

## Philippe Herreweghe

Philippe Herreweghe was born in Ghent and studied at both the University and Music Conservatory there, studying piano with Marcel Gazelle. He also started to conduct during this period, and founded *Collegium Vocale Gent* in 1970. He was invited by *Nikolaus Harnoncourt* and *Gustav Leonhardt*, who had noticed his innovative work, to participate in their recordings of the complete cantatas of J.S. Bach.

Herreweghe's energetic, authentic and rhetorical approach to baroque music was soon drawing praise. In 1977 he founded the ensemble *La Chapelle Royale* in Paris, with whom he performed music of the French Golden Age. From 1982 to 2002 he was artistic director of the *Académies Musicales de Saintes*. During this period, he founded several new ensembles with whom he made historically appropriate and well-thought-out interpretations of repertoire stretching from the Renaissance to contemporary music. They include the *Ensemble Vocal Européen*, specialised in Renaissance polyphony, and the *Orchestre des Champs Élysées*, founded in 1991 with the aim of playing Romantic and pre-Romantic repertoire on original instruments. Since 2009, Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Gent have been actively working on the development of a large European-level symphonic choir, at the invitation of the prestigious *Accademia Chigiana* in Siena and from 2011 to 2013 with the support of the European Union's Cultural Program.

Philippe Herreweghe continually seeks out new musical challenges, and for some time has been very active performing the great symphonic works, from Beethoven to Gustav Mahler. Since 1997 he is principal conductor of the *Royal Flemish Philharmonic*. He was appointed permanent guest conductor of the Netherlands' *Radio Chamber Philharmonic* since 2008. He is also in great demand as a guest conductor with orchestras such as Amsterdam's *Concertgebouw Orchestra*, the *Gewandhaus Orchestra* in Leipzig and the Berlin-based *Mahler Chamber Orchestra*.

Over the years, Philippe Herreweghe has built up an extensive discography of more than 100 recordings with all these different ensembles, on such labels as Harmonia Mundi France, Virgin Classics and Pentatone. Highlights include the *Lagrima di San Pietro* of Lassus, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Schumann, Mahler's song cycle *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, Bruckner's *Symphony No. 5*, *Pierrot Lunaire* by Schönberg and the *Symphony of Psalms* by Stravinsky. In 2010 he founded together with Outhere Music his own label  $\phi$  (PHI), in order to give himself full artistic freedom to build up a rich and varied catalogue. Since then some ten new recordings with music by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler or Victoria have become available. In 2013 three new recordings appeared: Antonin Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* (LPH009), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Last Symphonies* (LPH010) and complete recording of Carlo Gesualdo's *Responsoria* (LPH011).

Philippe Herreweghe has received numerous European awards for his consistent artistic imagination and commitment. In 1990 the European music press named him "*Musical Personality of the Year*". Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Gent were appointed "*Cultural Ambassadors of Flanders*" in 1993. A year later he was awarded the Belgian order of *Officier des Arts et Lettres*, and in 1997 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Catholic University of Leuven. In 2003 he received the French title *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*. Lastly, in 2010 the city of Leipzig awarded him its *Bach-Medaille* for his great service as a performer of Bach.

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