



# Masterful tribute

## The Verdi Requiem

Maestro Series  
The Queensland Orchestra  
Concert Hall, QPAC  
Friday, April 24

**VERDI'S** magnificent *Messa da Requiem* was a fitting choice for the Queensland Orchestra to perform on the eve of Anzac Day.

A requiem mass to honour the dead, Verdi's work also explores in liturgical form the gamut of human emotions through prayers for the salvation of the soul to the terrors and hope of the final Day of Judgment.

The work's dramatic juxtapositions and emotional range, combined with ravishing melodies and powerful rhythms, demonstrate the composer's operatic style, which he masterfully contained within the distinct structure of the mass.

In realising the vision of the work, he was served well by the combined forces of conductor, orchestra, soloists and a double choir working harmoniously together.

Chief conductor, Johannes Fritzsich, conducted the evening with measured strength and consummate skill. From the gentle opening of the *Kyrie* and the lightest of touches during the *Lacrimosa*, he rose magnificently to the vigorous demands of the repeated *Dies Irae* sequences with thrilling results. Fritzsich elicited solid work from the soloists and both choirs, while coaxing some luscious woodwind playing and warmth and colour from the trumpets and brass, as well as powerful playing from the strings.

The four soloists were impressive in this demanding work, with well-blended complementary voices.

One of Australia's finest oratorio

## Review

By Suzannah Conway

singers, soprano Rosamund Illing, cut through the orchestra with spine-tingling top notes and skilful pianissimo. Her rendition of the final *Libera Me*, scored at the lower end of the soprano register, was moving and beautifully handled.

Striking mezzo-soprano, Milijana Nikolic, has a rich colour in her dark chocolate sound and she sang some of the most difficult passages Verdi wrote with passion and commitment.

Rosario la Spina, his full-bodied Italianate tenor well-suited to this work, produced some beautiful intonation in the *Ingemisco* aria as well as a lushness and control in the more operatic *Lacrimosa*. Dutch bass-baritone Harry Peeters' dark and sonorous voice displayed an effortlessness and ease across the vocal range, bringing gravitas to the Tuba mirum and Mors stupebit sections of the *Dies Irae*.

The combined forces of the Brisbane Chorale and the Adelaide Symphony Chorus, directed by Emily Cox and Carl Crossin, worked seamlessly together from the choral quadruple-fortissimo sections of the *Dies Irae* to the complicated eight-part fugue scored for double chorus in the *Sanctus*.

This was a terrific night from the Queensland Orchestra in the remodelled Concert Hall, assisted by a welcome and sharpened acoustic following the recent renovations.

