



Passion for Fashion

Tue, 7th Dec 2021 GMT+1/BST

Viewing:

Viewing for this sale is strictly by appointment only, and you must be registered to bid with us in advance. Please contact us directly to arrange an appointment, with the available times as follows:

Thursday 25th November and Friday 26th November: 9:00am-5pm

Monday 29th November - Friday 3rd December: 9:00am-5pm

Additional viewing times may be considered, by special request.

Lot 199

Estimate: £400 - £600 + Fees

A Murray Arbeid evening gown, identical to one worn by Princess Diana, 1985

unlabelled, of black velvet, the strapless bodice lightly boned, narrow skirt cut in a curve with striking ivory taffeta mermaid hem with layers of tulle petticoats, *bust approx 81cm, 32in, waist 66cm, 26in*; together with a photocopy of news clippings relating to the dress (2)

The owner of this gown wore it to attend the 21st birthday party of Prince Edward at Windsor Castle on the 22nd June 1985. She was unaware that Princess Diana - who was also in attendance - was wearing exactly the same gown that evening! She recalls:

'It was the 22nd June 1985 and at around 10.00pm I found myself driving through a thicket of paparazzi, down the drive of Windsor Castle, to attend A Midsummer Night's Ball - the 21st birthday party of Prince Edward and his three royal cousins. I had been invited almost by chance, and felt something of an imposter in the beautiful black velvet and ivory silk Murray Arbeid ball dress which I had borrowed from my older sister.

Once through the doors, I fiddled with my Butler & Wilson paste jewellery nervously as I scanned the huge crowd for the handful of people I knew at the party. Finding a friend, he told me that I had committed the egregious faux pas of wearing the same dress as Princess Diana. What to do? Should I leave the party? A consultation with the Queen Mother was arranged and she said kindly that if Diana insisted on wearing "awf the peg" clothes then this kind of occurrence was bound to happen. "Go and have a lovely time and think no more of it," the Queen Mother urged me.

I made sure to display my dress to Diana and Charles on the dancefloor, to their gentle amusement, but it was an otherwise uneventful party. Outside, the tired paparazzi - in the grip of Diana mania - were getting desperate for a story. What started as a "mystery blond upstaging Diana" ended with a few tabloid photographers camped outside my door offering me ever-larger sums of money to pose in the dress. I declined, but "Dishy Natasha" and the beautiful borrowed dress got their fifteen minutes of fame'.

Princess Diana's identical gown was sold in 1997, ex-lot 49,

'Dresses from the Collection of Diana, Princess of Wales',
Christie's, 25th June 1997, and is pictured in the catalogue,
p.111.

*A digital copy of the news clippings is available on request
to the buyer of this lot.*