

The wonder of Whitacre

Whitacre ★★★★★

Choral works

The Eric Whitacre Singers, Laudibus, The King's Singers, Pavao Quartet/Eric Whitacre

VOCAL DECCA 274 5209



The Music American Eric Whitacre is a thoroughly 21st-century composer. 'Lux Aurumque' was first performed by a virtual choir, individually auditioned and recorded over the internet. His optimistic-sounding music has a fluid, ambient,

otherworldly quality, created by luxurious chords of suspended harmonies and frequent changes of meter.

The Performance In a word, faultless. Whether it's the Eric Whitacre Singers, the ex-National Youth Choir of Great Britain singers of Laudibus, or The King's Singers, it's all spot on: tuning, vocal blend, articulation of text, or shaping and colouring of phrases. Whitacre's texts have a youthful appeal, from Leonardo DaVinci dreaming, to a young couple kissing in the sun. The singers' vibrant performances complement this, not just in their silvery vocal timbre, but in the sense that they truly believe in what they're singing.

The Verdict Behold, some of the UK's most gifted ensembles perfectly matched in vocal style to Whitacre's captivating music. Go forth and purchase. CHARLOTTE GARDNER

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THIS

■ MELTING POT

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine explores how DaVinci's dreams might sound. Tension juxtaposes with release, and Renaissance forms and harmonies bounce off Whitacre's own mystical suspensions and tribal bursts.

■ STYLE POINTS

Five Hebrew Love Songs are love poems written by Whitacre's wife. The singing is just perfect: pure, light, tender, with gossamer-weighted ornamentations. Meanwhile, the Pavao Quartet nails the klezmer feel in its atmospheric accompaniment.

■ VOCAL CONTRASTS

The Stolen Child describes faeries seducing children away into their world. Whitacre's setting casts the youthful Laudibus as the human child, answering the mature, male voices of The King's Singers as the faeries.