Psallite is an exhortation to sing: sing for joy, sing through sorrow, sing of love, sing songs of praise. Throughout history, humanity’s most deeply felt emotions, aspirations, and experiences of the Divine have been made manifest in song. The transcendent power of a community joined in song is a force that has shaped generations of worshippers and continues today in sanctuaries and concert halls. Through the singing of the ancient texts of the Psalms, hymns, or spirituals, communities have used their voices to claim their faith, share their joy, and support their neighbors.

Psallite presents an inspirational collage of choral works spanning the centuries. Rather than flowing in a chronological presentation, musical eras are intermingled so the listener can experience the continuity of praise across generations, or hear the isolation of an individual lamentation. Whether a setting by the Renaissance master Palestrina or a contemporary work by Latvian composer Ešenvalds, the music reveals much that connects us. The African-American spiritual tradition resonates with the Psalm traditions, offering musical prayers created to inspire, support, and guide in times of trials and celebrations. Musical styles may change, but the needs of humanity—and the deeper connection to the Divine—are the same from generation to generation.
COR CANTIAMO, conducted by Eric A. Johnson

1. Ily Matthew Maniano (b. 1988, Philippines):
   *Doxologia*        6:36

2. Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621, Netherlands):
   *Chantez à Dieu* (Psalm 96)  2:01

3. * Gavin Bryars (b. 1943, UK):
   *Psalm 141*            7:08

4. Stephen Foster, arr. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962, USA):
   *Hard Times*
   *soloist: Carrie M. Filetti, soprano*  5:55

5. Traditional spiritual, arr. Carol Barnett (b. 1949, USA):
   *By and By*
   *soloists: JoEllyn Caulfield, soprano; Mark Baglione, tenor*  3:17

6. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594, Italy):
   *Exultate Deo* (Psalm 81)  1:56

   *Psalm 67*
   *soloist: Antonio Quaranta, bass*  6:11

8. * Galina Grigorjeva (b. 1962, Ukraine):
   *Bless the Lord, o my soul* (Psalm 103)  5:10

9. * Peter Bannister (b.1966, UK):
   *Psalm 96*
   *William K. Trafka, organ*  9:52

10. * Daniel Kellogg (b. 1976, USA):
    *Preserve Me, O God* (Psalm 16)  6:20

    *Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?*  2:40

    *We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace*  3:43

   **total duration** 60:54

* Commissioned by SDG Music Foundation as part of the Psalms Project, made possible by Lilly Endowment, Inc.
THE MUSIC

*Doxologia*
This stunning setting of a text from the Book of Revelation unfolds from an intense unison into glorious cascading lines of celebration and praise. The soaring voices of the tenors and sopranos express the energy and power of the Divine as the people sing out “Salvation unto God.”

*Ily Matthew Maniano (b.1988, Philippines) is an exciting new compositional voice for choral music and a member of the Philippine Madrigal Singers.*

*Chantez à Dieu (Psalm 96)*
A joyful setting of Psalm 96 that exemplifies the ideals of a late Renaissance motet. With jubilant calls of *chantez* (“sing”) rebounding between all voices in the choir, this composition captures the energy of a great celebration.

*Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621) was a Dutch organist and composer who worked through the end of the Renaissance and into the early Baroque period.*

*Psalm 141*
A powerful depiction of abandonment as a supplicant calls to the Divine to “leave not my soul destitute.” The text-driven nature of this work (one note to each syllable) creates a clarity and poignancy that draws the listener into the pain of the Psalmist’s plea.

*Gavin Bryars (b. 1943, UK) is both a jazz bassist and composer who has written extensively for the stage and has a long list of instrumental, orchestral, and vocal works to his credit.*

*Hard Times*
Although this Stephen Foster work is not a traditional sacred text, it resonates with the texts of penitential Psalms. An evocative soprano solo opens the work with a deep-felt sense of vulnerability, and the music gradually builds to reveal inner strength as the soloist rebukes troubled times to “come no more.”

*Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962, USA) is a leading artistic voice in choral music. In addition to composing, arranging, and teaching, he conducts the professional choir Conspirare.*
By and By
This traditional spiritual provides the perfect resolution to the lamentations found in Psalm 141 and Hard Times. The uplifting theme reminds the listener that, regardless of current difficulties or challenges, it is possible to persevere because the ultimate reward of heaven will come “by and by.”
Carol Barnett (b. 1949, USA) is a Minnesota composer and charter member of the American Composers Forum who has received international awards for her compositions.

