



Icons of Opera

Matthew Boyden

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As we move into the 21st century, opera is enjoying a popular revival. Since its birth in the late 1500s, opera has generally suffered from the misconception that only the privileged few, educated in the language and musical traditions of an elitist art form, could enjoy the genre. Today, however, mass culture has embraced opera--witness the phenomena of the Three Tenors--and has excited ordinary people with a passion for music that synthesizes orchestra, voice, drama, and thrilling spectacle. Not surprisingly, this renaissance of opera has resulted in the elevation of many celebrated singers to the status of icon, while helping to push relative newcomers straight into the limelight. *Icons of Opera* takes a look at more than eighty of the "larger-than-life" operatic figures of this century, using stunning black-and-white photographs and descriptive narratives to encapsulate each subject's greatness, either by way of an intimate portrait revealing charisma and character, or in performance of one of their greatest roles.

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