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 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 encourage you to continue giving the gift of inspiration every day.
FREDERICKSBURG, TX
St. Mary’s Catholic Church
Wednesday, 7:30pm
May 11, 2016

AUSTIN, TX
St. Martin’s Lutheran Church
Thursday & Friday, 8:00pm
May 12-13, 2016

NORTHFIELD, MN
Boe Memorial Chapel, St. Olaf College
Tuesday, 7:30pm
May 17, 2016

pre-concert talk one hour before each Texas performance

A version of this program, along with outreach activities, will also be performed in Minnesota and Canada.

Stephen Paulus
A Lyrical Life
May 11 – 17, 2016
Craig Hella Johnson, Artistic Director & Conductor

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**Arise, My Love**

Arise up my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flow’rs appear upon the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise my love, my fair one, come away. O my dove in the clefts of the rock, and the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely.

—Anonymous Hebrew, fourth century B.C., Song of Solomon 2:10-13

**We Gather Together**

We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing; He chastens and hastens His will to make known; The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing; Sing praises to His Name; He forgets not His own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining, Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine; So from the beginning the fight we were winning; Thou, Lord, were at our side, all glory be Thine!

We all do extol Thee, Thou Leader triumphant, And pray that Thou still our Defender will be; Let Thy congregation escape tribulation; Thy Name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

—Anonymous 1625, Translated by Theodore Baker (1851-1934)
One of the things that we as composers are taught about the history of our art is that it is founded on a linear progression of ideas. Medieval chants lead to the Renaissance polyphony of Palestrina, and composers like Monteverdi took those ideas and gently ushered in the Baroque era before Bach and Handel later defined it. A boy genius named Wolfgang and a kind man named Haydn subsequently gave us the Classical era and a composer who would eventually go deaf complicated their harmonies and pushed us into the Romanticism of the 19th century. Then the 20th century yielded a plurality of styles that were...well...there's just not enough pages here to delve into that particular kettle of fish.

Of course, I'm making it sound more simplistic than it actually is, but all of this is to say that a lot of the identity of our art music is tied up with the idea that composers throughout history were always consciously standing on the shoulders of giants. Essentially, attempting to innovate new styles was their primary concern.

But Stephen Paulus's music isn't “new” in this sense. The harmonies aren't complicated and esoteric like his twelve-tone progenitors, and an overarching process doesn't govern it like the music of the minimalists. It's elegant, warm, and inviting to the listener. Some folks might even call it “conservative.” But that's the wonderful thing about Steve's music and what made him so successful. As a composer he was less concerned with saying something new than he was with saying the right thing. And over the course of his career he had a lot to say.

Though he wrote in literally every genre — opera, chamber, oratorio, orchestral, etc. — Steve most frequently wrote for and was beloved by the choral world. He wrote over 400 works for choral ensembles and tonight Conspirare presents a retrospective of that particular aspect of his staggeringly large body of work. We'll hear short, hymn-like works written so elegantly you'd think it took him forever to get them right (it didn't), as well as some of the dozens of arrangements of pre-existing melodies he had a knack for casting in his unique and generous compositional voice. Alongside this remarkable music there will also be a world premiere by a gifted British composer, an iconic American piece often used as a means to grieve, and a moving musical eulogy a son wrote for his father. But most of all — and to borrow a phrase from one of Steve's pieces we'll hear — “the night shall be filled with music.” But perhaps, for tonight, that might mean something else:

“A life shall be filled with music.”

This is the life and work of Stephen Paulus.
Stephen Paulus was a prolific American composer of classical music. He wrote over 600 works for chorus, opera, orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo voice, concert band, piano, and organ, receiving premieres and performances throughout the world as well as a Grammy® award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2015. His writing style has been described by The New York Times as “lush and extravagant,” and critics from the The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Opera News, and many others have praised his work. The New Yorker described him as a “bright, lyrical inventor whose music pulsates with a driving, kinetic energy.” He was a recipient of both NEA and Guggenheim Fellowships.

