



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Playbill for Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies**

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 03:29:36

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## FASHION FORECAST

The couture designers have made their best stand in years.

[[image: photo of woman modeling gold brocade]]

[[image: photo of woman modeling gold embroidered chemise]]

Who decides what kind of clothes women will wear?

Traditionally, the answer was the Paris couturiers, the designers who produce relatively elitist, expensive, extravagant designs for the women with the time (a couple of weeks generally), patience to endure the fittings and money (five figure price tags are not unusual these days) to order these custom-made creations.

Their decisions ultimately affected the clothes that secretaries wore to work in Midwest cities of the United States as well as the styles Japanese and Indian women put on when they slipped out of their kimonos and saris.

The Paris couture had a way of absorbing other influences and making them its own. Irish tweeds, American sports clothes, the harem pants of the Middle East—all were transformed into the Paris mystique. If the American or German or South African woman couldn't afford the trip to Paris, she could find recognizable copies of the couture styles in her neighborhood department store.

In the days before ready-to-wear, dressmakers decided from sketches in magazines whether skirts should have hoops or bustles, necklines should be high or low, sleeves should be puffed or smooth.

The first serious threat to the couture's role as pacesetter to the world of fashion took place 20 years ago when the boutique

by Bernadine Morris

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[[end page]]

[[start page]]

[[advertisement]]

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[[image: photo of man and woman exchanging a gift; man is covering woman's eyes with his left hand, giving her a present with his right]]

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Whether you're shopping crosstown, cross-country or around the world, you'll find the American Express® card is welcomed. At stores and shops of all sizes, shapes and styles.

So take the American Express Card shopping. Just look for the emblem at fine stores like these. And you'll see that anything is possible.

Henri Bendel, 10 W. 57th St., 247-1100. Where women are outfitted in the great classic looks and style.

Leighton's, B'way at 47th St., 757-6040. Men's fashions: Oxford



clothes, furnishings, J & M and Bally shoes.

Charivari Ltd., 2307 B'way., 873-1425. Imported and domestic contemporary high fashioned excitement.

I. Miller, 5th Ave. at 57th St., 581-0062. Finest women's designs, footwear and coordinated handbags.

Barney's, New York, 7th Ave. & 17th St., 929-9000. Finest collection of designer fashions for men and women.

Rizzoli Bookstore, 712 5th Ave., 397-3706. Fine arts, bestsellers, records and foreign magazines.

Madonna, 223 E. 60th St., 832-0268. Men's imported Italian clothing and exclusive designs by Narcissa for women.

Napoleon, 1048 3rd Ave., 688-3156. Exclusive Italian menswear, ties by Leonard, suits by Zegna.

San Francisco, 975 Lexington Ave., 472-8740. Casual yet elegant. Fashions for ladies and gentlemen.

Susan Bennis-Warren Edwards, Park Ave. at 56th St., 755-4197. The most extravagant shoes, boots, accessories in Manhattan.

The Bermuda Shop, 605 Madison Ave., 355-0733. The key to this elegant colletcion is "conservative chic."

Veneziano, 819 Madison Ave., 688-2088. Exclusive designs for women imported from Italy.

[[image: an American Express card]]

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