

So what IS opera?

FIRST! Opera is telling a story. Take some interesting people, add in a little adventure, some love, or even some hate; put it all in an interesting place, and maybe an interesting time, and you've got a story fit for an opera.

SECOND! Opera is drama. Take the story you've chosen and put the words into dialogue for actors to say. Tell the story in a creative way and add in some heroes and heroines or queens and kings. Maybe a monster--or four. Make sure there is a clear conflict in the story that the characters must overcome. Put your actors in costumes and makeup, and put them on a stage with some great scenery in order to illuminate the characters.

THIRD! Opera is music. Write some fantastic music for your play. Instead of having the actors speak, have them sing...everything! When they get really happy or mad, have them sing high and loud! When they are trying to express an important emotion, let them sing something longer to show off a little. Add in an orchestra to accompany them and to help set the mood of your show.

FOURTH! Opera is spectacle. Add a little razzle-dazzle! How about a parade of elephants? Or an earthquake or a dragon! Have lots of capable people backstage to help you manage all of that. The sky (and your budget) is the limit! Add all four of these things together and you've got...



Musetta in *La Bohème*, 2012

...an opera!