
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Verdi: Requiem. The Llewellyn Choir & School of Music Symphony Orchestra. Llewellyn Hall, June 21.

VERDI'S *Requiem* is one of the great 19th-century settings of the mass for the dead, its romantic sweep and deeply felt expression making it a notable challenge for all involved in its performance — conductor, soloists, choir and orchestra.

Last Saturday night, the Llewellyn Choir and CSM Symphony Orchestra provided a performance that was eminently satisfactory, sometimes moving, sometimes exciting, but always strongly committed. Conductor Richard McIntyre once again showed his fine feeling for large-scale choral/orchestral works, drawing a powerful response from the 170 performers in the more dramatic moments of the *Dies Irae*, and balancing this with expressive realisations of the serene *Agnus Dei* and the consolatory prayers of the *Libera me*.

The choral singing was strongly projected in the dramatic moments and well-controlled in the more in-

troverted sections, and always of a good, firm tonal quality. The young instrumentalists of the orchestra provided well-balanced playing of Verdi's warm and expressive scoring, their youthful enthusiasm giving an exciting edge to such moments of blazing sonority as the *Tuba Mirum* with its resounding trumpets and the majestic *Rex Tremendae*.

A notable asset in the overall effectiveness of the performance was the all-Canberra group of soloists. The solo contributions are so important if the quasi-operatic qualities of Verdi's solo writing are to be effectively realised, and soprano Sarah Hills, mezzo Anthea Moller, tenor Tupe Tam Yam, and baritone Terence den Dulk, sang with strength and assurance in their solos and blended beautifully in ensemble.

The one debit to the presentation was its very late start. It was advertised for 8pm but the performance did not begin until more than 20 minutes later, an unconscionable delay with those attending seated and waiting.