



# ERIC WHITACRE

## CHORAL WORKS

### VOLUME 1

A CAPPELLA WORKS, 1991-2001

## BYU SINGERS

RONALD STAHELI, CONDUCTOR

**DIGITALLY REMASTERED**

ERIC WHITACRE: THE COMPLETE A CAPPELLA WORKS, 1991-2001





Brigham Young University Singers and Eric Whitacre have enjoyed a close personal and musical relationship for years. BYU Singers conductor Dr. Ronald Staheli first made contact with the young composer when he was still a student at The Juilliard School. Since that time BYU Singers have performed Whitacre's music with great success around the world, beginning with their 1996 concert at the Sydney World Choral Symposium. Whitacre first visited the choir on campus the following year, where he sat in on the first of many recording sessions of his works. In 1999 BYU Singers premiered "When David Heard," a piece commissioned specifically for the choir's Carnegie Hall concert, and performed "Water Night" that same evening. Whitacre continued his visits to rehearsals and recording sessions on BYU campus as his works were prepared for the original release of this album, then titled *Eric Whitacre: The Complete A Cappella Works, 1991–2001*.



Dr. Ronald Staheli and Eric Whitacre, 2002

Producer (2002): Sandefur Schmidt  
Executive producer for Arsis Audio (2002):  
Robert Schuneman  
Remaster producer and executive producer  
for BYU Records (2014): Ben Fales  
Recording engineer: Jon Holloman  
Editing engineer: Troy Sales  
Mastering engineer (2002): Fred Vogler  
Remastering engineer (2014): Troy Sales  
Licensing: Brad Robins

Graphic design: Dale Boman and Ben Fales  
Photography: Sandefur Schmidt  
Cover Image: ©iStockphoto.com/vladm

*Recorded at the Leid Gallery, Brigham Young  
University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah (tracks  
1, 5, & 10: Winter Semesters 1997 & 1999;  
tracks 2–4, 6–9, 11–12: Winter Semester 2002)*





In 2002 Whitacre requested that BYU Singers and Dr. Staheli collaborate with him in an interest session at the American Choral Directors Association's Western Division convention. During the session Whitacre stated that Dr. Staheli understood his music more than any other conductor and that he was able to make more of the music than Whitacre had originally envisioned when writing the piece. When one attendee asked, "What sound are you looking for when you compose?" Whitacre quickly pointed to the choir and said, "This sound." The choir, in turn, has relished every opportunity to sing Whitacre's music; it is a favorite of the singers and audiences in the way it speaks to the soul through text and music.

Melding Whitacre's appreciation for BYU Singers with Dr. Staheli's and the choir's artistic and spirit-filled performances of his choral compositions resulted in a recording that has been a best seller since its original release in 2002. With this CD in hand, autograph seekers have shown up at concerts and symposiums in places as diverse and faraway as Sweden and South Africa.

Now, just over ten years after the original release of this best-selling album, we are pleased to reintroduce the Eric Whitacre and BYU Singers choral collaboration in this digitally remastered album, *Eric Whitacre Choral Works, Volume 1: A Cappella Works 1991–2001*.

*This album was recorded at the specific request of the composer after several visits to Brigham Young University campus. Eric Whitacre was involved in all recording sessions. BYU Singers members from three years recorded this album: 1996–97, 1998–99, and 2001–02. The success of this album led to a second album of Eric Whitacre's music, which included recordings of BYU Singers, BYU Concert Choir, and BYU Women's Chorus. This second album was originally released in 2008 with the title Brigham Young University Choirs and Eric Whitacre 2 and was digitally remastered and rereleased in 2014 with the new title Eric Whitacre Choral Works, Volume 2.*





## THE ARTISTS

### BYU SINGERS

Brigham Young University Singers is a highly select ensemble of 40 skilled and versatile singer musicians that is known for polished and moving concert performances. Under the baton of founding conductor Dr. Ronald Staheli, the choir has gained the reputation of being one of the finest university choirs in the United States and has toured Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, the British Isles, West Africa, and South Africa since its organization in 1984. Their extensive touring in the United States and abroad, along with many audio recordings and TV broadcasts, has given the choir a well-deserved reputation for excellence and artistry. Both critics and audience members report the ensemble to be musically precise with an impressive flair for stylish and heartfelt interpretation.

