



The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire

By Wayne Koestenbaum

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This innovative, profound, and wildly playful book reveals the ways in which opera has served as a source of gay identity and gay personal style. The result is a learned, moving, and often very funny work of critical insight, subversion, and homage.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Why do so many gay men love opera? What makes an "opera queen"? What is the connection between gay sexuality and the full-throated longing that emerges from the diva's mouth? In *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*, self-proclaimed opera queen Wayne Koestenbaum investigates the hidden--and unexpected--mysteries that opera and sexuality produce. At once a personal meditation and an iconoclastic, highly entertaining survey of divas, *The Queen's Throat* is ultimately a profoundly moving, and at times curiously disturbing, investigation of the intricate interplay between art and sexuality, between beauty and eroticism. Koestenbaum is not afraid to challenge, and he more or less grabs readers by the hand to drag them, with nonstop exuberance, through the ornate, highly stylized world of diva worship. Traipsing through descriptions of classic performances, musical autobiographies, personal recollections, historical notations, and the music itself, Koestenbaum creates for us the daring, frenzied, disordered, highly sexual--and ultimately ecstatic--world of the opera queen. --*Michael Bronski*

From Publishers Weekly

Witty reminiscences, personal confessions and cultural analyses of the reputed affinity of gay men for opera. Author tour.

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From Library Journal

Initially, *The Queen's Throat* reminded this reviewer of the author's earlier work, *Ode to Anna Moffo and Other Poems* (LJ 9/15/90), which also had an operatic theme. Here, everything from opera trivia to serious analysis is blended in the context of the author's personal experience, with results that are at times humorous. Koestenbaum's innovative ideas reflect a gay point of view that will be startlingly different and refreshing for some readers. As an example, the author reads the autobiographies of long-gone divas looking for the words queer or gay and then interprets each diva's words from his personal perspective. An appropriate book for the 1990s. Recommended for collections in opera or gay studies.

- *James E. Ross, Seattle P.L.*

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