Exultate Deo (Psalm 81)
Palestrina’s setting of Psalm 81, “Sing joyfully to the Lord,” is a quintessential example of the Renaissance motet. Set for five voices, the composition deftly exchanges themes between treble and bass lines, with ebullient melismas of exultate and echoing buccinate (“blowing trumpets”) expressing the Psalm’s joy.
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594, Italy) is hailed as the Italian master of the late Renaissance motet style. He was a prolific composer of masses, motets, and other sacred music.

Psalm 67
Evocative of the Anglican liturgical tradition, a baritone soloist recites the Psalm text with the choir echoing in response. The dramatic narrative includes extreme dynamic and tonal shifts, depicting a wide range of emotions, from the fear of God’s wrath to a plea for mercy.
Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977, Latvia) is one of the most popular Latvian composers of the new generation. His music has won awards internationally and is performed throughout the world.

Bless the Lord, o my soul (Psalm 103)
Rooted in the Byzantine tradition, this powerful work maintains a relentless driving rhythm throughout. It elicits the pulsating energy of Stravinsky in which constantly changing meters and insistent eighth notes press on to create a ritualistic trance.
Galina Grigorjeva (b. 1962, Ukraine) is a free-lance composer in Estonia, where she writes for such groups as the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the State Choir Latvia.
Psalm 96
Incorporating African rhythms and percussion, Bannister uses the text to create long arching melodies, intricate harmonies, and dense contrapuntal elements. Originally composed for choir and orchestra, this recording features a virtuosically intricate organ part created by Bannister as a re-imagination of his original orchestration.

Peter Bannister (b. 1966, UK) has earned awards at the national and international level as a composer and solo pianist/organist. Born in London, he has been a resident in Paris since 1989.

Preserve Me, O God (Psalm 16)
Though the work opens with a call for refuge, the lush harmonies and gentle melodic lines convey the comfort and assurance that protection is already provided. The music reflects the peaceful knowledge that “my soul dwells secure.”

Daniel Kellogg (b. 1976, USA) has been hailed as an “engaging” composer who writes with “pensive beauty.” His music ranges from orchestral and chamber works to choral and opera.

Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?
Citing the Old Testament story of Daniel’s delivery from the lion’s den, the text asks, “Why not every man?” While this might be interpreted as an example of God’s protection extending to all who petition for help, a slightly different interpretation might be aligned with a more provocative question, “Why is not every man delivered?”

Moses Hogan (1957-2003, USA) revitalized spiritual choral traditions in the late twentieth century. His harmonies and dancing rhythms captivated audiences until his untimely death at age 45.

We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace
Appling’s simple and elegant hymn setting of this traditional spiritual is strongly referential to Psalm 23, complete with imagery of moving through the valley of death with no worries or trepidation. The repeated reassurances of “no sorrowing” hold out a comforting promise.

William Appling (1932-2008, USA) was a pioneer African-American composer, teacher, and pianist in the mid-twentieth century. He founded the William Appling Singers and Orchestra.
Doxologia

Et clamabant voce magna dicentes:
Salus Deo nostro
qui sedet super thronum et agno
Benedictio et claritas et sapientia
gratiarum actio et honor et virtus et fortitudo
Deo nostro in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

And they cried out with a loud voice, saying,
Salvation to our God
which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb
Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, thanksgiving,
and honour, and power, and might
be unto our God forever and ever.
Amen.

Revelation 7:10, 12, based on the King James Version (KJV)

Chantez à Dieu

Chantez à Dieu chanson nouvelle,
Chantez, ô terre universelle,
Chantez, et son Nom bénissez.
Et de jour en jour annoncez
Sa délivrance solennelle.

O sing unto the Lord a new song:
sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Sing unto the Lord, bless his name;
shew forth his salvation from day to day.

Psalm 96:1-2, King James Version (KJV)

Psalm 141

Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me;
give ear to my voice, when I cry unto thee.
Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense:
and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth;
keep the door of my lips.
Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity:
and let me not eat of their dainties.
Let the righteous smite me;
it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me;
it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head:
for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.
When their judges are overthrown in stony places,  
    they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.  
Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth,  
    as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.  
But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord:  
    in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.  
Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me,  
    and the gins of the workers of iniquity.  
Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

Psalm 141, King James Version, 1611

Hard Times

Let us pause in life’s pleasures  
    and count its many tears  
While we all sup sorrow with the poor;  
There’s a song that will linger forever in our ears;  
Oh Hard Times, come again no more.

