

# BOSTON Herald

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## Youth symphony Verdi, Verdi good

By T.J. MEDREK

The average age of instrumentalists on the stage of Symphony Hall dropped considerably Sunday night when the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras presented a polished, powerful performance of Verdi's Requiem.

Led by Music Director Federico

### MUSIC REVIEW

Cortese, the high school-age musicians of GBYSO's Senior Orchestra played with a focus, energy and technical prowess that all but the world's most elite bands might envy. They were joined by the more seasoned but no less enthusiastic members of Chorus pro Musica.

At the foot of the stage stood a quartet of singers using their big, beautiful voices with, yes, the right sensitivity to mood and text — this

*Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, with Chorus pro Musica, at Symphony Hall, Boston, Sunday.*

is, after all, the Latin liturgy for the dead. But Indra Thomas, Eleni Matos, Philip Webb and Stephen Morscheck also projected their voices with just the right thrilling, in-your-ear Verdian punch.

Indeed from start to finish, this was a dramatic Requiem, not a more-reverent-than-thou kind. Obviously this is the best approach for young musicians longer on enthusiasm than the kind of uniformity and finesse it takes many years to develop. But Verdi's setting of this sacred text is known for wearing its heart on its musical sleeve anyway — and what could get the blood flowing more than anticipation of Judgment Day?

A shaky Sanctus aside, Cortese managed the various forces at his

command with strength and passion. The only thing missing from the fine performance of the chorus was a program page listing their names.

Thomas had problems securely placing a couple of the softest high notes. But otherwise she wrapped her plush, commanding soprano around this music as if she were born to sing it. Equally compelling was mezzo Matos, an authoritative presence. Webb thrillingly delivered the treacherous tenor solo *In gemisco*, and Morscheck's bass seemed the perfect medium for some of heaven's sterner pronouncements.

The concert, which opened with some fine Bartok played by GBYSO's Repertory Orchestra, conducted by Joel Bard, was dedicated to the memory of three former GBYSO players: Arthur Lauer, Margaret Bradley and Michael Magazu.