Beginning in 1979, fresh out of graduate school with a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, he was commissioned by the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and later went on to write a total of 12 operas with performances coming from the Boston Lyric Opera, Washington Opera, Minnesota Opera, Sacramento Opera, The Berkshire Opera Company, and others. With 55 orchestral works to his credit, Paulus served as a Composer in Residence with the orchestras of Atlanta, Minnesota, Tucson and Annapolis. Conductors who premiered his works include Osmo Vänskä, Christoph van Dohnanyi, Kurt Masur, Sir Neville Marriner, and Leonard Slatkin. Orchestral commissions include a violin concerto for the Cleveland Orchestra and William Preucil, a jazz concerto co-written with his son, Greg, for the Minnesota Orchestra as well as organ concertos for the Phoenix Symphony and the Portland (Maine) Symphony.

Paulus wrote over 400 works for chorus ranging from his Holocaust oratorio, To Be Certain of the Dawn, recorded by Minnesota Orchestra on the BIS label, to the poignant anthem, “Pilgrims’ Hymn,” sung at the funerals of Presidents Reagan and Ford. Both works were written with his frequent collaborator and friend, librettist Michael Dennis Browne. His works have received thousands of performances and recordings from such groups as The New York Choral Society, L.A. Master Chorale, Robert Shaw Festival Singers, VocalEssence, Dale Warland Singers and countless others. Notable works for vocalist and orchestra include commissions for Thomas Hampson, Deborah Voigt, Samuel Ramey and Elizabeth Futral. Instrumental soloists who have performed Paulus’ works range from Doc Severinsen and Leo Kottke to Robert McDuffie, William Preucil, Lynn Harrell and Cynthia Phelps.

Paulus was a passionate advocate for the works and careers of his colleagues. In 1973 he co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now known as the American Composers Forum, the largest composer service organization in the U.S. He also served as the Symphony and Concert Representative on the board of ASCAP from 1990 until 2014.

Stephen Paulus passed away in October, 2014 from complications of a stroke, but his music continues to be frequently performed and described by critics as rugged, angular, lyrical, lean, rhythmically aggressive, original, often gorgeous, moving, and uniquely American. The New Yorker characterizes his music as having “impeccable technique and well-honed audience appeal.”

“Mr. Paulus often finds melodic patterns that are fresh and familiar at the same time.... His scoring is invariably expert and exceptionally imaginative in textures and use of instruments.”
– The New York Times
We first talked about it over orecchiette at an old Italian restaurant in Manhattan. Healthy at the time, my Dad brought up what to do with his music and the publishing business if he ever passed away. In his usual self-deprecating way he said it would be OK to sell the business if we wanted to, but it was clear that was not his hope. He thought his music should be getting more performances and hoped I would get involved. Knowing I had ambitions outside of classical music he ended with a joke, saying that the business would probably really take off just when he dies.

Less than a year after that dinner he suffered a stroke that ultimately took his life. Managing my Dad’s musical legacy has been both a tremendous honor and a heavy responsibility. I’ve found guidance in the goal, above all else, to do whatever I can so as many people as possible get to listen to, perform, record, and enjoy his music.

Continuing my Dad’s legacy is not something I can do alone, which is why I am grateful to the many people who continue to champion his music. There are too many to list, but my Dad’s legacy lives on in the performances and passions of others. We are grateful to everyone who continues to help ensure his music will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Beyond his own music, a core part of my Dad’s legacy is how much he cared about fostering and developing the careers of fellow composers. He always made time to meet with young composers, providing advice and making connections. Through co-founding the Minnesota Composers Forum and through his role on the board of ASCAP he was always working to help his fellow colleagues. Through his humor, wit, and thoughtful advice he could always cheer up a friend.

My Dad was the consummate working composer. He built a prolific catalog through disciplined work and an empathetic desire to create music of meaning. He created a diverse catalog, handwriting new compositions on pen and paper, and always talking to commissioners. He once described being a composer to a group of kids, saying “It is not a casual type of thing. You work at it every day, the same way a lawyer would work at a job every day, or a physician or a carpenter. The more you work at it, the better you get.” His discipline fostered a humble confidence in his work, which I’ve seen transfer to my brother and me as we have grown up. I couldn’t be more grateful to have him as my father, and I couldn’t be more honored to do all I can to grow his musical legacy in the years to come. To all those who have helped and continue to help by performing, listening to, and enjoying his music — thank you. On nights like tonight his joke seems prescient, if not too bittersweet.

