<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Whitacre Background At a Glance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Context At a Glance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Whitacre Knowledge Base</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Early Life</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Musical Training &amp; Development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Personal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Inspiration</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Composing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Albums</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Awards &amp; Honours</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Virtual Choir</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Top 10 Albums</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Other Influences</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Speaking</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Style</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Conducting</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Quotes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Anthony Silvestri</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvestri on Sleep</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to Sleep</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poems</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the poem Sleep</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarities with Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost: 23

Interviews With Eric Whitacre 24

Whitacre on Composing 28

History of Virtual Choir 31

Choral Music in Context 32

What is a Choir? 32

How Does a Choir Work? 33

Choral Music Through History 35

Medieval Music (Middle Ages) 35

Renaissance 35

Baroque 36

Classical 36

Romantic 37

Twentieth Century 37

Today (Twenty First Century) 38

Analysis of Sleep 39

Key Points 39

Form in Brief 39

Detailed Elements Analysis By Section 40

Section: A 40

Section: A’ 46

Section: B 50

Section: A”(+B) 54
Introduction

Welcome to the first Music Works Study Guide, featuring Sleep (for SATB chorus) by London-based American composer, Eric Whitacre. In this study guide you will find key data from a huge range of books, webpages, interviews, blogs, videos and other sources brought together into one resource. This guide is full of hyperlinks to the primary sources of the information, so teachers and students can verify the information and delve further into the topic. This material is not designed for a particular curriculum or to prepare students for any particular mode of assessment, but, instead, aims to provide the most valuable information on a given topic in an accessible way.

Eric Whitacre is undoubtedly one of the most popular classical composers of the Twenty First Century with more than 1,000,000 copies of sheet music sold and a huge international following in social media. Whitacre signed on to a rare long-term recording contract with Decca, which came with his own professional choir, the Eric Whitacre Singers made up of some of London’s finest choristers. His innovative use of social media, to bring together a ‘virtual choir’ of strangers from around the globe, captured the imagination of the choral world.

Sleep, Whitacre’s best-known and most performed work, was chosen as the Virtual Choir test piece back in 2009, and was used again for Virtual Choir 2.0 in 2011. Whitacre was hoping for many more singers the second time, but instead of the expected 900 singers, some 1752 singers in 58 countries recorded themselves to Whitacre’s pre-recorded conductor track and submitted their recordings on YouTube. Now at version 3.0 (with Virtual Choir 4.0 in planning stages at time of writing), Virtual Choir continues to grow beyond anyone’s expectations.

As the most popular composition of one of the most popular choral composers today, Sleep is well worth investigating. On close study, Sleep reveals many of the composer’s trademark composition techniques and devices, and at the same time it offers opportunities to delve into a fascinating story and explore the intimate link between poetry and music (which, in this case has an unexpected twist!).

For an introduction to Sleep I encourage readers to explore the following links (time indicated):
› Whitacre talks at TED about his background and Virtual Choir 2.0 link (14:35)
› Bob Edwards interviews Eric Whitacre on radio link (45:09)
› Eric Whitacre introducing his first album Light & Gold link (5:09)

The score references and bar numbers in this resource refer to the Sleep score included in the book “Light & Gold” published by Chester Music rather than the individual sheet music published by Walton Music. Please note that the bar numbers in these two publications do not match! If using the Walton sheet music, please start by renumbering the bars with the first complete bar as bar 1. Also, the Chester score includes a piano reduction which will be of great benefit when studying the harmonic language of this work.

For more resources in support of this unit, including CDs, scores and teacher resources visit the Music Works Study Guides page at www.stephenlange.wordpress.com

Regards
Stephen Lange
January 2013
Eric Whitacre, Sleep

Eric Whitacre At a Glance

Born 2 January 1970, Reno, Nevada, U.S.A

Could not read music until first formal music instruction, age 18

His first choir rehearsal (singing Mozart) changed his life

Composed and published his first piece for choir age 21

BA in Music, and Masters degree in Composition (Juilliard)

Became professional composer age 27

Influenced by a wide variety of music styles and genres

Critically acclaimed and popular (unusual to be both)
Eric Whitacre, *Sleep*

**Sleep Context At a Glance**

- **Commissioned in 1999 by Julia Armstrong, in memory of her parents.**
- **The text was to be her favourite poem Robert Frost’s *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening***
- **Whitacre took his time over the composition of the work “crafting it note by note.”**
- **Premiered in Austin, U.S.A, October 2000.**
- **Discovered Frost’s poem was still under copyright control. Forbidden from using the text.**
- **In 2011 *Sleep* used again for Virtual Choir 2.0, with over 2000 contributions all over the world.**
- **In 2009 a fan posted a video of herself singing *Sleep* on Youtube.**
- **The idea of a ‘virtual choir’, made up of piecing together a group of such videos, was born.**
- **In 2009 Whitacre now prefers Silvestri’s poem to the original and will never go back to the Frost poem.**
- **Asked poet & friend Charles Anthony Silvestri to set new words to the music he had already written.**

*In 2009 *Sleep* used as the Virtual Choir test piece in 2009. *Sleep* now Whitacre’s most popular work.*
Eric Whitacre Knowledge Base

1 Early Life

- Born January 2, 1970, Reno, Nevada, U.S.A
- Began playing piano at an early age but with no formal training
- Played trumpet in Junior High Marching Band for a short time (again, no formal training)
- First discovered music when cast in a national ad for McDonalds, age 14. Spent his earnings on a synth (and clothes!)
  - Purchased an Ensoniq ESQ-1 and a EMU Drumulator
  - Whitacre says: "The very first pieces of what would become a lifelong fetish with electronic instruments"
- Played synth in a techno-pop band
  - Wrote many songs influenced by Depeche Mode, Alphaville and others
  - Longed to be a member of these bands (and Duran Duran)

2 Musical Training & Development

- See radio interview with Bob Edwards - lots of background info
- BA in musical education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (first formal music training)
  - Whitacre unable to read music at start of degree
- Reluctant to join a choir because of the outfits his High School Show Choir was made to wear.
  - Convinced by friends to join a choir, with the promise of cute sopranos and a trip to Mexico
- First choral piece he sang, Kyrie from Mozart's "Requiem", aged 18, changed his life
- For the rest of his degree he spent many hours in the UNLV library, listening to recordings and following scores
- Studied composition with avant garde Ukrainian composer Virko Baley
  - and choral conducting with David Weiller.
  - Whitacre credits Weiller with the inspiration that put the young composer on the musical path
- Completed BA in Music, 1995 (took seven years to complete BA, kept dropping out)
- Went on to a Master's degree in composition at the Juilliard School, New York, studying with Pulitzer Prize and Oscar-winning composer, John Corigliano.
- At 21 he wrote his for choir piece, a setting of "Go, Lovely Rose" for his college choir and presented the composition as a gift to David Weiller, which was then published
- At the age of 23 Whitacre completed his first piece for Wind Orchestra, "Ghost Train", which has now been recorded over 40 times
- Graduated from Juilliard in 1997 (age 27) and moved to Los Angeles and following the success of "Ghost Train", Whitacre decided to become a full time professional composer

Following the success of "Ghost Train", Whitacre decided to become a full time professional composer.