### RONALD STAHELI, CONDUCTOR

Dr. Ronald Staheli is the choral and conducting division coordinator and the director of graduate studies in choral music at Brigham Young University. He also regularly appears as conductor in performances involving the BYU combined choirs and orchestra. He has traveled widely as a clinician and guest conductor and has become known for what a colleague calls a profound sense of phrasing and articulation that informs all his work. In July of 2001 Dr. Staheli conducted an all-Mozart concert with choirs at the Zimriya International Choral Festival. Dr. Staheli was a guest lecturer at the Fourth International Symposium on Choral Music in Sydney, Australia, where BYU Singers also performed concerts in the world-famous opera house and town hall. Dr. Staheli is a fine pianist and regularly arranges many selections performed by BYU Singers, several of which are now published.

*For more information about BYU Singers, Dr. Staheli, and their recordings, please visit [singers.byu.edu](http://singers.byu.edu).*





Recording session with BYU Singers, Dr. Ronald Staheli (center), and Eric Whitacre (bottom right) in the Leid Gallery, BYU Museum of Art, 1999





## WATER NIGHT

Night with the eyes of a horse that trembles in the night,  
night with eyes of water in the field asleep  
is in your eyes, a horse that trembles is in  
your eyes of secret water.

Eyes of shadow-water,  
eyes of well-water,  
eyes of dream-water.

Silence and solitude,  
two little animals moon-led,  
drink in your eyes,  
drink in those waters.

If you open your eyes,  
night opens, doors of musk,  
the secret kingdom of the water opens  
flowing from the center of the night.

And if you close your eyes,  
a river, a silent and beautiful current, fills you from within,  
flows forward, darkens you:

Night brings its wetness to beaches in your soul.

[Dr. Staheli] had recorded my choral version of “Water Night” [in 1997], and his recording is, in my opinion, the quintessential performance of that piece. He seemed to find such powerful beauty in the rests—empty moments that became electric in his hands.

—Eric Whitacre

## THREE SONGS OF FAITH

### I WILL WADE OUT

i will wade out  
till my thighs are steeped in burning flowers  
I will take the sun in my mouth  
and leap into the ripe air  
Alive  
with closed eyes  
to dash against darkness  
in the sleeping curves of my body  
Shall enter fingers of smooth mastery  
with chasteness of sea-girls  
Will I complete the mystery  
of my flesh  
I will rise  
After a thousand years  
lipping  
flowers  
And set my teeth in the silver of the moon

### HOPE, FAITH, LIFE, LOVE

hope, faith, life, love  
dream, joy, truth, soul

### I THANK YOU GOD FOR MOST THIS AMAZING DAY

i thank You God for most this amazing  
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees





and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth  
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay  
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing  
breathing any—lifted from the no  
of all nothing—human merely being  
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and  
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

## CLOUDBURST

La lluvia . . .  
(*The rain . . .*)

Ojos de agua de sombra,  
Ojos de agua de pozo,  
Ojos de agua de sueño.

(*Eyes of shadow-water, eyes of well-water, eyes of dream-  
water.*)

Soles azules, verdes remolinos,  
picos de luz que abren astros como granadas.  
Dime, tierra quemada, no hay agua?

hay sólo sangre, sólo hay polvo,  
sólo pisadas de pies desnudos sobre la espina?

(*Blue suns, green whirlwinds, birdbeaks of light pecking  
open pomegranate stars. But tell me, burnt earth, is there*

*no water? Only blood, only dust, only naked footsteps on  
the thorns?)*

La lluvia despierta . . .  
(*The rain awakens . . .*)

Hay que dormir con los ojos abiertos,  
hay que soñar con las manos,  
soñemos sueños activos de río buscando su cauce,  
sueños de sol soñando sus mundos,  
hay que soñar en voz alta,  
hay que cantar hasta que el canto eche  
raíces, tronco, ramas, pájaros, astros,  
hay que desenterrar la palabra perdida,  
recordar lo que dicen la sangre y la marea,  
la tierra y el cuerpo,  
volver al punto de partida . . .

(*We must sleep with our open eyes, we must dream with  
our hands, we must dream the dreams of a river seeking  
its course, of the sun dreaming its worlds, we must dream  
aloud, we must sing till the song puts forth roots, trunk,  
branches, birds, stars, we must find the lost word, and  
remember what the blood, the tides, the earth, and the  
body say, and return to the point of departure . . .*)

La lluvia . . .  
(*The rain . . .*)

## SLEEP

The evening hangs beneath the moon,  
A silver thread on darkened dune.





