

GALLERY VIEW



Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir

The YouTube Symphony Orchestra last year did much to demonstrate ways in which the internet can be used to bring people of disparate cultures together through music. Now, though, composer Eric Whitacre has gone even further.

He has harnessed the power of the web to form what he calls the "virtual choir". At the time of writing, the choir's YouTube film of Whitacre's soulful piece *Lux aurumque* has

been viewed nearly a million times. And it is a remarkable achievement.

Whitacre posted a film of himself conducting the work, offered the sheet music as a free download and invited viewers to join his choir. You can see the result above, or complete on YouTube. Posted in March, it featured 185 voices from 12 countries and resulted in a musical experience that works better than anyone might have expected. Whitacre himself

gives Scott Haines, who edited the final film (in keeping with the nature of the project, the two men have only met in person once) much of the credit and it does sound as though recorded in a cathedral rather than people's bedrooms. But any technical trickery doesn't make it less inspiring.

Whitacre, who has just been signed to Decca, promises more where that came from. Millions may be watching.



Five "cultural entrepreneurs" are recognised by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Breakthrough Fund in 2010, including Matt Peacock, founder of **Streetwise Opera**, who receives £83,000. Other recipients this year are the Whitworth Art Gallery's Maria Balshaw, Untitled Projects founder Stewart Laing, The Invisible Dot founder Simon Pearce and Eastside Projects founder Gavin Wade.



The BBC Philharmonic's 2010-11 season will be **Gianandrea Noseda's** ninth and final year as chief conductor, after which he will become conductor laureate, spending three weeks each year with the orchestra. During the coming season he will conduct works by Beethoven, Rachmaninov, Liszt and Strauss, and conclude his tenure with Verdi's *Otello*.