

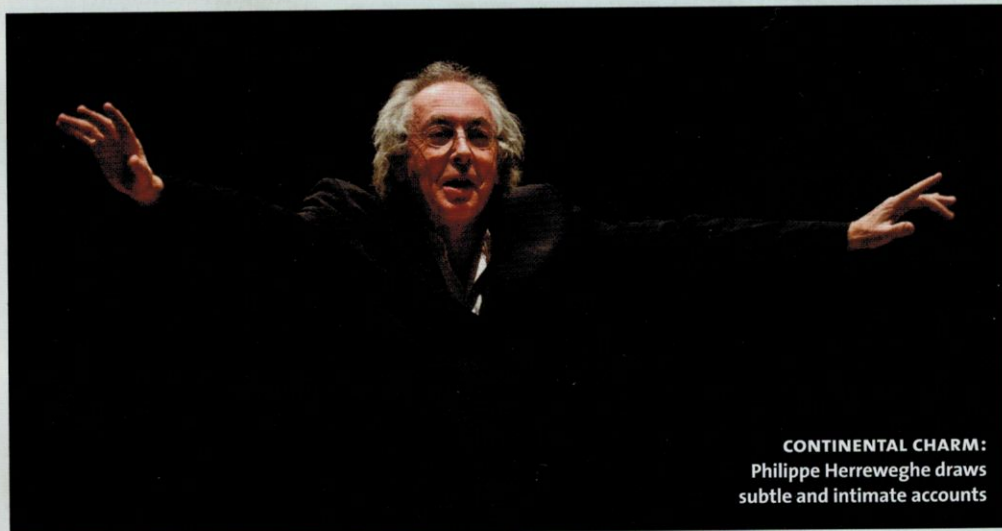
# CHORAL & SONG

*Jordi Savall* assembles a fine line-up of musicians for Bach and Vivaldi; *Mariss Jansons* brings discipline to Verdi's mighty Requiem; and *The Hilliard Ensemble* presents a first-rate final album

**MUSIC CHORAL & SONG CHOICE**

## Byrd of a different feather

*Berta Joncus* relishes the intensity of Philippe Herreweghe's style



**CONTINENTAL CHARM:**  
Philippe Herreweghe draws subtle and intimate accounts



### BYRD

**Mass for five voices; Motets: Emendemus in melius; Infelix ego; Ave Maria; Christe qui lux es, et c**  
Collegium Vocale Gent/  
Philippe Herreweghe  
PhiLPH014 49:49 mins  
BBC Music Direct £14.99

Byrd's repertory is familiar largely through English recordings. Departing radically from this tradition, Philippe Herreweghe renews the power of Byrd's masterpieces with sensual, intimate, moving, and very un-English performances. We have to lean in to hear what's going on, as Herreweghe uses silence, and unexpected twists in dynamic and tempo to build

intensity. Compare, for instance, this disc's *Infelix ego* with that of the Cardinal's Musick on Hyperion. Instead of each part robustly pressing forward, the Collegium Vocale Gent lets lines delicately unfold; rhetoric, not architecture, is the focus, so that statements, rather

### Instead of a towering finale, a long-breathed sigh ends the motet

than imitative points, grab our attention; and instead of a towering finale, a long-breathed sigh ends the motet, inviting reflection on the last word, 'mercy'. In English one-on-a-part ensembles, vocalists typically cultivate their individual responses to Byrd's ideas. In the Collegium, the response is collective, inspired and shaped by Herreweghe.

The Collegium's strengths make possible Herreweghe's deeply

meditative approach. Its creamy blend allows him to thicken textures or spin unison passages, and its vocal colours let him brilliantly paint the canvas of Byrd's score. The Collegium vocalists can also register slight stylistic changes: Alfonso Ferrabosco's *Peccantem me quotidie* – in its first recording – gets a flouncier delivery than Byrd, in keeping with Ferrabosco's madrigalisms and his temperament.

The recording faithfully captures the cosiness of the 13th-century Chiesa di San Francesco in Asciano, and bird song from the Italian countryside is faintly audible between movements.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

**ON THE WEBSITE**  
Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the **BBC Music Magazine website**  
[www.classical-music.com](http://www.classical-music.com)



### JS BACH • VIVALDI

**CD & DVD** Vivaldi: *Concerto for two violins, RV578*; Magnificat in G minor, RV610; JS Bach: *Keyboard concerto, BWV 1052*; Magnificat in D, BWV 243

Hanna Bayodi-Hirt, Johannette Zomer (soprano), Damien Guillon (countertenor), David Munderloh (tenor), Stephan MacLeod (bass), Manfred Kraemer, Pablo Valetti (violin), Pierre Hantaï (harpsichord); La Capella Reial de Catalunya; Le Concert des Nations/Jordi Savall  
Alia Vox AVSA 9909D (hybrid CD/SACD)  
CD: 72:50 mins; DVD: 70:20 mins (2 discs)  
BBC Music Direct £14.99

To watch as well as hear two outstanding Baroque Magnificats is a thrilling experience. Jordi Savall's forces are in fine form, his soloists matched yet distinctively characterised (as where two sopranos diverge, cross, and separate again in Vivaldi's 'Esurientes'). Bach's 'Quia fecit' reveals Stephan MacLeod as a star-quality bass. Instrumentalists – 13 strings, wind and continuo, plus impeccable trumpets and timpani for Bach – are warm, fluent, animated and poignant by turns, and wholly at one with each other. The opening oboes/bassoon trio of Vivaldi's 'Sicut locutus est' is totally arresting to ear and eye.

Savall paces the Magnificats to sustain the continuity of the text, despite the musical independence of each verse – a subtlety which in turn sustains the viewer's/listener's attention. He's faced with some potentially cloying reverberation in the Versailles Chapel Royale. At times, soloists sound (as they are) behind rather than forward of the accompaniment. In the more complex counterpoint of the Bach version, the 24-strong chorus tends towards constant *con bello* vitality rather than subtly differentiated dynamics to clarify entries and lines. But the overall exuberance, technical