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Verdi's 'Requiem' unites local choir, symphony

Choir director Filibeck's command of baton inspires maestro's masterpiece

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For The Enterprise*

Think Choir of the Sound, think Judy Filibeck directing. Think Cascade Symphony, think Michael Miropolsky conducting. Ordinarily, true; however, Miropolsky passed the baton to Filibeck at last Sunday's concert at ECA. Filibeck pointed the way all the way.

Appreciate the feat.

A: the music was Verdi's theatrical take on Catholic doctrine. B: voices and instruments had to line up on one interpretation. And C: the interpretation had to run the gamut; solemnity to whimsy, agony to ecstasy, despair to hope, damnation to redemption, doubt to faith.

Here's an agnostic by choice and a composer of immortal operas addressing Holy Scripture. Imagine the roadside bombs he had to negotiate. Church fathers on one side, free-thinkers on the other. Theatrical considerations here, spiritual beliefs there. Let alone his own personality disorders, pet peeves and fear of failure. Yikes!

Yet, Verdi mapped his way from hell to heaven on judgment day with notes on paper for voices and orchestra. To follow that map, you gotta go some.

Choir of the Sound and Cascade Symphony did just that and then some.

With a little outside help.

"Mors," which translates "death," weighed heavy coming from guest baritone Erich Parce, like the doom and gloom of eternal dark.

Richly textured loveliness from soprano Christina Kowalski and mezzo-soprano Jenny Knapp brightened the glories of humanity's highest hopes.

And Gino Lucchetti's tenor added the robust, life-loving, lyrical qualities that trademark Verdi's operas.

Grand as the scope was, broad and deep as the sweep swept, the single, most elusive quality this production captured was its cumulative emotion. Beethoven put it into "Ode to Joy;" Milton, into "Paradise Lost;" and Verdi, into "Requiem.

But it took Filibeck to pull it out, point it out and lead the way.

Bravo, all.

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