

THOMAS DAUSGAARD/ SWEDISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA *Bruckner Symphony No. 2 (BIS)*



It may seem strange that the 38-member Swedish Chamber Orchestra would want to take up the epic sweep of a symphony by Austrian composer Anton Bruckner (1824-1896). **But under the commandingly confident baton of music director Thomas Dausgaard — a regular and welcome guest of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra — Bruckner's *Symphony No. 2* gets a rhythmic edge that propels its four movements along with uncommon clarity.** Dausgaard uses editor Leopold Nowak's version of Bruckner's 1877 revision of the symphony, which had its premiere at the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873 (yes, things get complicated with Bruckner). Bruckner's sacred choral works are notable for their simplicity. The symphonies are the polar opposites, riddled with crazy dynamic and rhythmic shifts. But **Dausgaard finds a way of communicating a bigger picture, using the underlying turmoil as a way of keeping the momentum going. These days, every conductor with aspirations to greatness wants to record Bruckner's symphonies, but few have done it with Dausgaard's level of insight and purpose.**

*John Goddard*



Review: Version of Requiem would have pleased Verdi himself

## **Symphony and singers nail piece under guest conductor**

By EVERETT EVANS ARTS WRITER Jan. 21, 2011

*Giuseppe Verdi must have been smiling down on Jones Hall on Thursday, as guest Houston Symphony*

**Conductor Thomas Dausgaard led the Houston Symphony, Houston Symphony Chorus and an exceptional quartet of soloists in an almost supernaturally inspired rendition of the composer's**



**massive Requiem. Verdi created .....Dausgaard, who is chief conductor of the Danish National Symphony and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, again proved a striking presence on the podium, shrewdly balancing intelligence and emotion in his musical choices. With intensity and fastidious attention to detail, he articulated each phrase, sustained each chord for maximum effect. His absolute command of the vast forces required was impressive, eliciting responsive, vivid playing throughout the orchestra. Under his leadership, the rendition fully exploited the work's awesome range of dynamics, from the hushed strings and whispered entreaties of the chorus during the opening *Introit* to the terrifying *Dies Irae*, when orchestra and chorus unleashed an apocalyptic maelstrom of sound and fury signifying the Earth's total destruction.**

The Houston Symphony Chorus, prepared by Charles Hausmann, rose splendidly..... The choral singing could scarcely have been more exact and exciting ....Nor could one have asked any more from the soloists.....**But this rendition of the Verdi Requiem, which repeats tonight and Sunday, is a feast of great music-making all around. Count it one of the must-hear concerts of the season.**

**Everett Evans**