



Tiaras: Past and Present

Geoffrey Munn

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"Tiaras, Past and Present" is published to accompany a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in Spring 2002. It is a glittering celebration of these sumptuous jewels which are currently enjoying a revival. Far from being a fashion dinosaur, an outmoded, cumbersome relic from a former age, the tiara is now recognised again as the most flattering and versatile form of jewellery, and contemporary designers vie with one another to reinvent it in ever more imaginative creations. The book explores the origins of the word tiara which derives from the head ornaments of Persian kings. The term tiara encompasses the diadem, said to have been invented by Dionysos, god of wine, the Kokoshnik from early Russia, and the wreath of flowers, perhaps the most appealing source of inspiration for the modern jeweller. Tiaras are considered as emblems of love and marriage, as symbols of aristocratic heritage, and as works of art in their own right in a range of styles from the antique and neo-classical to art deco. The stunning array of contemporary designs indicates that tiaras are now most definitely items of high fashion. Many are shown alongside either their original designs or photographs of their owners from the Queen Mother to Madonna. "Tiaras, Past and Present" traces the history of these magnificent jewels from ancient time to their re-emergence in the First Empire, through the work of famous jewellers like Fabergé, Cartier and Boucheron to the extravagant contemporary creations of Vivienne Westwood and Versace. Tiaras of all types glitter throughout the pages, breathtaking in the sumptuousness of their stones and the intricacy of their design. The tiara is indeed pre-eminent among jewels, and this book is a celebration of them.

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