



Born in Nevada, in 1970, Eric joined a marching band at school and also played in a techno-pop group. His musical passions widened during his student years at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, inspired initially by the life-changing experience of singing Mozart's Requiem

Eric completed his first choral composition in 1990, studied Composition at the Juilliard School in New York, graduating as Master of Music in 1997 and went on to become Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK. He is currently based in Los Angeles, California, USA and is Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Light & Gold (translation: Lux Aurumque) is Eric's first album as composer and conductor. It won the 2012 Grammy® Award for Best Choral Recording, a harvest of five-star reviews and topped the US and UK classical album charts within a week of its release.

The range of Eric Whitacre's international reach increased in 2010 with the launch of his ground-breaking Virtual Choir. The online project, inspired by a young singer's video upload, was created by 185 singers from a dozen different countries, all singing Lux Aurumque together.

The project grew in numbers with Virtual Choir 5 receiving over 8,000 submissions from 120 countries. The Virtual Youth Choir, in association with UNICEF premiered at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. To date, the Virtual Choirs have registered over 60 million views.

The luminous beauty and harmonic richness of Eric's music crosses conventional borders and between different musical genres. His open-minded, compassionate approach acknowledges music's extraordinary capacity to unite people from all backgrounds.

Eric's remarkable global appeal has been enhanced by his achievements as conductor, innovator, broadcaster and charismatic public speaker, and the success of his recordings.

In addition to his extensive output for choir, Eric's instrumental works have been performed by some of the world's most distinguished orchestras, ensembles, and concert bands.

His list of works includes prestigious commissions for, among others, the BBC Proms, the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Minnesota Orchestra, Chanticleer, Julian Lloyd Webber and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and The King's Singers.

He has collaborated with multi award-winning composer and conductor Hans Zimmer, British soul artist Laura Mvula, Annie Lennox, composer Jeff Beal, accordionist Ksenija Sidorova and Norwegian singer-songwriter Marius Beck.

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Lux Aurumque (translation: Light and Gold / Light of Gold)

Lux - calida gravisque pura velut aurum - et canunt angeli molliter - modo natum.
Light - warm and heavy as pure gold - and the angels sing softly - to the newborn babe.

Written in 1999, the work was commissioned by the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, for Dr Jo-Michael Scheibe and based on the poem by Edward Esch.

Immediately struck by the poem's genuine elegant simplicity, Eric had it translated into Latin by celebrated American poet Charles Anthony Silvestri and 'waited for the right harmonies to shimmer and glow', believing 'that a simple approach was essential to the success of the work'.

The Seal Lullaby

Oh! Hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us,
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.

Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow,
Oh weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!

Rudyard Kipling, 1865-1936

In 2004, Eric met legendary composer Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked & Godspell*). Soon after, he received a call from a major film studio, to whom Stephen had recommended Eric, and they enquired if he was interested in writing music for an animated feature.

Incredibly excited, having always loved animation, he agreed. The creative executives explained that the intention was to make an epic adventure, a classic animated film based on Rudyard Kipling's *The White Seal*.

A beautiful, classic Kipling story: dark and rich and not at all condescending to children, the tale begins with the mother seal singing softly to her young pup, with the opening poem called *The Seal Lullaby*.

Struck deeply by its first beautiful words, "a simple, sweet Disney-esque song just came gushing out of me. I wrote it down as quickly as I could, had my wife record it while I accompanied her at the piano, and then dropped it off at the film studio".

Eric didn't hear anything for weeks and began to despair. Did they hate it? Was it too melodically complex? Did they even listen to it? Finally, he called them, begging to know the reason that they had rejected his tender little song. "Oh. We decided to make 'Kung Fu Panda' instead." Said the executive.

Eric didn't do anything further with it, except sing it to his baby son every night to get him to go to sleep, with "a success rate of less than 50%".

A few years later the Towne Singers graciously commissioned this arrangement of the work, with Eric grateful to them for giving it a new life.

The piece is dedicated to Stephen Schwartz, who has become Eric's friend and mentor.