

An essay by Bryan Sanders, Hendersonville High School, TN

Topic: "Who is your favorite composer and why? How has this person influenced you in your musical studies?"



A composer is the essential component in spreading the joy of music and inspiring the world through touching compositions. Without the creative minds behind it all, the amazing art of music would not exist. Although it is a broad spectrum from classical music to contemporary music, there is a special unity between each genre's composers, that being the love and passion for the universal language. Impacting the world of modern music, Eric Whitacre is such a profound composer in the music industry because of his unconventional and influential style that identifies his original works. He is also deeply admired due to his versatile musical abilities displayed throughout his compositions and, thus, has quickly become my favorite composer.

American composer Eric Whitacre employs an unorthodox style to his compositions, causing him to be a "rare thing, a modern composer who is both popular and original" (The Daily Telegraph 2). He approaches his works as though they are merely an extension of himself, expressing his utmost inner feelings. His uniquely elaborate chords are layered effectively to create a powerful delivery, stirring the emotions of his audience and exhibiting his true self. The fullness and intensity of his music fully captures his audience and forms an emotional relationship between the notes he has written and its listener. Whitacre's compositions give music a whole new meaning with his beautiful style and musical texture. His easily recognizable musical style has had its imitations amongst other composers, but Whitacre was the trailblazer for this unprecedented genre of music. The style is exclusively its own because Whitacre did not follow the path already paved; he paved his own path with others to quickly follow in his footsteps. Eric Whitacre is my favorite composer because he did not create what has already been created. His bravery in sharing his fresh style has influenced and inspired me as a composer myself to go beyond what others have composed and find my own distinct style that represents me to express to the world.

Connecting to a larger range of music lovers around the world, Eric Whitacre is versatile in his composing capabilities, writing original scores for both band and choir. The majority of his works for band are very quick and lively, obtaining obscure sounds to create a different musical effect, such as the screams in his original "Godzilla Eats Las Vegas!". In contrast, many of his choral pieces are slow in tempo and characterized by angelic voicing and religious overtones, expressed in his work "Alleluia". Not only is Eric Whitacre versatile in the sense of composing

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for different types of ensembles, but he is also flexible in changing a listener's experience with each work through the use of varied tempos and effects. Occasionally, he will write a choral piece and later arrange the work for a band setting, allowing his musical ideas to obtain a different timbre. His creative abilities have allowed him to not only be a composer, but a conductor, an innovator, a speaker, and an internet sensation. He embraces modern technology and has reached out to a new audience on his musical journey by creating "Virtual Choir", an online choral society consisting of singers from all over the world joining as one through the power of music. Due to his multifaceted skills, he continues to strengthen his fan base and give his listeners a wide variety of music. By keeping up with the ever changing tempo of society and expanding his capabilities, Eric Whitacre has influenced me to compose and teach both realms of music, sharing my passion for the art and connecting to many more people in the world.

Music is the universal language that is understood by all, connecting people around the world. Moving people with his music, Eric Whitacre has become so well known in the music industry because of his stylistic innovations and well-rounded musical aptitude. Eric Whitacre and his music have immensely affected my career decision to become a band director and, ultimately, a composer to share the amazing art and touch other's lives. I hope my music will make a difference in someone's life, similar to the way that Eric Whitacre's music has impacted my life.

Works Cited

Sweeting, Adam. "Eric Whitacre, Union Chapel, Review." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group, 3 Aug. 2010. Web. 14 June 2015.