

What is it about opera?

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If you write out the plot for almost any opera, it would seem unbelievably silly. Try this one: woman falls wildly in love with her brother's worst enemy. Her brother forces her to marry someone else. On their wedding night she stabs her new husband to death and goes completely mad and then dies, herself. Her true love, on hearing this, kills himself. Her ghost comes to comfort him in his dying moments. The end.

Why then, yesterday, on hearing and watching the Russian soprano Anna Netrebko sing Lucia di Lammermoor, did the entire audience...including me...snuffle and sob? This was not a live opera....it was a replay of the live-streamed performance from the Met two years ago, and on a big screen in a comfortable (and air conditioned) theater. As a way to spend three hours on a hot summer afternoon, it was glorious. Nothing of course beats a live performance but there were things that one couldn't have seen without the phenomenal cinematography...like the magnificent details of the costumes. And glimpses between acts of the backstage bustle.

I just went to You Tube and watched three other sopranos sing the mad scene from Lucia.

Now back to real life.



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