alguskokkukõla leitama: kust oleks muidus inimese rinda saanud ta muusika.

-juhan Liv, translation by H.L. Hix & Jüri Talvet
(Source: poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/242032)

It must be somewhere, the original harmony, somewhere in great nature, hidden.
Is it in the furious infinite, in distant stars’ orbits, is it in the sun’s scorn, in a tiny flower, in treegossip, in heartmusic’s mothersong or in tears?

It must be somewhere, immortality, somehow the original harmony must be found: how else could it infuse that music?
A Wondrous Birth

Strannoye Rozhdestvo videvshe,
ustranimsia mira,
um na nebesa prelozhim.
Tovo radi Visokiy Bog
na zemli yavilsia smirenniy chelovek.
Alliluya!

Strannoye Rozhdestvo videvshe,
ustranimsia mira,
um na nebesa prelozhim.
Tovo radi Visokiy Bog
na zemliu snide.
Da nas na nebesa vozneset
vopiyushchih Yemu:
Alliluya!

Having witnessed a wondrous birth,
let us be as strangers in this world,
and turn our minds towards the heavens.
For this the Most High God
appeared on earth as a lowly man.
Alleluia!

-from the Orthodox Christian Divine Liturgy

Born into Weary (The Weary Blues)

With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!

Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues! Coming from a black man’s soul.
O Blues!

In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—"
Ain’t got nobody in all this world,
Ain’t got nobody but ma self.
I’s gwine to quit ma frownin’
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
“I got the Weary Blues
And I can’t be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can’t be satisfied—
I ain’t happy no mo’
And I wish that I had died."

And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that’s dead.

-Langston Hughes
Motet: Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229
Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde, 
die Kraft verschwindt je mehr und mehr, 
ich sehne mich nach deinem Frieden; 
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!
Komm, ich will mich dir ergeben, 
du bist der rechte Weg, 
die Wahrheit und das Leben.

Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände 
und sage, Welt, zu guter Nacht!
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende, 
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben, 
weil Jesus ist und bleibt
der wahre Weg zum Leben.

- Paul Thymich (1656–1694)
(Translation from Choral Domain Public Library, cpdl.org)

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen, 
Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben,
Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen,
Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!

Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen, 
Ob sie mich für gestorben hält,
Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen,
Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.

- Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)
(English translation by Emily Ezust)

I. Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, BWV 225
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!
Die Gemeine der Heiligen sollen ihn loben, 
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.
Die Kinder Zion sei’n fröhlich über ihrem König.

May the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihen; 
They shall praise his name in the dance; 
mit Pauken und Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen. 
with timbrel and harps they shall play to him.

-Psalm 149:1-3
II. Chorale
Wie sich ein Vat’r erbarmet
As a father has mercy

Über seine junge Kindlein,
on his young child,

So tut der Herr uns Armen,
so the Lord has mercy on us all,

So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.
if, like children, we sincerely fear him.

Er kennt das arme Gemächte,
He knows our feeble powers,

Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
God knows we are but dust,

Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
like grass before the rake,

Ein Blum und fallend Laub.
a fading flower and a falling leaf.

Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
The wind but blows over it,

So ist es nicht mehr da!
and it is there no more!

Also der Mensch vergehet,
Sein End, das ist ihm nah.
Thus we all pass away,
our end is near.

-Johann Gramann (1487-1541)

II. Aria

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
God knows we are but dust,

Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.
For without you, nothing is achieved
in any of our affairs.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.
For without you, nothing is achieved
in any of our affairs.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.
God, continue to care for us.

Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
so wirst du’s ferner machen
Therefore be our shield and light,
and do not disappoint our hope,
Thus you will continue

Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
auf dich und deine Huld verläßt!
Happy is the one who steadfastly
relies on you and your grace.
III.
Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit!
Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn.
Halleluja!

Praise the Lord for his acts,
praise him for his great glory!
Let all that has breath praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

- Psalm 150:2, 6
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in time of
daffodils (who know
the goal of living is to grow)
forgetting why, remember how

in time of lilacs who proclaim
the aim of waking is to dream,
remember so (forgetting seem)

in time of roses (who amaze
our now and here with paradise)
forgetting if, remember yes

in time of all sweet things beyond
whatever mind may comprehend,
remember seek (forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be
(when time from time shall set us free)
forfeiting me, remember me
- e. e. cummings (1894-1962)

Peace like a River
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.

I've got pain like an arrow,
I've got pain like an arrow in my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul,
- Traditional American folk hymn

Motet: Lobet den Herrn, BWV 230
Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,
und preiset ihn, alle Völker!
Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit
waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.
Alleluja!

Praise the Lord, all nations,
praise him, all peoples!
Certain is his love and mercy for us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
Alleluia!

- Psalm 117
(Translation from Choral Domain Public Library, cpdl.org)
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Artistic Director & Conductor

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The word “conspirare” is from the Latin “con” and “spirare,” meaning “to breathe together.”

Founded in 1991 to present a summer classical music festival in Austin, Texas, Conspirare has become an internationally recognized, professional choral organization now in its twenty-first season. Led by founder and artistic director Craig Hella Johnson, Conspirare is comprised of two performing ensembles and an educational program. A professional chamber choir (“Conspirare” or “Company of Voices”) 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 large choral/instrumental works, often in collaboration with other organizations such as the Austin Symphony. The Conspirare Youth Choirs is an educational program for singers ages 8-17, who learn and perform in two separate ensembles, Kantorei and Allegro (formerly Conspirare Children’s Choir).

Conspirare made its first commercial recording through the green fuse in 2004 on the Clarion Records label. A second CD, Requiem, also on Clarion and since reissued by Harmonia Mundi, was released in 2006 and
received two Grammy® nominations. Harmonia Mundi released *Requiem* internationally in 2009, and it received the Netherlands’ prestigious 2010 Edison Award in the choral music category. The Edison is the Dutch equivalent of the U.S. Grammy.

