

## Mozart at his most beguiling

By W. L. HOFFMANN

*Mozart Magic.* The Llewellyn Choir and Canberra Chamber Orchestra. Llewellyn Hall, March 6.

**T**HE FIRST of Mozart's final three symphonies and his uncompleted *Requiem Mass* made up the program for this choral and orchestral concert.

The *Symphony No 39 in E flat major* is music of serenity and warm lyricism, Mozart at his most beguiling, and it received a suitably light and lilting realisation from the chamber orchestra of some 30 players under the perceptive direction of conductor Richard McIntyre.

There was a nice delineation of the expressive contrast between the spirited first and third movements and the wistful beauty of the *andante con moto* which comes between them, while the mood of gentle joviality which pervades the final *allegro* was excellently projected.

The *Requiem* has mainly achieved its popularity through its notoriety — the anecdotal gloss that now surrounds it because Mozart died before he could complete it, and by the story of its supposed commissioning by a "dark stranger". The one fact is that barely half the music is actually by Mozart. Only the *Introit* was composed and scored by him. The following eight movements through to the *Hostias* he left in short-score sketches only they were completed and scored by other composers. The final *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* were fully composed and orchestrated by his pupil Sussmayr.

What is left is pleasant enough, but far from the real genius of Mozart.

However, it received a committed and attractive performance on Saturday night from choristers, soloists and conductor, with the choral singing being spirited in such sections as the *Rex tremendae* and *Domine Jesu Christe*.

The soloists — Lorina Gore (soprano), Katrina Waters (mezzo), Carl Cooper (tenor) and Thomas Layton (bass) — were efficient as a quartet, and with excellent solo contributions from the soprano and tenor, while the orchestra provided strong and well-balanced support.