Andrew (Spud) Paulus is a Product Manager at BuzzFeed and the Managing Partner of his family music publishing business. He grew up in the North and graduated from Georgetown University with a degree in Finance and Management. When not working, he enjoys playing basketball, canoeing and wheel-thrown ceramics. His favorite Paulus pieces are The Road Home, Timepiece and Ice Fields.
Stephen Paulus and poet Michael Dennis Browne, friends and longtime collaborators, wrote 17 pieces together, beginning around 1976. Today's program includes several of their collaborations. Michael reflects on the continuing resonance of this relationship below.

**Stephen**

In the only dream I have yet had of you, I walked into a kitchen during a loud party and there you were, looking fit, youthful, your hair rather long and curly. (I used to ask you: “Where do you buy your hair?) Amazed, I asked, “Stephen, what are you doing here? How are you?” You said: “I’m working.”

Should that have surprised me? I have never known anyone else more disciplined, who worked harder at what he loved and seemed born to do, so why should it be any different for you in the life beyond this one?

I once described writing words for music as being like building a boat rather than a house—something firm, buoyant, to ride on top of the music; build too heavy, and things sink. (And most words for music on the page are as about as interesting as boats on sand.) And I wrote of your vast score for *To Be Certain of the Dawn* as the largest sea, the deepest, on which my words had ever been privileged to float.

**Michael Dennis Browne**

Michael Dennis Browne’s latest collection of poems is *The Voices*, published in 2015 by Carnegie Mellon University Press. His poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies, and his awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Bush Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, and the McKnight Foundation. Two of his collections have won the Minnesota Book Award for poetry. As a librettist, he has written many texts for music, working for almost four decades with composer Stephen Paulus. Their post-Holocaust oratorio, *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in music by the Minnesota Orchestra. Browne is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Minnesota, where he taught for thirty-nine years and was a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers.
Conspirare is committed to the repertoire of the choral canon and engaging in musical performances that represent both the voices of today and voices that have been silenced or under-represented. We actively seek to commission works to achieve this goal. Conspirare believes in the integrity and power of new music and its place in a vast choral repertoire. We are committed to the deepest and widest exploration of new expressions, styles and presentations. Throughout our history we have championed new music, with the support of Conspirare patrons and numerous organizations. These works, in addition to unlisted commissions, comprise an important piece of our present music-making and legacy:

**Hymn to the Earth (2003)** by Donald Grantham
**La canción desesperada (2005, rev. 2014)** by Donald Grantham
**Poemas de Amor (2006)** by Stephen Paulus
  Commissioned as part of the NEA American Masterpieces Festival: Exploring Influence And Finding Our Voice
**The Changing Light (2009)** by Peter Scott Lewis
  Commissioned by Conspirare and the Sanford Dole Ensemble
**Easter Chorale (Chorale for Ascension Day) (1965)**
  by Samuel Barber in a new version for chamber orchestra by Robert Kyr, 2011
**Songs of the Soul (2011)** by Robert Kyr
**Freedom Song (2011)** by Robert Kyr
**oh graveyard (Lay This Body Down) (2010)** by David Lang
**Same Train (2011)** by Mark Adamo
**To Touch the Sky (2012) & If I Were a Swan (2012)**
  by Kevin Puts
  Commissioned by the Thelma Hunter Fund of the American Composers Forum and Conspirare
**The Cloud of Unknowing (2013)** by Robert Kyr
**The Radio Hour (2014)** by Jake Heggie
  Pacific Chorale, lead co-commissioner, with co-commissioners Conspirare, The Philadelphia Singers and VocalEssence
**How Little You Are (2015)** by Nico Muhly
  Commissioned by Texas Performing Arts for Austin Classical Guitar and Conspirare with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
**This Delicate Universe (2015)** by Eric Banks
  Commissioned with the support of Chorus America’s Dale Warland Singers Award

Conspirare’s commissioning history with Tarik O’Regan began with these three commissions (available on the Conspirare release Threshold of Night):

- **Had I Not Seen the Sun (2007)**
- **Tal vez tenemos tiempo (2007)**
- **I Had No Time to Hate (2007)**
  His piece **Death is gonna lay his icy cold hands on me (2010)** is on the Conspirare release “Sing Freedom.”

**Today we celebrate Turn, a world premiere by Tarik O’Regan.**

Tarik O’Regan has composed music for a wide variety of ensembles and organizations; these include the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Sydney Dance Company, Chamber Choir Ireland, and the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Among O’Regan’s projects for 2015/16 are Mata Hari, a full-length ballet commissioned by the Dutch National Ballet; A Celestial Map of the Sky, a large-scale composition for the Hallé Orchestra, who will record the work as part of a new album of his orchestral music; and the North American premiere of his first opera, Heart of Darkness, which opened at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2011. He is currently working on a full-scale opera commissioned by Houston Grand Opera for 2019.

