

Independent classical podcast: Eric Whitacre

Interview by Edward Seckerson

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There could be no better illustration of the globe-shrinking power of the internet that Eric Whitacre's 'virtual choir' recording of his own Lux Aurumque.

Edited from 185 separately recorded vocal parts from singers around the world, each performer individually guided by Whitacre's own conductor's video, the piece has become a YouTube phenomenon.

Whitacre's own story is no less astonishing. The fair-haired kid who looked like a throwback to the Beach Boys era had no formal musical training until he was 18 years old. The money from a McDonald's TV commercial bought him a synthesizer and a drum machine and with those tools he started writing songs in imitation of his pop heroes Yaz and Depeche Mode.

Nothing, though, could have prepared him for the epiphany of joining the University of Nevada choir and running through the Kyrie from Mozart's Requiem on the first day of rehearsal. From that moment his extraordinarily evocative choral music began to evolve.

That music is now sung all over the world and his debut album for Decca Light and Gold enshrines a haunting cross-section of it. In this exclusive audio podcast with Edward Seckerson, Whitacre tells of his amazing journey, his myriad influences - everyone from Radiohead to Rodgers and Hammerstein, his love affair with the human voice, and an ambitious new high-tec stage musical Paradise Lost - Shadows and Wings.



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