

America's Got Talent – No Pity Party Please!

☒ I love America's Got Talent. Watching it puts a smile on my face. But what I've noticed is that some of the contestants LOVE to tell a hard luck story which, in my mind, is a plea for a pity vote. This is not unique to AGT. American Idol is a far worse offender of this practice. I'm not even sure whose idea it is – the producers, the network, the contestants themselves.

Here's a perfect example. Last week, opera singer, Branden James, was interviewed before his performance and laments that he was raised in a conservative household. When I heard that, I knew exactly what was coming next he is openly gay and his mother doesn't accept his homosexuality and opera allows him to be himself, blah, blah, blah. Woe is me! I'm a victim! Please vote for me!

Well, he went on stage, sung the aria from Puccini's Turandot, my favorite by the way, Nessun Dorma, and it was okay as far as I was concerned. I don't think I've ever heard Luciano Pavarotti sing Nessun Dorma without crying – that's how moving I find the song, particularly since I've seen the opera several times. Anyway, Mr. James was able to hit all the notes but his rendition did not even give me goose bumps, but that's just me.

What ticks me off is his complaining how his lifestyle isn't accepted by his family. Well, his mother was in the audience and I don't think I've ever seen a prouder or happier mother, especially when he hit the high C. So what does this guy want?

What does having sex with men have to do with your ability to sing? Are we supposed to vote for this guy because he's gay?

If you tell me you suffered from throat cancer a few years ago and you can now sing like Andrea Bocelli, I'll listen to you. If you tell me you lost your legs in a car accident and you're still an amazing gymnast with prosthetic legs, I'll be impressed. But the fact that you sleep with men has absolutely nothing to do with your ability to sing. So why do I have to know that? I've yet to see any contestant saying they have sex with the opposite sex. So why do we need to know this about Branden James?

Am I supposed to think worse of your mother because she doesn't accept your lifestyle? Or should I think more of you because you're gay? You come off as a crybaby. She looked like a very happy lady in the audience and you should be grateful she was there to support you.

So just shut up and sing. And while you're at it, I'll have some cheese with your whine.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.