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# WHEN DAVID HEARD

A COMPOSITIONAL  
COMPARISON OF TEXT  
SETTINGS



# FOR THIS PRESENTATION



Please make sure you are muted, especially while we are listening to music.



Utilize the chat for questions



There is a “raise hand” function or emoji. Use that if you’d like to add to the discussion.



While listening to recordings, use the “thumbs up” during moments of AWE!

## TWO COMPOSERS, BOTH ALIKE IN FOLLICLES

Renaissance composer of the Tudor and Stuart Period in England.  
Member of the Chapel Royal and the English Madrigal School.  
Pupil, colleague, friend of: William Byrd, Thomas Morely, Orlando Gibbons.

**Thomas Tompkins**  
(1572 - 1656)

**Eric Whitacre**  
(1970 - )

American composer, conductor, speaker.  
Artist-in-Residence for the Los Angeles Master Chorale.  
Pioneered the Virtual Choir.  
Founded the Eric Whitacre Singers.

**THE TEXT:**  
**2 SAMUEL**  
**18:33**

WHEN DAVID HEARD THAT  
ABSALOM WAS SLAIN

HE WENT UP INTO HIS  
CHAMBER OVER THE GATE  
AND WEPT.

AND THUS HE SAID:

MY SON, MY SON,

O ABSALOM MY SON,

WOULD GOD I HAD DIED  
FOR THEE!

## **TOMPKINS' STYLE**

Madrigals, consort music, anthems

Extremely conservative, ignoring rising Baroque practices and Italian influences

Text painting – music reflects the literal meaning of the text.

Polyphony, as opposed to lute songs or ayres.

Chromaticism

# WHITACRE'S STYLE

01

Aleatoric – determined in general, but depends on chance in detail

02

Indeterminacy – some aspects are left open to chance or to the interpreter's free choice.

03

“Full of shimmering, shuddering, shifting harmonies that awaken the ear to a contemporary yet accessible voice.”

04

Similar to Morten Laudisen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nn5ken3RJBo>

05

Neo-impressionistic

- mood, emotion, atmosphere
- Colour or timbre
- New chord combination, ambiguous tonality, extended harmonies



# WHAT'S A CONDUCTOR TO DO?

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Text painting (Absalom, David, God; climbing; crying out, weeping; grief, anguish, despair, loss)
- Use of rests/silence
- Difference sections, voice types, timbres
- Form



**THOMAS  
TOMPKINS:  
SUNG BY THE  
GESUALDO SIX**

32

A. Ab - sa-lom my son, Ab - sa-lom my son, Ab - sa-lom my son...

T. Ab - sa-lom my son, O my son, my son Ab -

T. O Ab-sa-lom my son, O my son,

S. - sa-lom my son, my son, Ab - sa-lom

B. Ab - sa-lom my son, my son Ab - sa-lom my son, ab - sa-



**ERIC  
WHITACRE:  
SUNG BY THE  
ERIC  
WHITACRE  
SINGERS**

44

A page of musical notation for a vocal ensemble. The score is written on ten staves. The top nine staves are for vocal parts, and the bottom staff is for piano accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and features a mix of vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "I am a child of the earth, / I am a child of the sky, / I am a child of the sea, / I am a child of the sun, / I am a child of the moon, / I am a child of the stars, / I am a child of the earth, / I am a child of the sky, / I am a child of the sea, / I am a child of the sun, / I am a child of the moon, / I am a child of the stars." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

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## COMPARISONS

GIVEN THAT THESE PIECES WERE WRITTEN ROUGHLY 400 YEARS APART



SIMILARITIES



AUDIENCE VS.  
PERFORMER

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**OTHER TEXTS  
THAT YOU LOVE  
(BY MULTIPLE  
COMPOSERS)**