

Italian tenor Bocelli is ready for operas

USA TODAY music critic David Patrick Stearns could not be more wrong about Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli not belonging in opera or on the opera stage ("Thomas Ades composes classical mix of good, bad," Life, Tuesday).

Bocelli's "expressivity" does not elude him, as the USA TODAY critic wrote. I attended two performances of the opera *Werther* and found Bocelli having a fine voice and being a wonderful actor.

Once his initial nervousness was over, he was very good. The more dramatic the scene, the more beautiful his voice and the more wonderful his acting. Many people sitting near me commented what a pleasant surprise *Werther* was — contrary to what the critics and the opera world had been saying.

After all, it was only Bocelli's fifth or sixth performance as lead tenor in an opera. Yes, he needs to perfect his stage-voice techniques, but given time and experience on stage he will do so. He has worked very hard the past few years on technique, and Stearns won't even acknowledge that. Stearns has done a great disservice to opera by continuing his elitist poppycock babble.

Bocelli has the grace of voice and the grace of movement that the opera stage has needed for a long, long time. See any other tenor bringing the masses back to the opera theater? I'd rather pay to see a tenor with that undefinable "it" than pay to see and hear a



By Martin Johnson, AP

On stage: Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performing recently in Rome.

technically perfect tenor who puts me to sleep or one who thrashes about in a death scene like a dead fish.

No one could touch Bocelli's *Werther* in the third and fourth acts, nor will Stearns succeed in ruining his career in opera. Critics be damned, Bocelli is the authentic Italian tenor.

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