

TIARAS

and Bridal Jewellery

Projects using beads and wire

Jema Hewitt



Tiaras and Bridal Jewellery



A RAINBOW DISKS BOOK

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Rainbow Disks Ltd
www.rainbowdisks.com

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27 Manor Road,
Bishopsteignton
Devon
TQ14 9SU

First published in the UK in 2007

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-906314-00-2

Additional photography by Jonathon Bosley



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Victoria



Eleanor



Elizabeth



Catherine



Charlotte



Anne

Introduction



The Author: Jema Hewitt

Jema Hewitt is a professional costume designer, working on projects for films, theatre and museums, specialising in period clothing and jewellery. She is the owner of Kindred Spirits Bridal-Originals, a couture wedding dress company that designs and creates historical and coloured wedding gowns.

Jema's love of vintage beads and embroidery developed naturally into teaching and writing on a variety of subjects, from tiaras to corsetry. She has written two books on beaded jewellery and is a regular contributor to magazines.

To see more of Jema's work, go to Kindred Spirits at:

www.bridal-originals.co.uk

Today there are more tiara designs available than ever before, but finding exactly the right combination of design and materials to suit your taste or occasion is never easy. Perhaps you want to create a unique piece, or design your own work of art for your wedding, or for a special prom or party.

In these projects we discover many different ways of putting beads and wire together to create spectacular tiaras anyone would be thrilled to wear – whether their style is funky or classic. And if you want to start designing your own tiaras, here are all the techniques you need.

A star system grades the projects in difficulty: from * (easy) to *** (more difficult).

- **Victoria Tiara*** shows the use of end caps, the manipulation of medium and thick gauge wire, and a basic neatening technique.
- The soft and informal style of **Eleanor Tiara**** encourages a loose approach to the wirework while still keeping the finishes neat.
- **Elizabeth Tiara**** uses the basic skills of branched wire to bring many simple pieces together to create a stunning finished piece.
- **Charlotte Tiara***** combines beautiful beads with smart and precise wirework to show how to make a circle tiara.
- Woven crystal clusters created separately from the wirework are the key to the amazing **Catherine Tiara*****.
- **Anne Tiara***** introduces the use of a Wig Jig tool to aid its precise wirework.

USING THIS BOOK

Browse through this book using the pdf bookmarks and page tabs on the left-hand side - they will take you quickly to the chapter, project or page you need.

Use the pdf zoom tool to zoom in on close-up details in photographs, and see the details greatly enlarged.

TIP: Click on the zoom tool and drag a box around the area you want to enlarge.

When you have chosen your first project, print out its pages for easy and portable reference.

Use links to suppliers to go directly to their web pages.

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The Tiara Tradition

The use of a tiara as an essential bridal accessory is a fairly modern idea, but from the earliest civilisations a headdress has been the immediate way to recognise a person of rank. From the Roman laurel wreath to the golden crown of a king, the adornment of the head has been a mark of respect and appreciation.

Headgear fashions have come and gone like all others. Wealthy Egyptian and Babylonian ladies had delicate headdresses made from gold and precious gems, fashioned in the shapes of flowers and leaves.

A medieval crown of traditional gold points is depicted in a painting of the marriage of Isabella of France to Edward II in 1308. Interestingly, it is Isabella, not Edward who is wearing a crown.

Roman brides were among the first to wear veils, believing them to confuse malign spirits. Fabulous jewelled decorations adorned the wigs of the ladies of the Court of Versailles.

Josephine had a diamond tiara for her 'consecration' as Napoleon's Empress. Napoleon made the tiara a pre-requisite of court dress for social functions so he was influential in establishing its popularity.

Most tiaras, diadems, coronets and crowns were made from precious metals and jewels, handed down through aristocratic families. Occasionally the jewels were taken off the metal frame and re-set because it was cheaper to get a master craftsman like Cartier to re-set the stones in a new style than to buy a new tiara! You would be expected to wear the family jewels on your big day whether or not they were to your taste .

If you were not from a family with piles of diamonds in the safe, then hair ornaments might be made of fake stones, silk flowers and feathers.

Before Queen Victoria, most brides married in a simple 'best' dress and hat, but when Victoria married in 1840, her lovely white gown became the aspiration for wedding wear.

Tiaras of wax flowers became popular in the 1920s, echoing the medieval tradition of crowning of a virgin bride with fresh flowers.

Gradually, tiaras started to be made from non-precious metals and crystals, until they have now become possibly the most iconic bridal accessory.

Anne Tiara, page 45



Catherine Tiara, page 30



Charlotte Tiara, page 36