Eric Whitacre listening during a recording session, 1999

With closing eyes and resting head  
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,  
A thousand pictures fill my head,  
I cannot sleep, my mind's a-flight;  
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,  
A frightening shadow, flickering light;  
Then I surrender unto sleep,  
Where clouds of dream give second sight.

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,  
Of flying wings and soaring leap  
As I surrender unto sleep,  
As I surrender unto sleep.

## THREE FLOWER SONGS

### I HIDE MYSELF

I hide myself within my flower,  
That wearing on your breast,  
You, unsuspecting, wear me too—  
And angels know the rest.

I hide myself within my flower,  
That, fading from your vase,  
You, unsuspecting, feel for me  
Almost a loneliness.

### WITH A LILY IN YOUR HAND

With a lily in your hand  
I leave you, o my night love!  
Little widow of my single star  
I find you.

Tamer of dark butterflies!  
I keep along my way.  
After a thousand years are gone  
you'll see me,  
o, my night love!

By the blue footpath,  
tamer of dark stars,  
I'll make my way.  
Until the universe  
can fit inside  
my heart.





## GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely Rose—  
Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
That now she knows,  
When I resemble her to thee,  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,  
And shuns to have her graces spied,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts where no men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired:

Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die—that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
May read in thee;  
How small a part of time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

## WHEN DAVID HEARD

When David heard that Absalom was slain he went up into  
his chamber over the gate and wept, my son, my son, O  
Absalom my son, would God I had died for thee!

Dr. Ronald Staheli, more than any other conductor I have ever worked with, understands my music. He is that rare musician who discovers more music in the music than the composer even realized was there. So when I received the Barlow Commission to write a work for his amazing choir, I knew it had to be something special. The previous year Ron had recorded my choral version of “Water Night,” and his recording is, in my opinion, the quintessential performance of that piece. He seemed to find such powerful beauty in the rests—empty moments that became electric in his hands. So as I set out to write “When David Heard,” I decided that my first and most principal musical motive would be silence.

Setting this text was such a lonely experience, and even now just writing these words I am moved to tears. I wrote maybe 200 pages of sketches trying to find the perfect balance between sounds and silence, always simplifying, and by the time I finished a year later I was profoundly changed: older, I think, and quieted a little. I still have a hard time listening to the recording.

“When David Heard” was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition for the Brigham Young University Singers and is dedicated with love and silence to Dr. Ronald Staheli.

—Eric Whitacre





## LUX AURUMQUE

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.)*

## LEONARDO DREAMS OF HIS FLYING MACHINE

i. Tormented by visions of flight and falling,  
More wondrous and terrible each than the last,  
Master Leonardo imagines an engine  
To carry a man up into the sun . . .  
And as he's dreaming the heavens call him,  
softly whispering their siren-song:  
"Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni á volare."  
*("Leonardo. Leonardo, come fly.")*  
L'uomo colle sua congeginate e grandi ale,  
facendo forza contro alla resistente aria.  
*(A man with wings large enough and duly connected might  
learn to overcome the resistance of the air.)*

ii. As the candles burn low he paces and writes,  
Releasing purchased pigeons one by one  
Into the golden Tuscan sunrise . . .  
  
And as he dreams, again the calling,  
The very air itself gives voice:

"Leonardo. Leonardo, vieni á volare."  
*("Leonardo. Leonardo, come fly.")*

iii. Vicina all'elemento del fuoco . . .  
*(Close to the sphere of elemental fire . . .)*  
Scratching quill on crumpled paper,  
Rete, canna, filo, carta.  
*(Net, cane thread, paper.)*  
Images of wing and frame and fabric fastened tightly.  
. . . sulla suprema sottile aria.  
*(. . . in the highest and rarest atmosphere.)*

iv. As the midnight watchtower tolls,  
Over rooftop, street and dome,  
The triumph of a human being ascending  
In the dreaming of a mortal man.

