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*For Immediate Release*

## **Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble Announces 2022-23 Season Marking First Complete Season Since the Pandemic**

**Three Programs Inspired by the Resilience of the Human Spirit with  
Music by Composers Sarah Kirkland Snider, Joby Talbot, and Paul Moravec**

**World Premiere Performance of Paul Moravec's Chamber  
Orchestration of *Sanctuary Road***

**CINCINNATI, OH** (September 19, 2022)—Cincinnati's **Vocal Arts Ensemble (VAE)** led by **Music Director Craig Hella Johnson** announced its 2022-2023 season, the first complete season since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, with music inspired by the resilience of the human spirit, wildlife, and the changing natural state of the world.

Opening the season on November 12, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral is a performance of **Sarah Kirkland Snider's** *Mass for the Endangered*, a program rescheduled from January 2022 due to the pandemic. Originally commissioned by Trinity Wall Street in 2020 as part of its "Mass Re-Imaginations" Project, Snider's *Mass for the Endangered* is a modern-day requiem for the natural world, weaving together text from the traditional Latin Mass and original poetry by **Nathaniel Bellows**. The six-movement piece gives voice to the voiceless in a spiritual prayer for the endangered animals of the planet, making an emotional appeal for compassion and protection from all that threatens Earth's delicate ecosystems.

The second program on January 21, 2023 at Christ Church Cathedral continues the theme of spirituality with **Joby Talbot's** *Path of Miracles*. Written in 2005 with libretto by **Robert Dickinson**, *Path of Miracles* was inspired by one of the most grueling pilgrimages along the Camino de Santiago, a large network of ancient pilgrim routes leading to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great in Spain. Divided into four sections, the music in each section depicts one of the church towns on the route to Santiago de

Compostela and incorporates musical representations of the journey through the use of repeated phrases, or ostinatos, and an eclectic array of musical styles from around the world. The piece is sung a cappella in 17-part harmony and in more than seven languages, including Greek, Latin, Spanish, Basque, French, English, and German.

The third program on April 29, 2023 at the Aronoff Center for the Arts' Jarson-Kaplan Theater completes Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble's 2022-23 season with **Paul Moravec's** *Sanctuary Road*. The oratorio, with libretto by **Mark Campbell**, is the second in the series of Moravec's large-scale works on American history and tells the story of **William Still**, an American hero who facilitated the escape of hundreds of enslaved people by way of the Underground Railroad. *Sanctuary Road* draws inspiration from Still's landmark 1872 book, *The Underground Railroad Records*, an archive of primary documents that trace the narrative arc of one of the most successful campaigns of civil disobedience in American history. Vocal Arts Ensemble will perform the world premiere of a new chamber orchestration of *Sanctuary Road*, orchestrated by Moravec himself.

"The music that makes up our season is densely loaded with meaningful and timely themes," said **VAE Music Director Craig Hella Johnson**. "**Sarah Kirkland Snider's** *Mass for the Endangered* is a beautiful prayer for the endangered wildlife and imperiled environments as a result of climate change. **Joby Talbot's** *Path of Miracles* is an epic pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago and incorporates musical styles from around the world. And **Paul Moravec's** *Sanctuary Road* draws upon the heroic stories from **William Still's** memoir, *The Underground Railroad Records*. These stories as told through the power of music join our hearts together—performers and audience alike. I can't wait to share our 2022-23 season with everyone."

Tickets for Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble's 2022-2023 season are now available online at [vaecinci.com](http://vaecinci.com) or by calling 513.381.3300. For more information, visit [vaecinci.com](http://vaecinci.com).

## VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE

Founded in 1979, the [Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati](#) (VAE) is Greater Cincinnati's premier professional vocal ensemble, committed to the presentation of innovative choral works and the development of modern chamber music that raises and nurtures the public's appreciation of the choral arts. Earning a reputation for artistic excellence, VAE presents rich, passionate performances of a broad variety of choral works with precision and unparalleled virtuosity. VAE has enjoyed artistic leadership by some of the nation's leaders in choral conducting; Grammy Award-winner and seven-time nominee [Craig Hella Johnson](#) currently leads the ensemble. Considered one of the finest choral conductors in the U.S., Johnson is praised for his visionary approach and brings depth of knowledge, artistic sensitivity, and rich imagination to the organization. Under his direction, VAE's recent album recording of Kile Smith's *Canticle* helped to propel Blanton Alspaugh's Grammy nomination and win for Producer of the Year in 2020.

Cincinnati Vocal Arts Ensemble gratefully acknowledges annual support from:



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MUSICAL ARTS FUND



The Vocal Arts Ensemble 2022-2023 Season follows:

### **MASS FOR THE ENDANGERED**

Saturday, November 12, 2022 | 7:30pm

Christ Church Cathedral

#### **Vocal Arts Ensemble**

Music Director [Craig Hella Johnson](#), conductor

Program:

**Sarah Kirkland SNIDER** *Mass for the Endangered*

[Sarah Kirkland Snider](#)'s *Mass for the Endangered* gives voice to the voiceless in a spiritual prayer for the endangered wildlife of the planet and their homes. Weaving together text from the traditional Latin Mass and original poetry by [Nathaniel Bellows](#), this orchestration combines music from the past and present in a beautiful setting that will move people to action.

### **PATH OF MIRACLES**

Saturday, January 21, 2023 | 7:30pm

Christ Church Cathedral

#### **Vocal Arts Ensemble**

Music Director [Craig Hella Johnson](#), conductor

Program:

**Joby TALBOT** *Path of Miracles*

Inspired by a historic pilgrimage in Spain, [Joby Talbot](#)'s *Path of Miracles* is a haunting choral work that takes audiences on a journey to four towns on the path to Santiago de Compostela. Featuring a unique 17-part harmony for a cappella voices, *Path of Miracles* is a pilgrimage of vocal sound, embracing musical styles and languages from around the world along the way.

### **SANCTUARY ROAD**

April 29, 2023 | 7:30pm

Jarson Kaplan Theater, Aronoff Center for the Arts

#### **Vocal Arts Ensemble**

Music Director [Craig Hella Johnson](#), conductor

[Laquita Mitchell](#), soprano

[Taylor Raven](#), mezzo-soprano

[Noah Stewart](#), tenor

[Malcom Merriweather](#), baritone

[Dashon Burton](#), bass baritone

Program:

**Paul MORAVEC** *Sanctuary Road*

The **Vocal Arts Ensemble** will perform the world premiere of a new orchestration of *Sanctuary Road* by original composer and Pulitzer Prize-winner [Paul Moravec](#). Inspired by an archive of primary documents that trace the narrative arc of one of the most successful campaigns of civil disobedience in American history, *Sanctuary Road* transforms the epic stories of courage, perseverance, and sacrifice along the Underground Railroad into a riveting musical saga.

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