

## Noseda does justice to Rossini's freedom fighter

Teatro Regio Torino's sparkling concert-performance of the full Rossini opera proves there's more to it than the 'Lone Ranger'

*Kate Molleson - Wednesday 27 August 2014*



Rossini's last opera – the whole thing, that is, not just the overture – is a rarity that suddenly seems to be everywhere. There are new productions at Welsh National Opera and Covent Garden this season, and there was this, a magnificent concert-performance from Teatro Regio Torino and its music director, Gianandrea Noseda. Perhaps the themes of self-rule and justice are particularly topical at the moment; perhaps the word is finally out that there's a whole lot more to this score than the first 10 minutes.

The plot is pure picturesque nationalism, and lively enough if you like that sort of thing. Set in Austrian-occupied medieval Switzerland, Guglielmo Tell is a Swiss freedom fighter who outwits the brutish Austrian governor Gessler by shooting an apple from atop his own son's head and navigating treacherous waters to freedom in a rowboat. Arnold, son of the Swiss leader, is in love with Matilde, an Austrian princess; the chorus alternates between righteous patriots and boorish oppressors. Mainly it's the music that keeps things rollicking along. This is Rossini at the height of his operatic powers: boisterously fluid and inventive, sparkling with dramatic sequences, colourful orchestration and lush choral writing. Premiered in Paris in 1829, the rumblings of grand opera are everywhere.

Noseda and his team made a terrific case for the piece. The demands on the soloists are as daunting as the Alps – poor Arnold needs an absurd cache of high notes, but John Osborn sounded heroically well-oiled. Angela Meade was an ardent, sassy Matilde with huge decibels; Dalibor Jeniš an august Tell, Luca Tittoto a deliciously suave Gessler. The chorus was rich and spirited and the orchestra gave its all for Noseda; shaping the music meticulously, he kept the performance wonderfully buoyant and made the four hours fly by.