Chorus:
'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary,  
Hard Times, Hard Times, come again no more;  
Many days you have lingered  
around my cabin door;  
Oh Hard Times, come again no more.

While we seek mirth and beauty  
    and music light and gay  
There are frail forms fainting at the door;  
Though their voices are silent,  
their pleading looks will say,  
Oh Hard Times, come again no more.

Chorus
There’s a pale drooping maiden  
    who toils her life away,  
With a worn heart whose better days are o’er;  
Though her voice would be merry,  
’tis sighing all the day,  
Oh Hard Times, come again no more.

Chorus

By and By

Refrain:
Oh, by and by,  
I’m gonna lay down this heavy load.

I know my robe’s gonna fit me well,  
’cause I tried it on at the gates of hell.
Refrain

Oh hell is a deep and dark despair,  
So stop poor sinner an’ a don’t go there.  
Refrain

Oh one of these mornings bright and fair,  
Gonna take my wings and cleave the air.  
Refrain

Oh when I get to heaven gonna sing and shout,  
For there’s no one there to turn me out.  
Refrain
Exultate Deo

Exultate Deo adjutori nostro
jubilate Deo Jacob.
Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum
psalterium jucundum cum cithara.
Buccinate in neomenia tuba,
in insigni die solemnitatis vestræ.

Sing aloud unto God our strength:
make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

Psalm 81:1-3, King James Version (KJV)

Psalm 67

God be merciful unto us and bless us,
and show us the light of his countenance,
and be merciful unto us;
That thy way may be known upon earth,
thy saving health among all nations.
Let the people praise thee;
O God, let the people praise thee.
O let the nations rejoice and be glad;
for thou shalt judge the folk righteously,
and govern the nations upon the earth.
Let the people praise thee, O God;
yea, let all the people praise thee.
Then shall the earth bring forth her increase;
and God, even our own God,
shall give us his blessing.
God shall bless us;
and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Psalm 67, Church of England 1662, Book of Common Prayer

Bless the Lord, o my soul

Bless the Lord, O my soul:
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth life from destruction;
who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;
so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment
   for all that are oppressed.
He made known his way unto Moses,
   his acts unto the children of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
   slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
He will not always chide:
   neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins;
   nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
For as the heaven is high above the earth,
   so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
   so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth his children,
   so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
   he remembereth that we are dust.
As for man, his days are as grass:
   as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
   and the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
   upon them that fear him,
   and his righteousness unto children's children;
To such as keep his covenant,
   and to those that remember his commandments to do them.
The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
   and his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the Lord,
   ye his angels, that excel in strength,
   that do his commandments,
   hearkening unto the voice of his word.
Bless ye the Lord, ye his hosts;
   ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion:
   bless the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 103, King James Version (KJV)
Psalm 96

Oh sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!
Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!
Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
Let the field exult, and everything in it!
for he comes to judge the earth.

Psalm 96:1-4, 7-9, 11-13, English Standard Version (ESV)

Preserve Me, O God

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
You are my Lord;
   I have no good apart from you.
The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
   indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand,
I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad,
   and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures for evermore.
Therefore my heart is glad,
   and my whole being rejoices;
my soul also dwells secure.
For you will not abandon my soul
   or let your holy one see corruption.
Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
You are my Lord. Amen.

Psalm 16:1-2, 5-11, English Standard Version (ESV)
**Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?**

*Refrain:*
Didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel, then why not every man?

He delivered Daniel from the lion’s den, 
Jonah from the belly of the whale, 
And the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace, 
And why not every man? Hallelujah! 
*Refrain*

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, 
It blows like the judgement day. 
And every poor sinner that never did pray 
will be glad to pray that day. Hallelujah! 
*Refrain*

I set my foot on the Gospel ship, 
and the ship, it began to sail. 
It landed me over on Canaan’s shore, 
and I’ll never come back anymore. Hallelujah! 
*Refrain*

**We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace**

We shall walk through the valley 
 of the shadow of death. 
We shall walk through the valley in peace. 
And if Jesus Himself shall be our leader, 
we shall walk through the valley in peace.

There will be no sorrowing there. 
There will be no sorrowing there. 
And if Jesus Himself shall be our leader, 
we shall walk through the valley in peace.

