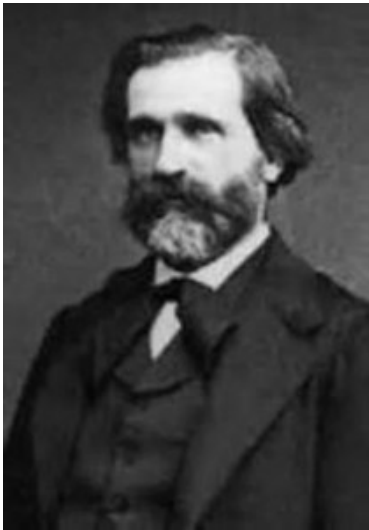


# Review: Refinement in lesser-known choral works

Cherubini's "Requiem in C Minor" and (Luigi Cherubini) and Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces", presented by The Llewellyn Choir, conducted by Rowan Harvey-Martin. At St Paul's Church, Manuka, April 20.

**THIS evening of refined, sacred music by two great Italian composers was a rare opportunity to hear works not often heard enough in the broader repertoire.**



Verdi

Although conductor Rowan Harvey-Martin has alluded to the fact that both composers are better known for their operatic works, the maturity of both compositions speaks volumes of their more serious intent in writing sacred music.

The Llewellyn Choir gave a sensitive rendition of the Verdi pieces, published shortly before the composer's death and featuring little of the triumphal magnificence of his most famous opera choruses. The treatment was serious and pleasing, although a little thinness in the upper registers meant that some of the complexity of the Stabat Mater was not fully realised.



Cherubini

By contrast, Cherubini's admired Requiem was interpreted in a vigorous manner, a little ironical considering that he wrote it to commemorate the anniversary of the executions of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The demanding "Offertorium" was not quite so smoothly realised as the other sections, particularly the "Dies Irae" and the "Agnus Dei," but the overall effect was one of great beauty and vocal harmony.

Much of the energy in this moving performance can be put down to Harvey-Martin's lively and inspiring style of conducting. As well, Anthony Smith dashed between organ and piano during the evening to provide exquisite accompaniment throughout.

The choir must be applauded for taking up the challenge of performing these lesser-known works.

