

ERIC WHITACRE'S
VIRTUAL CHOIR 6

Sing Gently

"Ten years ago we created the Virtual Choir with a simple question: is it possible to make beautiful music together, no matter how far apart we are? After multiple Virtual Choir projects featuring over 20,000 singers from 124 different countries, the answer is a resounding **yes**. We continue the journey with a new piece I've written especially for the Virtual Choir during these challenging times, 'Sing Gently'. Come join us and let us once again make beautiful music together." *Eric Whitacre*

Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir 6: Sing Gently - inviting submissions from Friday May 1, 2020.

Grammy®-winning composer and conductor, Eric Whitacre, created his first Virtual Choir as a simple experiment in social media after a young woman recorded a video of herself singing one of his compositions and shared it on YouTube. Moved by her performance, Eric sent out a call asking singers to record their voice-parts and in 2010 the first Virtual Choir was created. The initiative gained attention after Eric was invited by the curator of TED, Chris Anderson, to speak at the annual TED Conference. That TedTalk has had close to 10m views; the Virtual Choirs have well over 40m online and millions more through live events and television broadcast. Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir has grown from 185 singers in Virtual Choir 1 to more than 8,000 singers aged 4-87, from 120 countries, in Virtual Choir 5.

"With everyone unexpectedly far apart from each one another I found myself thinking about the virtues of empathy, community and service, and a new Virtual Choir felt like a deeply human way to address all of those virtues. I tried as best I could to keep the lyrics of 'Sing Gently' straightforward and unadorned, to simply say what I felt needed to be said." *Eric Whitacre*

Over 30,000 people from around the world have signed-up to the Virtual Choir 6 community in the last week, and the site goes live for submissions on Friday May 1st. There will be a three-week period during which singers have their chance to learn the music, rehearse, record and upload their videos for inclusion in Virtual Choir 6: 'Sing Gently'. Learning tools are provided for singers of all ages and experience levels including those who do not read music, have sight or hearing impairments or lung conditions. Everyone is welcome, there is no cost to join and every person's recording will be included if it meets the technical criteria.

Alongside the Virtual Choir submission tools on the website, a ThinkTank of pre-recorded and live video will be available to the community. Vocal warm-ups, singing and composition workshops and creative and stimulating discussions with educators and performers will take place each week.

'Sing Gently' was written in April 2020 for choir (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) and piano. The piano track has been recorded by Sam Glicklich, a student at the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

To make Virtual Choir 6, Eric and producers, Music Productions, have teamed-up with two organisations that share their commitment to expanding access to the performing arts – the Colburn School and The NAMM Foundation.

A world-class performing arts school in Los Angeles, the Colburn School, provides music and dance tuition for students from beginners to those about to embark on professional careers. “At Colburn, we believe that the arts are essential to the life of a community and that all should have access to an outstanding performing arts education,” said Colburn President Sel Kardan. “We share Eric’s commitment to breaking down barriers and making music available to as many people as possible. Now more than ever, we see the unique power of the arts to bring us together.”

The NAMM Foundation is devoted to promoting and supporting music education and music-making for people of all ages and abilities. The NAMM Foundation is the presenting sponsor of Make Music Day in the US – a festival that is celebrated in more than 1000 cities across 120 countries on June 21st; a day where everyone is encouraged to make music and share free, live music virtually or in-person, from balconies to rooftops.

Research undertaken in 2018 as part of a collaborative study with Eric and University College (London) into virtual cultural experiences, showed that singing in a Virtual Choir boosts participants’ self-esteem, reduces feelings of social isolation, creates a strong sense of personal agency and promotes better mental health.

Submissions for Virtual Choir 6 will close on May 22, 2020 at 12pm Pacific Time. The audio for the final film will be edited and mastered by Floating Earth, and the film will be made by the award-winning creative team at 59 Productions with whom Eric, Music Productions, NASA and the Space Telescope Science Institute collaborated to make Deep Field: The Impossible Magnitude of Our Universe.

Virtual Choir 6: ‘Sing Gently’ will premier on YouTube early in the summer.
For more information, FAQs or to sign-up, visit virtualchoir6.com.

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Eric Whitacre
TedTalk

The Colburn School
NAMM Foundation

Music Productions
59 Productions

<u>Virtual Choir 1 (2010)</u>	Lux Aurumque	185 singers from 12 countries
<u>Virtual Choir 2 (2011)</u>	Sleep	1,999 singers from 58 countries
<u>Virtual Choir 3 (2012)</u>	Water Night	2,9445 singers from 73 countries
<u>Virtual Choir 4 (2013)</u>	Fly to Paradise	5,905 singers from 101 countries
<u>Virtual Choir 5 (2018)</u>	Deep Field	8,500 singers from 120 countries

Collaboration with NASA, the Space Telescope Science Institute and 59 Productions to create a bespoke film for Eric’s orchestral score inspired by the Hubble Space Telescope’s discovery of the Deep Field.

Virtual Youth Choir (2014) 2,292 singers under the age of 18 from 80 countries. Fundraiser for UNICEF, first seen in a stadium of 40,000 people; raised over \$6m in one night

World of Color Honor Choir (2013) - Glow - Disney theme park Anaheim.

Deep Field: The Impossible Magnitude of our Universe

Boosey & Hawkes Hal Leonard Corporation

Eric Whitacre:

Grammy® Award-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre is one of today's most popular and performed musicians. His works are programmed worldwide by orchestras and choirs, while his groundbreaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from over 120 different countries. A graduate of the prestigious Juilliard School of Music, Eric served two terms as Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale concluding in 2020, following five years as Composer in Residence at the University of Cambridge, UK.

As conductor of the Eric Whitacre Singers, he has released chart-topping albums including Grammy®-winning *Light and Gold* and *Water Night* on Universal Decca. In high demand as guest conductor, he has drawn capacity audiences to concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Choir, London Symphony Orchestra, Flemish Radio Choir, BBC Singers and the New World Symphony. Eric has collaborated with legendary Hollywood composer Hans Zimmer and British pop icons Laura Mvula, Imogen Heap and Annie Lennox, also receiving major classical commissions for the BBC Proms, Minnesota Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops, Rundfunkchor Berlin, National Symphony Orchestra, The Tallis Scholars, Chanticleer and The King's Singers.

His orchestral work *Deep Field* featuring Virtual Choir 5 became the foundation for a pioneering audiovisual collaboration between Music Productions, the Space Telescope Science Institute and film-makers 59 Productions. *Deep Field: The Impossible Magnitude of our Universe* has been seen in museums, concert halls, space centers and festivals around the world. Inspired by Hubble Space Telescope's discovery of the Deep Field image, the film celebrates the beauty, size and scale of our universe, extraordinary scientific discovery and human endeavor.

A charismatic speaker, Eric has given keynote addresses for many Fortune 500 companies and global institutions, from Apple and Google to the World Economic Forum in Davos and the United Nations Speaker's Programme. His two mainstage talks at the hugely influential TED conference in Long Beach CA received standing ovations.

5.1.20