*Threshold of Night* was released worldwide in 2008 on the Harmonia Mundi label, Conspirare’s first title for the distinguished recording company, and received two Grammy nominations. In 2008, in cooperation with Austin’s public television station KLRU, Conspirare filmed the PBS television special “A Company of Voices: Conspirare in Concert,” which was broadcast nationally in 2009, is available on both DVD and CD, and received a Grammy nomination. Conspirare’s next recordings were *Sing Freedom! African American Spirituals* and *Samuel Barber: An American Romantic*, released in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Its latest CD in September 2013 features two world premiere works by Pulitzer-winning composer Kevin Puts.

In 2005 Conspirare received the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from national service organization Chorus America. In 2007, as one of the select choruses to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts under its American Masterpieces initiative, Conspirare presented a four-day festival with a distinguished gathering of composers and conductors, performances of three world premieres, and a gala closing concert with a 600-voice choir.

In July 2008 Conspirare represented the U.S. at the Eighth World Symposium on Choral Music in Copenhagen, joining invited choirs from nearly forty countries. The choir has performed at the American Choral Directors Association annual convention and for several regional ACDA conventions. Conspirare received the 2010 Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America to support the commission of a new work by Seattle composer Eric Banks. In February 2011 Conspirare gave three invited performances in New York City under auspices of the Weill Music Institute of Carnegie Hall. In March 2012 the ensemble toured several Midwestern states, and in fall 2012 traveled to France for six invited performances at the Polyfollia Festival and a public concert in Paris. Conspirare became a Resident Company of the Long Center for the Performing Arts in 2013.
Craig Hella Johnson brings unparalleled depth of knowledge, artistic sensitivity, and rich imagination to his programs. As founder and artistic director of the five-time Grammy®-nominated, Austin-based professional choir Conspirare, Johnson assembles some of the finest singers in the country to form a world-class ensemble. In addition to his work with Conspirare, Johnson is artistic director of the Victoria Bach Festival, a major regional summer festival that attracts audiences from all over the state, and music director of the Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble. He has also served as guest conductor with the Austin Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, and others in Texas, the U.S., and abroad. Through these activities as well as Conspirare’s recordings on the internationally distributed Harmonia Mundi label and performances in multiple Texas communities and beyond, Johnson brings national and international recognition to the Texas musical community.

Beloved by audiences, lauded by critics and composers, and revered by vocal and instrumental musicians, Johnson is known for crafting musical journeys that create deep connections between performers and listeners.
A unique aspect of Johnson's programming is his signature “collage” style: programs that marry music of many styles from classical to popular to create profoundly moving experiences. The Wall Street Journal has praised Johnson's ability to “find the emotional essence other performers often miss.” Distinguished composer John Corigliano wrote, “I believe that [Johnson] has understood my music in a way that I have never experienced before. He is a great musician.” Composer and collaborator Robert Kyr observed, “Craig’s attitude toward creating a community of artists … goes beyond technical mastery into that emotional depth and spiritual life of the music.”

Johnson was Director of Choral Activities at the University of Texas at Austin (1990-2001) and remains an active educator, teaching and giving clinics statewide, nationally, and internationally at conferences and universities. In fall 2012 he became the first Artist in Residence at the Texas State University School of Music. As composer, arranger, and music editor, Johnson works with G. Schirmer Publishing and Alliance Music Publications; his works have sold thousands of copies.

Johnson's accomplishments have been recognized with numerous awards. Most recently, the Texas Legislature named him the Texas State Musician for 2013. Other honors have included 2008 induction into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame, Chorus America’s 2009 Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal, and the 2011 Citation of Merit from international professional music fraternity Mu Phi Epsilon. Johnson studied at St. Olaf College, the Juilliard School, and the University of Illinois, and earned his doctorate at Yale University. He has been a Texas resident since 1990.
This project is funded and supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division, believing an investment in the arts is an investment in Austin’s future. Visit Austin at NowPlayingAustin.com.
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Midday Music Series (formerly Bach Cantata Project)
This collaboration between UT’s Butler School of Music and the Blanton has been renamed and expanded to include a broad new range of musical genres. Held select Tuesdays at noon in the museum’s Rapoport Atrium. Media Sponsor:

**September 24:** Bach cantatas and Baroque paintings

**October 29:** Classical guitar and *The Nearest Air: A Survey of Works by Waltercio Caldas*

**November 26:** Jazz composers and modern Latin American art

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**The Big Sing: Music from Germany and Beyond**
*Thursday, October 17 | 6:30PM*

In conjunction with *Imperial Augsburg: Renaissance Prints and Drawings, 1475–1540*, join the Symphonic Choir from Conspirare in a community singing event.

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**SoundSpace: Graphic Notation**
*Sunday, October 20 | 2PM*

*SoundSpace: Graphic Notation* features music from composers who have worked with graphic representations of musical compositions through the ages, beginning with a rare performance of Anthony Braxton’s *For 100 Tubas*.

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**Beat the Rush**
*Third Thursdays at 5:30PM*

*Beat the Rush* is a dynamic new music program that features curated “musical responses” to works in the Blanton’s galleries. Curated this fall by musician/composer Graham Reynolds.
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A song sung from the heart can change any person’s tune.

And, this is why the power of music can change lives.

Conspirare, you are an inspiration in our community. Thank you for all that you do to inspire change. We at UFCU also strive to inspire positive change in the lives of our members; we work hard to provide for their well-being.

As partners in our community, we will and encourage you to continue giving the gift of inspiration every day!

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