

# Decca claims US composer



Eric Whitacre

Eric Whitacre, the American composer who scored an online hit with his 'virtual choir' project earlier this year, has signed with Decca, becoming one of the few composers to have an exclusive long-term recording contract with a major label.

The 40-year-old, best known for his choral works, will record his debut album at the beginning of August. Entitled *Light & Gold*, the album will be released in the UK on 18 October. It will include three world premiere recordings as well as some of Whitacre's best-known works – the first time he

has both recorded and conducted his own music.

Whitacre gained some exposure in March this year after releasing a video clip of his composition '*Lux Aurumque*' onto the video-hosting site YouTube. The performance features the voices of 185 singers from 12 countries, with all the separate recordings assembled and put together by the composer. The clip (see *weblink below*) has already attracted almost 1m hits in less than two months. 'Decca shares [Whitacre's] vision to reinvent classical music for a new digital generation,' said the label's managing director Dickon Stainer.

Whitacre received a master's degree in composition from the Juilliard School, where he studied with John Corigliano and David Diamond. He won a Richard Rodgers Award for his musical *Paradise Lost: Shadows and Wings*, and has had awards from the Barlow international composition competition, American Choral Directors Association and American Composers' Forum.

'I appreciate the respect that the team at Decca holds for me as one of their "core classical" artists,' said Whitacre in a statement. 'Importantly, we have a shared vision, drive and passion to develop the extraordinarily wonderful opportunities that technology offers to our world.'

<http://bit.ly/bQa2oE>

'Lux Aurumque' (YouTube)