

A CENTURY OF FASHIONS, 1830-1930

A Shakespeare Club Pageant

On Saturday afternoon, November 6th, 1926, the Shakespeare Club's Entertainment Committee presented a Fashion Pageant entitled "A Century of Fashions" in the Library Gardens of the Henry Huntington estate in San Marino. Judging from the extensive coverage in the newspapers, this was a spectacular event. It promised to be the biggest event in many years given by the Shakespeare Club. Society folk from all over the Southland attended in large numbers.

According to various news articles:

"Under a cloudless sky, Queen Titania held gracious court Saturday afternoon in the beautiful gardens of the Henry E. Huntington estate in San Marino, when the Shakespeare Club presented a gorgeous and spectacular Century of Fashions, a costume pageant of unusual proportions and beauty.



Huntington Gardens

*In the charming prologue to the event, With Queen Titania (“A Midsummer Night’s Dream”) impersonated by **Mrs. Joseph H. Dorn**, President of the Shakespeare Club, with charming dignity and grace Club, came fair Portia, (portrayed by Miss Gertrude L. Pettigrew), and Shylock (portrayed by Edward P. Murphy) in correct Shakespearean costume., and a troop of as lovely fairies as ever danced in dell or glade. Two pages with silver trumpets, Mrs. James Morin and Mrs. Cecil Bryan, heralded the entrance of the actors, and Shylock bespoke in Shakespearian lines, the interest and attention of the audience.*



Mrs. Joseph H. Dorn as “Queen Titania”

*Following the prologue, the Century of Fashions began with the **Modes and Manners of Yesterday**.*

In this episode, Mrs. George Crusselle and Mrs. Edward Burton MacDowell appeared as stately ladies of the Old School, wearing wonderful authentic gowns made for the Duchess of Raveneau, the best-dressed woman in Paris in her day, and (at that time) being shown in

museums of Europe. The gowns were owned and loaned by Walter Switzer. The stately dames moved with dignity across the esplanade in front of the library, which formed a most appropriate background with its classic beauty.



Mrs. Edward Burton MacDowell

*Then, with the coming of the era of **1830-1840**, at a simply charming garden party, the Squire's wife (portrayed by Mrs. A. H. Palmer), her sister, (Mrs. Robert Loofbourrow), and her young daughter, delightfully played by Miss Eleanor Gerdine, entertained a group of lovely young girls and the village beau (Leslie Gaze). As was the wont in those by-gone days, a simple game of grace hoops was the diversion offered 8 young ladies.*

In this episode, Mr. Gaze, the village beau, sang with much feeling and expression, 'Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms,' and was

prevented from giving an encore, by the (according to the manners of the times) fainting attack and sprained ankle of one of the fair debutantes, whom of necessity the village beau had to escort to her home.

*The next episode presented was “Early California,” - **1840-1850.** Again, the heralds announced the appearance of another group in rich Spanish costume. As they entered, from the distance came the soft notes of music and gay laughter. Two little flower girls in Spanish garb, flung posies to the crowd, and a group of señoritas entered to the romantic strains of 'Juanita,'.*

Guests at this lovely party, Spanish grandees from San Gabriel Valley were impersonated by members of the club and their significant others.

The famed Beatrice Collenette danced in spirited manner the Manzanilla.



*Mrs. Edwin F. Hahn
Spanish Grandee Senora*

*With a coming-out party of the **1850-1860s**, debutantes with their swains held the center of interest; poke bonnets, hoop skirts and charming lace pantalettes were the vogue. Mrs. C. C. Snyder was chaperone and hostess with her guests wearing gowns of 1850, loaned by Mrs. Florence Roberts.*



Miss Ruth Hosking, Debutante

Mrs. Jessie MacDonald Patterson, renown coloratura soprano soloist, whose arrival as Jennie Lind, famous Swedish soprano, was a trifle late and caused her hostess a moment of anxiety, sang charmingly Jennie Lind's own song, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' and again 'Hark, Hark, the Lark,' and responded to applause with 'Comin' Through the Rye,' after

which, with a lad from among the swains, she led the happy young people away.

