

shadow water music

Eric Whitacre



# Nox Aurumque

Charles Anthony Silvestri

SATB a cappella

# Nox Aurumque

## About the Work:

**From the Composer:** *Nox Aurumque* (Night and Gold) was written as a sort of ‘companion piece’ to my *Lux Aurumque* (Light and Gold). I used themes (textual and musical) taken from both *Lux Aurumque*, and my work for music theater, “Paradise Lost: Shadows and Wings.”

By my count this is my seventh collaboration with poet Charles Anthony Silvestri (*Sleep, Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine*, etc.) and it was by far our most challenging. Here is a summation of our process together, recounted by the poet himself:

### Notes on the Text

by Charles Anthony Silvestri

The task of the lyricist is to provide for the composer a text which, on the one hand, gives the composer the material he or she needs to complete the piece, according to unique specifications; while on the other hand, could stand alone as a poem in its own right. Writing the Latin text for *Nox Aurumque* was a singular challenge.

First, Eric had already composed much of the musical material; several distinct melodic motifs were already formed and essential to the structure of the piece. Any text I composed had to fit within the parameters of that structure. Eric was very specific about the number of syllables in this line, the necessary word-painting in that line, etc.

Second, Eric had strong ideas about the meaning of the text. He communicated impressionistic images of an angel, the emotions of that angel, and other evocative images, darker than usual for him. My text had to speak to those images in a meaningful way, consistent with Eric’s intentions for the piece. It has a distinctly different sound than earlier works, and I wanted my text to be darker, and as different.

Third (and most challenging), the text had to flow effectively in Latin. The Latin had to communicate accurately the images Eric wished to evoke about this angel, all within the already-established framework of the piece. Latin affected the English, and English affected Latin, in a tug of war between meaning and grammar. It had to be singable, and employ the kind of vowels and consonants Eric likes to set. (We joked that not every word could end in the lovely and mysterious *-um* sound Eric likes so much—Latin grammar just doesn’t work that way, although I became intimately familiar with the many uses of the genitive plural!) And the Latin had to be correct—it had to conform to the rules of Latin grammar—to satisfy my need as a scholar. I had to settle at times for some Latin that strayed from what Cicero might have written, but which stayed certainly within the somewhat looser realm of Medieval usage. From my perspective as a poet, the Latin language is living, vibrant and malleable; I’m certainly not the first poet to take liberties with canonical rules. No doubt there will be quibblers who will question the choices I have made. I humbly ask these critics to consider the *nodus triplex* with which I was presented, and see this poem for what it is—lyrics to a choral work, not a sequel to the *Aeneid*.

## *Nox Aurumque*

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*Aurum,  
Infuscatum et obscurum,  
Canens noctis,  
Canens mortis,  
Acquiescens canendo...*

*Et angelum somnit aurorarum  
et bellorum,  
Saeculorum aurorum fundit lacrimas,  
Lacrimas rerum bellorum.*

*O arma!  
O Lamina Aurata!  
Gestu graves nimium,  
Graves nimium volatu.*

*Aurum,  
Infuscatum et torpidum  
Suscita!  
Dilabere ex armis in alam!  
Volemus iterum,  
Alte supra murum;  
Angeli renascentes et exultantes ad alas  
Aurorarum,  
Aurorum,  
Somnorum.*

*Aurum,  
Canens alarum,  
Canens umbrarum...*

Gold,  
Tarnished and dark,  
Singing of night,  
Singing of death,  
Singing itself to sleep...

And an angel dreams of dawns,  
and of war.  
She weeps tears of the golden times  
Tears of the cost of war.

O Shield!  
O gilded blade!  
You are too heavy to carry  
Too heavy for flight.

Gold,  
tarnished and weary,  
Awaken!  
Melt from weapon into wing!  
Let us soar again,  
High above this wall;  
Angels reborn and rejoicing  
With wings made  
Of dawn,  
Of gold,  
Of dream.

Gold,  
Singing of wings,  
Singing of shadows...

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*Nox Aurumque* was commissioned by:

VocalEssence (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Philip Brunelle, Artistic Director, with the world premiere presented on 22 March 2009 at Orchestra Hall with the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers and the St. Olaf Choir (conducted by the composer); Coro Città di Roma, who gave the first performance in Italy conducted by Mauro Marchetti on 20th June 2009; Khorikos, New York, and Falu Kammarkör, Sweden.





## NOX AURUMQUE

(Night and Gold)

CHARLES ANTHONY  
SILVESTRI

ERIC WHITACRE

Adagio doloroso (♩ = 66)

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Piano (for rehearsal only)

5

9 *mf*

ca - - - nens noc - tis, ca - - - nens mor - tis, ac - qui - *f* 3

*mf*

ca - - - nens noc - tis, ca - - - nens mor - tis

*mf*

ca - nens noc - tis, ca - nens mor - tis ac - *f*

*mf*

ca - - - nens noc - tis, ca - - - nens mor - tis,

13

- es - cens, \_\_\_\_\_ ac - qui - es - cens, ca - - - - nen - do, et *mp*

*f* 3 *mp*

ac - qui - es - - - cens, ca - - - - nen - do, et

*f*

- - qui - es - - - cens ca - - - - - nen - - do,

*f*

ac - - - qui - es - cens, ca - - - nen - do,

an - ge - lum, som - ni - it, au - ro -

an - ge - lum, som - ni - it, au - ro -

*mp* an - ge - lum, som - ni - it, au - ro -

*mp* an - ge - lum, som - ni - it, au - ro -

*pp* - ra - rum, et bel - lo - rum. Bel - lum!

*pp* - ra - rum, bel - lo - rum. Bel - lum!

*pp* - ra - rum, bel - lo - rum. Bel - lum!

