

“Humanity’s most basic instincts are often expressed in discovery and music. Hubble Telescope’s images of the Deep Field, which fundamentally changed the way we understand the Universe, have been transformed into inspired music by composer Eric Whitacre. Combining the voices of thousands of singers from around the world in the Virtual Choir with symphony orchestra and Hubble’s extraordinary images of the cosmos, will a truly mind-blowing experience.”

Dr. Robert Williams | Astrophysicist, Former Director - Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI)

Join the World’s largest Virtual Choir | Eric Whitacre, Deep Field

Submissions are now open for Eric Whitacre’s Virtual Choir 5: Deep Field (VC5). Singers are invited to record and upload their video to become part of a new digital art film created by Eric Whitacre and Music Productions in collaboration with the Space Telescope Science Institute and 59 Productions.

Grammy-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre’s Deep Field, scored for orchestra, choir and electronics, is inspired by the revolutionary discoveries of the determined scientific visionaries working with the Hubble Space Telescope.

VC5 opens on Tuesday June 5 and closes on Wednesday June 27 at 11:59pm PST.

The Music: Twenty-eight years ago, NASA’s Space Shuttle Discovery launched the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit. The vast map of our universe that it produced stands as one of the most important scientific discoveries of the twentieth century. It is a story of human endeavor, wonder and extraordinary scientific ambition. This story was the inspiration behind Eric Whitacre’s Deep Field which was commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra and BBC Radio 3 for the BBC Proms.

The Film: The Deep Field film is being created by the extraordinary scientists at the Space Telescope Science Institute (Washington D.C) and the imagineers from Tony Award-winning 59 Productions (London). The teams will work to combine the extraordinary imagery taken by the Hubble Space Telescope to support the narrative of the music. The film will include never before seen imagery from Hubble as realized by STScI. The soundtrack will feature the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The Eric Whitacre Singers and singers from around the world in Virtual Choir 5. The film will be released online later in 2018 and will be featured in planetariums, space agency sites and galleries around the world.

Why Now: Virtual Choir 5 is being created in 2018, the year of NASA’s 60th anniversary and just before the successor to Hubble – the James Webb Space Telescope – will launch from a European Space Agency site in 2020. The JWST will allow humans to look back to the formation of the very first stars in the universe.

Accessibility: Eric’s first Virtual Choir in 5 years, VC5 is designed to be accessible to as wide a community as possible. Everything that you need to sign up, learn the music (by ear or with sheet music) and record your video is provided at virtualchoir5.com. Executive Producers, Music Productions, are working directly with specialist organizations to improve accessibility and reduce barriers for the underserved.

STEAM: VC5 is a celebration of STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design, Math. As part of the recording process, users will come across a series of fun challenges inspired by STEAM. Each completed challenge earns the user a badge and once all eighteen are successfully completed, you earn one entry into a prize draw to win a selection of prizes.

Scientific Research: As part of the Virtual Choir submission process, scientists from University College London, led by Dr. Daisy Fancourt, are conducting a large-scale, two-phase study into the benefits of virtual cultural experiences, the results of which will help support the research into the mental health of those in isolated spaces.

Sign up now and record at virtualchoir5.com.

“Astronomy has long permeated the arts, from architecture to poetry and literature to music. Together they enrich the human experience by allowing us to interpret the world around us in ways we can understand and push the boundaries of discovery further than we ever thought possible. The Hubble Space Telescope has not only transformed the science of astronomy, but also has revealed the beauty and richness of the fabric of the Universe. That the Hubble Deep Field became a source for musical inspiration to composer, Eric Whitacre, comes as no surprise. The image is emotionally stunning and intellectually inspiring.”

Dr. John Mace Grunsfeld | Hubble Astronaut and Former Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Sincere thanks to our partners that have helped to make this Virtual Choir possible:

Boosey and Hawkes: Boosey & Hawkes is the world's leading publisher of contemporary classical music, with a blue chip catalogue of 20th-century masters including Bartók, Bernstein, Britten, Copland, Prokofieff, Strauss and Stravinsky alongside an eminent front list of composers that includes John Adams, Louis Andriessen, Harrison Birtwistle, Unsuk Chin, Brett Dean, Detlev Glanert, Osvaldo Golijov, HK Gruber, Karl Jenkins, Magnus Lindberg, James MacMillan, Steve Reich and Mark-Anthony Turnage. The company has offices in London, New York and Berlin and a network of agents around the world. Boosey & Hawkes is part of Concord Music, the worldwide leader in the development, acquisition and management of recorded music, music publishing, and theatrical performance rights. <http://boosey.com>

Hal Leonard Corporation: Hal Leonard Corporation is the world's largest educational music publisher, with the #1 methods for learning guitar (the Hal Leonard Guitar Method), piano (the Faber Piano Method), and school music instruments (Essential Elements for Band and Strings), plus publications for learning virtually every instrument imaginable. Hal Leonard also publishes and distributes thousands of works for school, church and community choirs at all levels. In its catalog of more than 220,000 available titles, Hal Leonard represents many of the world's best known and most respected publishers, artists, songwriters, arrangers and musical instrument manufacturers. Its products are sold in more than 65 countries throughout the world through Hal Leonard offices and a large network of distributors. <http://halleonard.com>

Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY): Founded in 2007 by Iris Derke and Jonathan Griffith, DCINY gave its first public concert in January 2008. DCINY is a leading producer of dynamic musical entertainment performed in renowned American venues. Over 40,000 musicians and singers embodying 45 countries and all 50 US states have participated in DCINY productions. Since its inception, DCINY has produced over 200 concerts and 17 world premieres, performing to over 200,000 people. With its unforgettable, world-class concert experiences, empowering educational programs, and its global community of artists and audiences, DCINY changes lives through the power of music performance. DCINY commemorates its 10th Anniversary season in 2018. <http://DCINY.org>

Dunard Fund: The Dunard Fund is a generous, creative and strategically-minded philanthropic organization that makes donations principally for the training and performance of classical music at the highest standard, the education and display of visual arts at an international standard and the rehabilitation of endangered architectural masterpieces and the design and construction of new architectural masterpieces.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Eric Whitacre

Grammy-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre is one of the most popular musicians of our time. His concert music has been performed throughout the world by millions of amateur and professional musicians alike, while his ground-breaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from over 110 different countries. A graduate of the prestigious Juilliard School of Music, Eric was recently appointed Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale having completed a five-year term as Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK.

As conductor of the Eric Whitacre Singers he has released several chart-topping albums including 2011's bestselling *Light and Gold*. A sought-after guest conductor, Eric has conducted choral and instrumental concerts around the globe, including sold-out concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra. In addition to several collaborations with legendary Hollywood composer Hans Zimmer, he has worked with British pop icons Laura Mvula, Imogen Heap and Annie Lennox.

A charismatic speaker, Eric has given keynote addresses for many Fortune 500 companies and global institutions including Apple, Google, the World Economic Forum in Davos, the United Nations Speaker's Programme and two main stage TED talks.

The Virtual Choir

The Virtual Choir is a global phenomenon, creating a user-generated choir that brings together singers from around the world and their love of music in a new way through the use of technology. Singers record and upload their videos from locations all over the world. Each one of the videos is then synchronized and combined into one single performance to create the Virtual Choir.

It began in 2009 as a simple experiment in social media when one young woman – a fan of Eric's music – recorded a video of herself singing "Sleep" and shared it on YouTube. Moved by the video, Eric responded by sending a call out to his online fans to purchase Polyphony's recording, record themselves singing along to it, and upload the result. Eric was so impressed by the result that he decided to push the concept to the next level by recording himself conducting 'Lux Aurumque', asking Virtual Choir members to sing along to that and the first Virtual Choir was created.

Now with more than forty million views, the VC phenomenon has reached all corners of the world, inspiring more and more singers to join each year. The VC has grown from 185 singers in VC1 to an amazing 8,409 videos for VC4 from 101 countries.

The VC videos have featured on worldwide TV (ABC in the US and BBC in the UK) and as installations across the globe including the Millennium Bridge, London as part of the 2012 Olympics, the opening of the Titanic Belfast 100-year anniversary exhibition as well as at the closing plenary of Davos World Economic Forum at 2013. The VC has also been seen on the main stage of the revered TED conference, the Paley Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC at events for Google, UNICEF and the United Nations amongst others.

Recent spin-off projects have included "Glow", written especially for World of Color – Winter Dreams show which premiered at Disney California Adventure® Park, California and the first-ever Virtual Youth Choir, in partnership with UNICEF, which premiered at the opening ceremony of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Space Telescope Science Institute

Founded in 1982, we have helped guide the most famous observatory in history, the Hubble Space Telescope. Since its launch in 1990, we have performed the science operations for Hubble. We also lead the science and mission operations for the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), planned to launch in 2020. We will perform parts of the science operations for the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), in formulation for launch in the mid-2020s, and we are partners on several other NASA missions. Our staff conducts world-class scientific research; our Barbara A. Mikulski Archive for Space Telescopes (MAST) curates and disseminates data from over 20 astronomical missions; and we bring science to the world through internationally recognized news, education, and public outreach programs. We value our diverse workforce and civility in the workplace, and seek to be an example for others to follow.

59 Productions

59 Productions is the Olivier and Tony Award-winning company of artists behind the video design of the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games, globe-trotting smash hit, War Horse, the design and creative direction of the record-breaking David Bowie is exhibition and the decor concept design for The Met Ball, hosted by Anna Wintour. Led by directors Leo Warner, Mark Grimmer, Lysander Ashton and Richard Slaney, with the company's New York branch led by Ben Percy, 59 are world-leading specialists in design for stage and live events, the go-to team for generating creative and technical ideas to realize ambitious artistic projects.

Building on a decade of experience making theatrical work for some of the world's greatest venues – including the National Theatre, the Royal Opera House, The Metropolitan Opera and the Salzburg Festival – the Company has more recently become renowned for creating spectacular public artworks, projection-mapping some of the world's most iconic buildings, including the Sydney Opera House, Edinburgh Castle, and the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Contact

Meg Davies
Music Productions Ltd
Producer, Eric Whitacre & Virtual Choir
meg@musicprods.co.uk
+44 1753 783 739

Links

Virtual Choir 5: <http://virtualchoir5.com>
Eric Whitacre: <http://ericwhitacre.com>
Space Telescope Science Institute: <http://www.stsci.edu/>
59 Productions: <http://59productions.co.uk/>
Virtual Choir 1: Lux Aurumque: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7o7BrlbaDs>
Virtual Choir 2: Sleep: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WhWDCw3Mng>
Virtual Choir 3: Water Night: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3rRaL-Czxw>
Virtual Choir 4 'Fly to Paradise': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8oDnUga0JU>
TED Talk: A virtual choir 2,000 voice strong: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NENIXsW4pM>
Eric Whitacre Bios & Headshots: <http://ericwhitacre.com/resources>