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**THE MUSICIANS**

**Soprano**
JoEllyn Caulfield 
Kim Duncan 
Sarah Fallon 
Carrie M. Filetti 
Alana Nelson 
Jenilyn Roether 
Erin Truesdell

**Alto**
Amy Allen 
Toria Burrell-Hrencecin 
Julie Dee 
Adrienne Gallagher-Beetstra 
Kirsten LaPrade 
Janna Mudlin

**Tenor**
Mark Baglione 
Peter Barsch 
Daniel Beetstra 
Robert Campbell 
Niall Casserly 
Zachary Weiss

**Bass**
Brian Balika 
Tom Foust 
David Hartley 
Nick Kalina 
Anthony Quaranta 
Michael Richards 
Michael Thoms

**Guest Organist:** William K. Trafka, Director of Music and Organist at St. Bartholomew’s Church, New York City

**Conductor:** Eric A. Johnson
Cor Cantiamo is a touring chamber choir in residence at Northern Illinois University, founded with a mission to perform and promote contemporary choral music and foster new composers for the art form. Since their inception in 2009, the choir has emerged as an energetic and accomplished vocal ensemble, receiving accolades for their performances. The ensemble has commissioned new works from composers such as Sir John Tavener, Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, and Stacey Gibbs; forthcoming commission projects include collaborations with some of the foremost choral composers of our time, including James Whitbourn, Timothy Takach, and Jake Runestad. Cor Cantiamo’s first commercial album, *Canticum: Choral Music of Jaakko Mäntyjärvi*, was released in 2014 by Centaur Records.

In partnership with SDG Music Foundation, Cor Cantiamo has presented the U.S. premieres of *Bless the Lord, o my soul* by Ukrainian-born composer Galina Grigorjeva, and *Psalm 141* by British composer Gavin Bryars, along with the world premiere of *Psalm 10* by Swiss composer Richard Dubugnon. In the summer of 2014, Cor Cantiamo partnered with SDG to record the *Psallite* album, with Abbey Road Studio Grammy Award-winning engineers.

Cor Cantiamo maintains an active concert series, performing throughout the central United States on collegiate and community concert series. The ensemble has performed at the American Choral Directors Association Central Division Convention and has been the featured professional choir for the Michigan Choral Directors Association State Conference. The ensemble also sponsors educational outreach programs for area school music programs such as the All-State audition clinics and the Masterworks Project, a program designed to partner aspiring high school vocalists with professional singers in the performance of choral/orchestral masterworks.

[www.corcantiamo.org](http://www.corcantiamo.org)
Eric A. Johnson, D.M.A., is the Founding Artistic Director of Cor Cantiamo and Director of Choral Activities at Northern Illinois University. Ensembles under his direction have performed at multiple national, division, and state conventions in the United States, as well as at Avery Fisher Hall Lincoln Center in New York.

Internationally, Johnson has served as a guest conductor of the Clare College Chapel Choir (Cambridge, England), taught at Makumira University (Tanzania), the Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte (Brazil), and has directed guest choral residencies at Canterbury and Worcester Cathedrals (England).

Dr. Johnson has published music with Santa Barbara Music Publishing, published articles in the *Choral Journal*, and served as a music editor for Earthsongs Publications. He is active as a clinician and guest conductor, leads master classes in conducting, and has collaborated with many leading composers of our time, including Morten Lauridsen, who has praised Cor Cantiamo as “choral artistry at its finest.”
Headquartered in a Chicago suburb, SDG Music Foundation is an international not-for-profit organization devoted to the preservation, performance, and promotion of classical sacred music in the biblical tradition. At the heart of its mission is the commissioning of new sacred music from the world’s leading composers. In the two short decades since its founding, SDG Music Foundation has created a body of 38 original works of sacred music from 27 composers of 9 nationalities. Works commissioned by SDG have been performed in concert halls and houses of worship in 8 countries. Major collaborators have included the New York Philharmonic, Westminster Choir College, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, American Boychoir, and Los Angeles Master Chorale.

SDG’s commissioning endeavors include the Psalms Project, made possible by a grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. SDG invited a group of internationally renowned composers to explore the symbolism and depth of the Hebrew Psalter as a source of inspiration and strength for our time, and to expand the musical reach of the Psalms for a 21st-century audience. Five of the pieces included on the Psallite CD are from this collection.

www.sdgmusic.org

Recorded in Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; and at College Church, Wheaton, Illinois, July 19-22, 2014
Producer: Donald Fraser
Engineer: Simon Kiln, Abbey Road Studios
Engineer: Arne Akselberg, Abbey Road Studios
Executive Producer: SDG Music Foundation (www.SDGmusic.org)

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