

Mozart at his most beguiling

By W. L. HOFFMANN

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

THE 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.