*pp* - ra - rum, bel - lo - rum. *mp* Sæ - cu - lo - rum, sæ - cu -

Bel - lum, bel - lum! La - cri - mas re -

Bel - lum, bel - lum! La - cri - mas re -

Bel - lum, bel - lum! La - cri - mas re -

- lo - - rum, au - ro - rum, Fun - dit la - - cri - mas re -

- rum, bel - lum. *f* Ar - - ma! Au - -

- rum bel - lum. *f* Ar - - ma! Au - -

- rum. *f* O ar - - ma! O la - - mi -

- rum bel - lo - rum. *f* Ar - - ma! Au - -

musical score for voices and piano, measures 37-41. The score includes vocal staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: -ra - - - ta! Ni - - - mi - um. Ges - tu gra - - - ves ni - mi - um, -ra - - - ta! Ges - tu gra - ves ni - mi - um. -na au - ra - ta! Vo - -ra - - - ta! Vo -

Dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Tempo I

musical score for voices and piano, measures 42-46. The score includes vocal staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: Au - - - rum, au - - - rum, Au - - - rum, au - - - rum, -la - tu. Au - rum, au - rum, -la - tu. Au - rum, au - rum,

Dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano).

*p* *mf* *p* *mp*

in - fu - - - ca - tum tor - pi - dum, au - - - rum,

*p* *mf* *p* *mp*

in - fu - - - ca - tum tor - pi - dum, au - - - rum,

*p* *mf* *p* *mp*

in - fu - sca - tum et au - rum,

*p* *mf* *p* *mp*

in - fu - sca - tum et au - rum,

## Poco mosso

*f*

su - sci - - - - ta! Su - sci - - - -

*f*

su - sci - - - - ta! Su - sci - - - -

*f*

su - sci - ta! Su - sci -

*f*

su - sci - - - ta! Su - sci - -

*mp*

- ta! A - lam, a - lam, an - - - ge -

*mp*

- ta! Vo - le - mus i - te - rum, vo - le - mus i - te - rum, vo - le - mus an - ge -

*mp*

- ta! Di - la - brex ar - mis in a - lam an - ge -

*mp*

- ta! Al - te su - pra mu - rum an - ge -

*mp*

- ta! Mu - rum an - - ge - -

58 *fp* poco allarg. Full and rhapsodic

- li, a - las, a - las, ad a - las,

*fp* *f*

- li, a - - - las, a - las, et re - na - scen - tes,

*fp* *f*

- li, a - las, a - las, ex - ul - tan - te ad a -

*f*

- li, ad ex - ul - tan - tes, ex - ul - tan - tes ad a -

*f*

- li, a - las, a - las, a - - - las,

a - las, a - las, ad a - las,  
 et re - na - scen - tes ad a - las, ad a - las, ad a -  
 - las, a - las, a - las,  
 - las, ex - ul - tan - te, a - las, ad a - las, ad a -  
 ex - ul - tan - te ad a - las, ad a -

au - - - ro - ra - rum, au - - - ro -  
 - las, au - - - ro - ra - rum, au - - - ro -  
 au - - ro - ra - rum, au - - - ro -  
 au - ro - ra - rum,  
 - las, au - ro - - ra - rum, au - - - ro -  
 - las, au - ro - - ra - rum au - - - ro -

*sempre f*



rit. poco a poco

Tempo 1°

70

*mp dim.* *p*

- rum som - - - no - rum. Au - - -

*mp dim.* *p*

- rum som - - - no - rum. Au - - -

*mp* *p*

- rum som - no - rum. Au -

*mp* *p*

- rum, som - - - no - rum. Au -

74

*mp* *p* *mp* *p*

- rum, au - - - rum, au - - -

*mp* *p* *mp* *p*

- rum, au - - - rum, au - - -

*mp* *p* *mp* *mp*

- rum, au - rum, ca - nens

*mp* *p* *mp* *p*

- rum, au - rum, au -

*mp* *rum,* //

*mp* *rum,* //

*mf* a - - la - - rum ca - - nens um - bra - rum, //

*mp* *rum,* //

*Red.*

*pp* um - - - bra - - - rum. //

*pp* um - - - bra - - - rum. //

*pp* um - - - bra - - - rum. //

*pp* um - - - bra - - - rum. //

### *About the Composer:*

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Born in 1970, Eric Whitacre has become one of the leading voices in contemporary choral composition. His concert works are regularly performed throughout the world.

### *Other choral works by Eric Whitacre:*

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Go, Lovely Rose (SATB)  
I Hide Myself (SATB)  
With a Lily in Your Hand (SATB)  
Cloudburst (SATB, piano, percussion)  
Water Night (SATB)  
Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (SSATB)  
Lux Aurumque (SATB)  
Sleep (SATB)  
When David Heard (SSAATTBB)  
i will wade out (SATB)  
hope, faith, life, love (SATB)  
i thank You God for most this amazing day (SATB)  
Little Birds (SATB, piano)  
Five Hebrew Love Songs (SATB or SA, piano, violin or string quartet)  
She Weeps Over Ragoon (SSA, piano, English horn)  
little tree (SATB, piano)  
This Marriage (SATB)  
Her Sacred Spirit Soars (SSATB/SSATB Double Chorus, a cappella)  
A Boy and a Girl (SATB)  
Animal Crackers, Vol. I (SATB)  
Animal Crackers, Vol. II (SATB)  
Nox Aurumque (SATB)  
Sleep My Child (SATB)  
The Stolen Child (SATB and sextet, a cappella)

### *Please visit Eric on the web at:*

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[www.ericwhitacre.com](http://www.ericwhitacre.com)  
[www.shadowwater.com](http://www.shadowwater.com)

