

CONDUCTOR/ COMPOSER ERIC WHITACRE UNVEILS BEHIND-THE-SCENES DOCUMENTARY ABOUT MAKING MUSIC DURING PANDEMIC

Free video streaming now available.

PALO ALTO, CA (25 August 2021) — Grammy Award-winning conductor and composer **Eric Whitacre**, whose worldwide audiences number in the millions, has released a behind-the-scenes documentary showing how young singers struggling with the loss of making live music were able to unite during the pandemic to perform together virtually. Titled ***Sing Gently: Behind the Scenes with JackTrip and Eric Whitacre***, this compelling video shares how profoundly affected young singers were when COVID 19 protocols prohibited singing in groups, and how deeply moved Whitacre was when finally able to conduct his first ever live online choral performance using a new groundbreaking tech created by Silicon Valley startup **JackTrip Labs**. Featuring dozens of young chorus members singing live from locations hundreds of miles apart, the concert was livestreamed in May 2021 and watched by thousands. The performance marked the World Premiere of the SSA (youth voices) arrangement of “Sing Gently”—a touching paean to the power of music viewed by millions around the world—performed live by young choristers from **Ragazzi Boys Chorus**, **San Francisco Girls Chorus**, and **Southern California Children’s Chorus** singing together in real time as conducted by Whitacre.

In this short film, Whitacre and the young singers describe their feelings of isolation, frustration trying to sing with cohorts using existing video conferencing tools, and the excitement of finally performing together in real-time after more than a year apart. ***Sing Gently: Behind the Scenes with JackTrip and Eric Whitacre*** is available to stream FREE on Whitacre’s YouTube page (youtube.com/c/EricWhitacre), premiering **9am PDT/ 12pm EDT/ 5pm BST**. For more information the public may visit jacktrip.org/ericwhitacre.

Whitacre is widely considered the pioneer of Virtual Choirs, in which a single stirring vocal work is created by splicing together individually recorded performances by dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of singers. Since 2010, his works have been viewed and shared around the world by millions of viewers. In a remarkable feat last year, Whitacre collected more than 17,572 singers from 129 countries to perform his musical composition “Sing Gently”—a deeply moving piece that has now

garnered nearly two million views on YouTube. He followed that feat this summer by assembling virtual choristers to sing together in real time performing a new arrangement of that uplifting work, re-created for treble voices (First Soprano, Second Soprano, Alto). The performance was made possible by JackTrip Virtual Studio technology that allows singers and musicians to hear each other and perform in unison from their homes via normal internet connections.

Grammy Award-winning composer and conductor **Eric Whitacre** is among today's most popular musicians. His works are programmed world-wide and his groundbreaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from more than 145 countries over the last decade. His compositions have been widely recorded and his debut album as a conductor on Universal, *Light and Gold*, went straight to the top of the charts, earning him a Grammy. As a guest conductor he has drawn capacity audiences to concerts with many of the world's leading orchestras and choirs, in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, and Buckingham Palace. A graduate of Juilliard School of Music, Whitacre completed his second term as Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 2020, following five years as Composer in Residence at the University of Cambridge (UK). In 2021, Eric was named a Yamaha Artist. His long-form work *The Sacred Veil*, a profound meditation on love, life and loss, was premiered by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and released on Signum Records in 2020. His recent collaboration with Spitfire Audio resulted in a trail-blazing vocal sample library, became an instant best-seller and is used by composers the world-over. Later in 2021, Whitacre will launch the Virtual School with its first course: *The Beautiful Mess: Lessons in Composition and Creativity*. "When I created the first virtual choir video, I never anticipated the immense popularity," said Whitacre. "Musicians want to come together to create something beautiful, and now JackTrip Virtual Studio provides them the tool to do so, dissolving the technological barriers that kept them apart. This technology offers the future of music, allowing musicians a feeling closer to the ephemeral beauty and the electricity of performing live together in the same room."

JackTrip Labs was spun out as an independent public-benefit corporation from the JackTrip Foundation, a collaboration between Stanford University's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) and Silicon Valley software entrepreneurs. JackTrip Virtual Studio, the online platform which allows users to play music together remotely over the internet, was initially developed in Silicon Valley during the Coronavirus pandemic as a platform for local choirs, who had discovered they were unable to sing together over the internet due to the inherent audio lag time in meeting spaces like

Zoom (as anyone who has tried to sing “Happy Birthday” has experienced). Unlike other virtual rehearsal/performance solutions which serve only small groups, JackTrip Virtual Studio can be used simultaneously by groups of over 100 participants, and offers CD quality, lossless audio, while all other applications compress audio, significantly lowering the sound quality. A beta version of JackTrip Virtual Studio is currently available free of cost—prototype plug-and-play devices are available for purchase and build it yourself plans are offered by the company, making it easy for new users to get started creating music together digitally. JackTrip has now expanded its reach to users in more than 50 geographic centers around the world, with universities, music teachers, professional musicians, theatre groups and more utilizing JackTrip to rehearse and perform together online. JackTrip Labs won “Best in Show” at 2021 Summer NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) and recently announced its partnership with the world’s largest print music publisher and leader in digital music technology, **Hal Leonard**, to distribute its plug-and-play devices. For more information about JackTrip Labs the public may visit **JackTrip.org**.

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MEDIA: High resolution photos can be downloaded from:
<http://cbpr.co/press/JackTripEricWhitacre/>

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