



A sparkling evening silhouette with scarf-wrapped throat



Embroidery accents the side-closing of the Russian-influenced suit

Fashion ballet aids orchestra

There's drama in this season's fashions of hooded capes, swirling skirts and flowing fringed scarves, enough drama to turn the looks into a fundraiser for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and draw nearly 800 people.

Saturday night, 12 European model dancers used ballet as the medium to present the collection of Paris designer Bernard Perris at Rackham Auditorium, Detroit.

The ballet fashion show benefit was organized by the Women's Association for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Somerset Mall retailer, Claire Pearson.

Amid a background of contemporary music, the models danced their way through a collection which ranged from suited ensembles to chiffon-turbanned evening-wear.

ACCORDING TO ORGANIZERS, the show was a first for the

Midwest. Although used by Perris for three years in Europe to present spring and fall collections, it has been imported to the United States only once. It was previously performed in Dallas.

"When I was creating my collection, I always saw the girls dancing and moving in the clothes," said Perris, explaining the origin of the dance format.

Since determining that American audiences are responsive to the presentation, Perris said, he plans a return trip to Detroit and additional shows on this side of the Atlantic.

Fashion show chairman was Mrs. Harry Bloch of Birmingham. Also instrumental in the presentation of the benefit was Mrs. William Shaw of Bloomfield Hills, Women's Association president.



The drama of black and white echoed in a fringed scarf (Photographed by Art Emanuel)

Designer opts for new couture

BERNARD PERRIS

Injecting life into fashion seems to be a way of life for Paris designer Bernard Perris.

Not only has he swept through Europe for the past three years presenting his collection via ballet, the collection itself was born of a desire to be rid of old-fashioned interpretations of haute couture.

In 1963, Perris broke away from haute couture and his working background in the houses of Guy Laroche, Heim and Dior.

Instead, he opted for the formula of the new couture.

"I decided to leave haute couture for something more in time with the way of living," explained the 37-year-old Frenchman. "The couture was expensive and very traditional. Some of the wardrobes were a bit old-lady looking. They didn't look like fashion."

So Perris joined a fashion movement which lowered prices by reforming work preparation and fabrication methods but which strove to retain quality of execution and fabrics.

"WE CALLED it the new couture because we wanted to keep the quality of creation of the old couture," Perris said. "All the fabrics in the collection are exclusive. All the colors are made in the house and are exclusive to us," he said of his salon which opened in 1969.

More effort is put into hand-worked details, Perris said, than in ready-to-wear collections.

The current problem felt by designers is finding those with expertise to work the details.

"There are so many techniques that are going to the wind," Perris said.

He cited his efforts to execute a crepe de chine ombred (shaded) blouse.

"The shaded materials require a hard technique," he said, explaining that a long search preceded location of artisans.

"We finally found two men over 65," he said, "and we brought them back to work to teach others."

FABRICS, Perris said, are playing a large part in the growing acceptance of longer hem lengths.

After heated disapproval of the mid of past years, knee-covering lengths are gaining momentum this season.

"The first time around it was a good idea because it changed fashion," Perris commented.

"Everyone was tired of the short, Courreges look. But we didn't have the right fabrics. Our materials were too stiff.

"In that length, materials have to be soft. They have to move."

Now, Perris said, with the revival of fabrics such as silk crepe de chine, the longer silhouette is coming to the fore.

For the most part, the fabrics and longer lengths in the Perris collection are styled into skirted ensembles. Dresses are few and far between.

"It's more fun for women if they can pick a skirt from one outfit and pick a blouse from another," Perris explained.

"I would like a woman to live easy in her clothes," he said. "But be refined, very refined."



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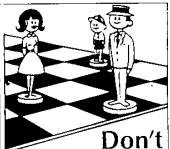
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