

Collegium Vocale Gent

Direction Philippe Herreweghe

In 2010, Collegium Vocale Gent celebrated its founding forty years before, by a group of friends studying at the University of Ghent, on Philippe Herreweghe's initiative. They were one of the first ensembles to use new ideas about baroque performance practice in vocal music. Their authentic, text-oriented and rhetorical approach gave the ensemble the transparent sound with which it would acquire world fame and perform at the major concert venues and music festivals of Europe, Israel, the United States, Russia, South America, Japan, Hong Kong and Australia.

In recent years, Collegium Vocale Gent has grown organically into an extremely flexible ensemble whose wide repertoire encompasses a range of different stylistic periods. Its greatest strength is its ability to assemble the ideal performing forces for any project. Music from the Renaissance, for example, is performed by an ensemble of six to twelve singers. German Baroque music, particularly J.S. Bach's vocal works, quickly became a speciality of the group and is still the jewel in its crown. Today Collegium Vocale performs this music with a small ensemble in which the singers take both the chorus and solo parts. Collegium Vocale is also specializing more and more in the Romantic, modern and contemporary oratorio repertoires. To this end, Collegium Vocale Gent enjoys the support of the European Union's Cultural Programme since 2011. The result is a shared symphonic choir recruiting singers from all of Europe, in which experienced singers stand alongside young talent. Moreover, Collegium Vocale Gent fulfils an important educational position.

Besides using its own baroque orchestra, Collegium Vocale Gent works with several historically informed instrumental ensembles to perform these projects, including the Orchestre des Champs Elysées, Freiburger Barockorchester and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin. It also works with prominent symphony orchestras such as deFilharmonie (Royal Flemish Philharmonic), the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. The ensemble has worked with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sigiswald Kuijken, René Jacobs, Paul Van Nevel, Iván Fischer, Marcus Creed, Kaspars Putnins, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and many others leading conductors.

Under Philippe Herreweghe's direction, Collegium Vocale Gent has built up an impressive discography with more than 80 recordings, most of them with the Harmonia Mundi France and Virgin Classics labels. In 2010, Philippe Herreweghe started his own label φ (phi) together with Outhere Music in order to give himself full artistic freedom to build up a rich and varied catalogue. Since then some ten new recordings with vocal music by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Dvorak, Gesualdo or Victoria have become available. In 2014 three new recordings appeared: another volume with J.S. Bach's Leipzig Cantatas (LPH012) and Joseph Haydn's oratorio Die Jahreszeiten (LPH013) and Infelix Ego (LPH014) with motets and the Mass for 5 voices by William Byrd.

Collegium Vocale Gent enjoys the financial support of the Flemish Community, the Province of East Flanders and the city of Ghent. From 2011-2013 the ensemble has been Ambassador of the European Union.

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