Leonardo steels himself,  
takes one last breath,  
and leaps . . .  
"Leonardo, vieni á volare! Leonardo, sognare!"  
*("Leonardo, come fly! Leonardo, dream!")*





## BYU SINGERS, 1996–97 AND 1998–99 [TRACKS 1, 5, 10]

Joel Adair	Arian G. Johnson	Robert Lochhead	Sandra H. Schmidt
Jared Anderson	Dacia S. Gray	Trevor Lucas	Steven Showalter
Courtney P. Atack	Daniel J. Hall	Tracy M. Schwartz	David Simmons
Darrell Babidge	Tracy Hall	Emily M. Malinka	Nathan Skene
Krista F. Baer	Eric Halliday	Joseph Malinka	Jeff Slade
Dwight Bigler	Tad Harris	Andrew McKee	Dean Smurthwaite
Cyndi H. Brooks	André Hicken	Wendy A. McNiven	Cami T. Madsen
David Brooks	Chris Hopkin	Erika C. McCauley	David Thomas
Tiffany C. Calás	Rachelle H. Hrnčirik	Erin McOmber	Shane Warby
Karissa C. Gardner	Joni Jensen	Elizabeth T. Molinaro	Darren Watts
Howie Cleavinger	Nathaniel Johnson	Jonathan Moody	Emily W. Toronto
Angela D. Davis	Scott Johnson	Kimberly K. Moody	Amy A. Weaver
Randall Davis	Mathew Kieffer	Heather C. Morrey	Mary Ann M. Weed
Adam Dawson	Lindsay R. Killian	Elizabeth P. Murdock	LaRke C. Witten
Bryan Elkins	Lindsay Killian	Caroline C. Owens	Timothy Workman
Adam Eyre	Karen Knudsen	Rachel B. Porcaro	Cherilyn Worthen
Rob Gerlach	Kate S. Kocherhans	Scott Perry	Marni H. Yarrington
Amy W. Glenn	Rex Kocherhans	David Robertson	
Thomas Glenn	Andrew Larson	Emily N. Schaumann	

## BYU SINGERS, 2001–02 [TRACKS 2–4, 6–9, 11–12]

Josh Baer	Eric Hart	James Noble	Michael Thatcher
John Bonner	Melissa Heath	Angela B. Owen	David Thomas
Robert Brandt	Jonathan Johnson	Ken Owen	Ben Torgerson
Jill L. Chipman	Emily D. Kalteich	Henry Patterson	Shane Warby
Andrew Crane	Kate S. Kocherhans	Lorena Perry	Daniel Webb
Brigitte B. Dumont	Jennie Litster	Scott Perry	Amy K. Weibell
Arly C. Evensen	Keith McCauley	Lori R. Davis	Brent Wells
Sarah Fawcett	Heather W. McMurray	Rachel R. Cox	Andrew Wheelwright
Karissa C. Gardner	James McMurray	Nate Robinson	Spencer Wheelwright
Cherie C. Hall	Wendy A. McNiven	Mark Steed	Jill Winters
Jeanette G. Hansen	John Nebeker	Heather N. Stewart	Jonathan Yarrington





# THE MUSIC

## ERIC WHITACRE, COMPOSER (b. 1970)

1. **WATER NIGHT [ 1995 ]**

*Text by Octavio Paz (1914–98), English translation by Muriel Rukeyser (1913–80)*

**THREE SONGS OF FAITH [ 1999 ]**

*Text by E. E. Cummings (1894–1962)*

2. **I WILL WADE OUT**

3. **HOPE, FAITH, LIFE, LOVE**

4. **I THANK YOU GOD FOR MOST THIS AMAZING DAY**

5. **CLOUDBURST [ 1992 ]**

*Text by Octavio Paz*

6. **SLEEP [ 2000 ]**

*Text by Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965)*

**THREE FLOWER SONGS**

7. **I HIDE MYSELF [ 1992 ]**

*Text by Emily Dickinson (1830–86)*

8. **WITH A LILY IN YOUR HAND [ 1992 ]**

*Text by Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), English trans. by Jerome Rothenberg (b. 1931)*

9. **GO, LOVELY ROSE [ 1991 ]**

*Text by Edmund Waller (1606–87)*

10. **WHEN DAVID HEARD [ 1999 ]**

*Text from 2 Samuel 18:33, Old Testament*

11. **LUX AURUMQUE [ 2001 ]**

*Text by Edward Esch (b. 1970), Latin translation by Charles Anthony Silvestri*

12. **LEONARDO DREAMS OF HIS FLYING MACHINE [ 2001 ]**

*Text by Charles Anthony Silvestri with Italian fragments taken from the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*

### PUBLISHERS

Walton Music Corporation: Tracks 1–6, 10–12

Santa Barbara Music Publishing: Tracks 7–9

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