

Earth Ritual

A world premiere from composer Robert Kyr
May 6, 2022 • 8pm

conspirare
Craig Hella Johnson • COMPANY OF VOICES



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Conspirare Season Finale to Feature the World Premiere of *Earth Ritual*

AUSTIN, Texas (April 22, 2022). Conspirare, the GRAMMY® Award-winning choir known for expanding the boundaries of choral performance, will premiere composer Robert Kyr's *Earth Ritual* on Friday, May 6 at St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Austin. The concert will also be livestreamed.

[Earth Ritual Event Info & Tickets](#)

Earth Ritual pairs music for voices and instruments with photo projections, creating an immersive experience about a couple traveling around the world striving to understand humankind's relationship to nature. The work also features an extensive multimedia component, created from a selection of photographic and video images that Kyr captured in a remote mesa canyon between August 2021 and March 2022. The images depict the extraordinary terrains and environments within the canyon about which the vocalists are singing, thus broadening the audience's experience of the majesty and beauty of Nature that is at the heart of *Earth Ritual*. Kyr reflected, "As a universal language, music has a crucial role to play in addressing the current environmental crisis, because it powerfully connects all of us to each other, and to our innermost beliefs and convictions."

Solo roles will be performed by Soprano [Awet Andemicael](#), who will be making her Conspirare debut, and Baritone [Simon Barrad](#). Barrad can be heard as a soloist in Conspirare's GRAMMY®-nominated albums *The Hope of Loving* and *The Singing Guitar*.



Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson notes the importance of *Earth Ritual* right now, saying:

"In this time, when we so many are feeling the extreme urgency of the climate crisis and hearing the cries of our imperiled planet, we receive this new composition with tremendous gratitude. *Earth Ritual* tells a tender and moving story of two people and their dramatic journey amidst great challenges caused by the intensifying climate crisis. Ultimately, this work and their story invite us to remember the wonder and beauty of the natural world and of our lives together on this planet."

About Robert Kyr Robert Kyr (b. 1952) is a composer, writer, and filmmaker, who has composed twelve symphonies, three chamber symphonies, three violin concerti, a piano concerto, chamber music, and more than 100 works for vocal ensembles, including nine oratorios, fifteen cantatas, two passions, five motet cycles, and an All-Night Vigil. His music often explores themes related to conflict and reconciliation (peace-making), the environmental crisis (living in harmony with nature), and spiritual issues related to love, compassion, and forgiveness. His *Songs of the Soul* was premiered and recorded on Harmonia Mundi by Conspirare (Craig Hella Johnson, director), and hailed as “a powerful new achievement in American music that vividly traces a journey from despair to transcendence” (Wall Street Journal) and named by NPR on its “Best of the Year” list.

About Conspirare’s Health Precautions Conspirare protects the health of our audiences and singers by employing a health consultant and on-site medical professional to ensure rigorous health protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

About Our Sponsors Conspirare’s Season Underwriter is H-E-B. 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.

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

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 are nominated for a 2022 GRAMMY® for Best Choral Performance for *The Singing Guitar* and were awarded a 2014 Grammy® for Best Choral Performance for *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*. 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, and the Texas State Legislature named him Texas State Musician for 2013. Johnson received the Dennis Dougherty Community Leadership Award from the Matthew Shepard Foundation in 2021.

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