Born in London in 1978, Tarik O’Regan lives in New York City.
**Singers and Instrumentalists**

**Soprano**
- Mela Dailey
  - Austin, TX
- Melissa Givens
  - Houston, TX
- Estelí Gomez
  - Watsonville, CA
- Julie Keim
  - North Potomac, MD
- Gitanjali Mathur
  - Austin, TX
- Julie McCoy
  - Fort Worth, TX
- Fotina Naumenko
  - Cincinnati, OH
- Kathlene Ritch
  - Santa Fe, NM
- Janeene Williams
  - Austin, TX
- Shari Alise Wilson*
  - Austin, TX

**Alto**
- Janet Carlsen
  - Campbell
  - Omaha, NE
- Cina Crisara
  - Austin, TX
- Stella Hastings
  - Pittsburg, KS
- Pam Elrod Huffman*
  - Dallas, TX
- Laura Mercado-Wright
  - Austin, TX
- Keely J. Rhodes
  - Austin, TX
- Megan Roth
  - Bloomington, IN
- Lauren Vick
  - Austin, TX

**Tenor**
- J.D. Burnett
  - Athens, GA
- Paul D'Arcy
  - Austin, TX
- Brian Giebler
  - Long Island City, NY
- Bodie Gilbert
  - Houston, TX
- Eric Neville*
  - Seattle, WA
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- Rick Gabrillo*
  - Round Rock, TX
- Robert Harlan
  - Austin, TX
- Harris Ipock
  - Cambridge, MA
- Craig Peterson
  - Gilbert, AZ
- John Proft
  - Sacramento, CA
- Paul Max Tipton
  - Boston, MA
- Thomas Burritt
  - Percussion
  - Austin, TX
- Faith Dellow
  - Piano
  - San Marcos, TX
- Kathy Kienzle
  - Harp
  - St. Paul, MN (MN performances)

*denotes section leader
He is a great musician.” Composer and collaborator Robert Kyr states “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.

A composer and arranger, Johnson works with G. Schirmer Publishing on the Craig Hella Johnson Choral Series, featuring specially selected composers as well as some of his original compositions and arrangements. His works are also published by Alliance Music Publications. A unique aspect of Johnson’s programming is his signature “collage” style: through-composed programs that marry music and poetry to blend sacred and secular, classical and contemporary, traditional and popular styles. In 2006 he was engaged to create a special peace-themed collage program for the North Central ACDA convention, and in 2007 by the famed St. Olaf Choir to create and conduct a collage program during a five-week residency. Craig’s first concert-length composition Considering Matthew Shepard was premiered in 2016 by Conspirare.

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 recognized his achievements with the Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art in 2015, and the Texas State 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.

Performing Note
Conspirare has the privilege of performing in a variety of beautiful venues that best enhance choral performances. While our performing venues and the text of some of our repertoire may be representative of specific traditions, it is in no way intended to be exclusive of any individual whose experience or set of beliefs is not represented. Conspirare respects and celebrates the great diversity of religious, artistic and human experiences represented among our singers and audience members. The audience creates the space in which the music is held.
Conspirare made their first commercial recording through the green fuse in 2004. The second album, Requiem, was released in 2006 and received two Grammy nominations. In 2008 Threshold of Night (Conspirare’s first recording for Harmonia Mundi) also received two nominations. Harmonia Mundi’s international re-release of Requiem in 2009 won the Netherlands’ prestigious 2010 Edison Award for choral music, the Dutch equivalent of the Grammy. Conspirare’s 2009 PBS television special “A Company of Voices: Conspirare in Concert,” available on both DVD and CD, received one Grammy nomination. The 2015 release Path of Miracles was awarded the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik, a highly respected German CD award.

The Conspirare organization and ensembles have received numerous honors and awards. All four ensembles have received local awards from Austin Critics Table. In 2005, Conspirare received the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from the national service organization Chorus America. In 2007, as one of the select choral organizations 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, 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, which premiered in May 2015. In February 2011, Conspirare gave three invited performances in New York City under auspices of the Weill Music Institute of Carnegie Hall. In fall 2012, the group 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.
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<td>Vera Ayres Bowen</td>
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