

Requiem was a dream

Verdi — Requiem, by The Llewellyn Choir with soloists and orchestra, conducted by Richard McIntyre. Llewellyn Hall, May 14.

VERDI'S great *Requiem* is a challenging undertaking for any choral group, but in a good performance it can be a truly rewarding experience for both performers and audience. And so it proved in this presentation of overall excellence last Saturday night, the first of two special concerts being given this year by The Llewellyn Choir to celebrate its 25th anniversary as a community musical body.

The singing was eloquent from the start, with the choir and orchestra creating an effectively atmospheric opening which immediately established the regretful mood underlying the music. It heralded a performance that was firmly controlled by the conductor, Richard McIntyre, as he led his large vocal and instrumental forces through a realisation of this noble work that was as arresting as it was satisfying.

The choral singing was ardent throughout, yet always disciplined, with the mighty *Dies Irae* powerfully projected while still maintaining a good sonic balance between choir and orchestra. By contrast, in a more lyrical choral movement such as the later



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Sanctus, the singing was warmly expressive and infused with a quiet joyousness.

The soloists for this performance were an extremely fine group. Soprano Celina Lindley provided singing of the necessary clear, strong quality and rose to the challenges posed by the testing *Libera me*, while Sonia Anfiloff brought to her solo contributions a mezzo voice of rich tonal quality.

Tenor Michael Honeyman sang with fine ringing tone, and bass Stephen Bennett injected a suitably dark and resonant quality, singing with authority in the supplicatory *Confutatis*.

It was a performance of this choral masterpiece that was eminently rewarding and a credit to all concerned in its realisation.