



by **Classical Music News Desk** January 22 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwclassical/article/Collegium-Vocale-Gent-and-Orchestre-des-Champs-Elyses-Released-from-Allegro-Classical-20130122>



Collegium Vocale Gent and Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, masterfully guided by Philippe Herreweghe, offer listeners a thoroughly transcendental experience with a new recording of Beethoven's *Missa solennis*. This major sacred work—considered by the composer himself to be his finest—features a quartet of superb soloists in soprano Marlis Petersen, mezzo-soprano Gerhild Romberger, tenor Benjamin Hulett and baritone [David Wilson](#)-Johnson. Following the European release, Belgium's *Le Soir* declared that the recording "achieves a summit of fervor. Miraculous!" The new recording on Herreweghe's PHI label is

available now from Allegro Classical.

Missa solennis is Beethoven's longest work and one of the apogees in the history of classical music, with its five sections tonally and thematically linked so that the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts. Beethoven, fully justified in boasting that the work was the greatest that he had yet written, also claimed that the mass could be performed as an oratorio, not merely as part of a liturgical event. History has proved this to be something of an understatement: since its first performance - as an oratorio - under the auspices of Prince Nikolai Galitzin at St Petersburg in April 1824, the *Missa solennis* has taken its place beside Haydn's *Creation* and *Seasons* in the repertory of sacred choral music of symphonic design.

Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Ghent's recent recordings for PHI include *Ach süßer Trost!* (Bach's Leipzig Cantatas) and Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Officium Defunctorum*. The rarely-heard Spanish mass from 1605 was hailed as "profound and moving ... an expanse of inordinate beauty with a performance to match" (*Pasatiempo*). All Music Guide affirmed: "Renaissance choral singing just does not get better than this."

Founded in 1970 by a group of [Friends](#) studying at the University of Ghent on Philippe Herreweghe's initiative, Collegium Vocale Gent was among 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-wide acclaim through performances at the major concert venues and music festivals across the world. The ensemble's distinguished discography includes more than eighty recordings.

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