Mrs. Patterson has appeared as soloist in many of the largest cities on the continent and in a series of concerts of her own in Paris. She was the first choice in the selection of the Angel Voice in the Pilgrimage Play

As with the present day young folk, nothing would satisfy those of the earlier day, except the most shocking of dances, and it required much firmness and show of authority to interrupt the latest of French dances, the 'Varsovienne.' (Click the following link for a video of this European waltz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp-hDkNcLl4>

The exit with the Peacock stride also was hardly in accord with the requirements of the older set.

*A fashionable wedding reception was the offering of the cycle of **1870 to 1880**, and thanks to the courtesy of Douglas Graham, the bride was not left at the altar, in spite of the defection at the last moment of the expected bridegroom. Miss Rose Stern made an altogether lovely bride, who fainted at the correct moment, with grace and charm, recovered promptly and danced the waltz with the new bridegroom without delay.*

Others in the party were: Flower Girls, the Father and Mother of the Bride, the Father and Mother of the Groom, (portrayed by Miss Theresa Cloud wearing the 1870 gown of her own mother), the Maid of Honor, the Best Man, the Grandmother of the Bride, 4 Bridesmaids and 4 Groomsmen, and several Guests.

*Coming down within the memory of folks in the audience, the cycle of **1900 to 1910** awakened responsive chords in many minds. 'I had one just like that,' was the undertone as models arrived in street gowns, carriage gowns, hats and wraps, dinner gowns and evening gowns.*

Miss Suzanne Emery Holmes wore a wonderful creation of Deall of Vienna, and a wrap worn by Madame Sarah Bernhart in 'La Tosca,' and Miss Harriet Karns in red, impersonated the 'Merry Widow' of historic fame.



Miss Suzanne Emery Holmes



Ms. Harriet Karns

*A lovely interlude was the graceful dancing of **Little Yvonne**, 11-year old child wonder interpretive dancer, who danced 'To a Wild Rose.'*



Little Yvonne Stebbins

***Fashions of Today** proved a revue of a bewildering array of gowns for every occasion; hats, wraps, furs and wigs of the present season, and according to all indications, skirts are positively not getting any longer, not an inch. Gorgeous colors reign, and furs are soft and enveloping.*

All these garments were displayed by models, many of whom were thrillingly pretty, and when moved with dignity and grace even over the thick, grassy turf.

As an epilogue, possibly suggesting a future change of mode, a young maiden in scanty skirt, short jacket, trim hat, whistled down the wind and was joined by the belated bridegroom in plus fours, of a rich plaid, about whose wrist the dominating female of the species quickly closed handcuffs also attached to her own capable arm, and led him from the scene.

Appearing during the interludes will be some of the finest talent which the Southland has to offer including Beatrice Collenette, protégé of Anna Pavlova; 'Yvonne,' child wonder dancer; Grace MacDonald Patterson, Pilgrimage Play soloist; H. G. Gage, formerly of New York City, and the original Chocolate Soldier in that famous musical comedy, Ethel Jenks, soloist, and Joyzelle, danseuse. Henri Van Praag's orchestra, augmented for the occasion, played throughout the afternoon.



Beatrice Collenette



Joyzelle Joyner

No amount of effort was spared in preparing for this extravaganza!

- *Every California women's club was invited to attend.*
- *Directional arrows, indicating routes from Los Angeles and all neighboring cities to Pasadena and the Huntington estate, were placed along all highways prior to the occasion.*
- *A Pacific Electric Special left the P.E. station at 1:15 o'clock and went directly to the Huntington Gardens.*
- *There was to be parking space for 800 cars and several thousand comfortable chairs were placed near the stage so that all could see the beautiful pageant. Tickets were sold at Hunter & Williams, a stationary and office supply store on East Colorado Street."*

The event was a tremendous success. It brought in nearly \$3,000 (the equivalent of \$40,000 in today's dollars) into the Club's building fund which helped to liquidate existing indebtedness on the club's newly-extended property.

What an Inspiration These Ladies Are!

