

# Taddei's interpretation delights

**WHAT:** Concert of Remembrance 70th Anniversary of Kristallnacht, Vector Wellington Orchestra, conducted by Marc Taddei with Orpheus Choir, Jenny Wollerman (soprano), Jared Holt (baritone), Donald Maurice (viola)

**WHERE:** Michael Fowler Centre, November 9

**REVIEWED BY:** John Button

**I**N REMEMBERING the events of November 9 and 10, 1938 — the nights when the German Reich systematically attacked Jewish people, their assets and synagogues — Marc Taddei and his orchestra chose a programme that was innovative and lateral.

To balance a work for viola and orchestra — *The Holocaust Requiem* by Russian/Israeli composer Boris Pigovat — they chose a work at the heart of the German musical tradition, Brahms' *A German Requiem*.

Perhaps it was Brahms' perceived position in opposition to Wagner, and a

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requiem that takes a less liturgical approach than was traditional, that was seen to make his work a conciliatory counterbalance to Pigovat's graphic work. In the event, the two works, for all the differences that separated them, worked well together. Brahms would have appreciated the musical company he was to keep.

His German language work can be turgid in the wrong hands, but Taddei kept things rhythmically alive, and the choir, despite some strain in the sopranos and a tonally weak tenor section, sang with verve and sensitivity. The two soloists were not ideal; Wollerman a touch thin and underpowered and Holt rather too vibrato ridden.

Boris Pigovat's *The Holocaust Requiem* uses some of the parts of the requiem mass as the basis for a purely instrumental work. It is not a concerto but rather, a

concertante work, like Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, in which the viola is a commentator, only speaking in conventionally soloistic fashion in the cadenza of the *Lacrimosa*.

The music is harrowing and tense, and very Russian in sound. Echoes of contemporary composers such as Denisov, Kancheli and Gubaidulina can be heard, as well as the inexorable tread of Shostakovich in the *Dies Irae*, but the voice of the composer remains highly individual. Balancing the violence, anger and tension is the conciliatory beauty of the *Lux Aeterna* that rounds out a work of deeply felt power.

The performance was stunning. Marc Taddei drew his forces together with enormous precision — better than in the recording of the work I listened to — and his orchestra responded brilliantly. But the hero was violist Donald Maurice, who gave a performance of great eloquence.

The composer, who was present, must have been delighted.