

## Guglielmo Tell/Nosedda/Teatro Regio Torino at Usher Hall, Edinburgh

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What with the technical requirements of shooting an apple off a boy's head with a bow and arrow, the stage-shunting of hordes of rowdy Swiss partisans and a lot of key dramatic moments spent in a rowing boat, you can see why one might opt to keep Rossini's last opera *Guglielmo Tell* firmly in the concert hall. The price tag alone would probably buy you a small Swiss canton.

But there was drama aplenty in this Teatro Regio Torino concert performance of Rossini's paean to liberty, thrillingly paced under music director Gianandrea Nosedda in this Italian translation of the French original. The soloists might have lined up on the Usher Hall platform in their sober evening best, but you could see the mountains in Rossini's thrillingly orchestrated work, from the remote call of the horns as the oppressed Swiss rose up behind every crag to the tinkling of bells across the restless valley and a truly Alpine storm whipped up with gale force in the strings.

Despite a low-voltage start from a self-effacing Dalibor Jenis as the eponymous rebel archer, the first act was a musical tour de force, every ounce of tension extracted from Rossini's sparkling score by Nosedda and his Teatro Regio cohorts. A fine lineup of soloists was crowned by John Osborn's ardent Arnoldo, running the emotional gamut of love, grief and revenge alongside the soaring soprano of Angela Meade's fabulous, coloratura-slaying Matilde. The chorus thrilled to Rossini's pastoral, partisan tapestry, from a pert chorus of archers to the impassioned cries of the put-upon populace.

Even the somewhat plodding dramatics of Act II, in which Swiss revolutionaries seep from the hills to join Guglielmo and Arnoldo in their fight to topple Luca Tittoto's crazed tyrant Gesler, had a certain hushed tension. And the Act IV finale was a shimmering triumph.