

Haydn: Die Schöpfung (The Creation) CD review – airy Belgian account of oratoria

Collegium Vocale Gent/Herreweghe (Out Here)

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Haydn's life-affirming oratorio can sound glorious in many different guises: Philippe Herreweghe's new account with his own choir and orchestra is wonderfully distinctive: light, transparent, dancing. The approach will not convince lovers of a hard-driven English choral sound, and some may find the big choruses lack dramatic heft, for the style of Collegium Vocale Gent has always been gently inflected and subtle. But it enables an excellent balance with the sublime purity of Christina Landshamer's soprano and the airy grace of Maximilian Schmitt's tenor. The bass, Rudolf Rosen, cannot quite extinguish memories of Christian Gerhaher on Nikolaus Harnoncourt's recording, but he revels in the intricate pictorial details, matching the forward-balanced orchestra.