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## THE EVOLUTION OF BALL GOWN FROM THE DECADES

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### ABSTRACT

A ball dress is simply a gown worn at a formal dance or ball. Beyond this basic explanation, there are a surprising number of complex traditions pertaining to proper ball attire. A ball gown, the most ostentatious type of evening attire, serves to captivate onlookers and enhance a woman's femininity. Ball dresses frequently include exposed arms, a low décolletage, a tight bodice, and tall, puffy skirts. Ball gowns may be distinguished from other evening wear by their elaborately created surfaces, which often have layers of swags and puffs as well as trim elements like ribbons, rosettes, and fake flowers

**Keywords:** Ball gown, Layers, Puffs, Ages

### INTRODUCTION

A lengthy garment typically worn at formal occasions is known as an evening gown, evening dress, or gown. [1] Ballerina (mid-calf to just above the ankles), tea (above the ankles), and full-length are the different drops. Evening gloves are frequently used with such dresses. Evening dresses are often constructed from expensive materials like chiffon, velvet, satin, organza, etc. The fabric of choice for many evening dresses is silk. Although though the names are interchangeable, a ball gown will always have a full skirt and a fitted bodice, but an evening gown can have any form, including sheath, mermaid, fit and flare, A-line, or trumpet, and may even feature straps, halters, or sleeves.

The most formal female dress for social gatherings is a ball gown. It is often a floor-length, full-skirted gown composed of opulent fabric with delicate, exotic trimming. The majority of variations have decollete necklines and shoulder cuts. Such outfits are generally accessorised with an expensive-fabric stole, a cape or cloak worn in place of a coat, "fine" (vintage or couture) jewellery, and opera-length gloves. Dancing shoes and an evening

purse in clutch shape are considered standard accessories. A tiara is worn by married ladies if they have one, and "state ornaments" are to be worn on a bow fastened to the breast. From the middle of the 19th century, the ball gown form has not evolved much. The most popular fabrics are satin, silk, taffeta, and velvet with embellishments of lace, pearls, sequins, embroidery, ruffles, and ruching, but artificial fabrics are now occasionally employed.

## **History and Origin of Ballgowns**

The early 19th century saw the introduction of the compound noun ballgown, which has mostly supplanted the previous word ball dress, though it is still occasionally used. Both the term "gown" and the word "ball," which refers to a long, beautiful dress, are derived from the French word "bal," which also means "fur garment." In the end, Latin is the source of both terms.

Women's formal clothing during the Regency era was evening gowns. With a high waist, short sleeves, and a somewhat small skirt, they featured the Empire silhouette. Yet, skirts started to get wider throughout the Victorian era. The skirts of evening dresses now featured layers of petticoats that fanned out. The crinoline was created as a result of the petticoats' rising weight. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, both day dresses and evening gowns were worn with a crinoline, but for most formal occasions, the "ball gown" took the role of evening gowns. Nevertheless, dresses started to have a narrow shape in the 1870s, and the rear of the skirt started to get more attention. Around this period, the bustle started to gain popularity. Towards the end of the 19th century, bustles vanished and skirts developed a straightforward bell-like shape.

Women's day dresses and evening gowns of the Edwardian era featured an S-curve form. The hems increased and the embellishments got more extravagant in the 1920s. The Great Depression would result in women wearing more formal attire as a result. In 1947, following the conclusion of World War II, Christian Dior debuted his "New Look," which featured long skirts and cinched-in waistlines. These outfits used opulent materials and reintroduced the ball gown. Although short and long sleeves are popular as long as the shape is off-the-shoulder, the ball gown frequently features a strapless bodice. Nowadays, ball dresses are still the most formal option for women and are only worn to balls.

## **Ballgowns in 1850s**

With very comparable elements, such as a low-cut neckline, a fitted bodice, a roomy skirt, and (sometimes) exposed arms, the same kind of garment would have been referred to as an evening dress in past decades. [2] A wide skirt supported by a petticoat, a narrow waist accomplished by a corset or bodice with a stay to keep the subject erect and with excellent posture, an off-the-shoulder design, and exposed arms were common characteristics of the ball gown at this period. [3]

The invention of the sewing machine in subsequent years altered the clothing industry. Now, middle-class individuals could create their own garments more effectively and with higher quality than when they were fashioned by hand in the past. Despite the shorter turnaround time, upper class members of society may still have had their garments produced by a designer. Chemical dyes were also introduced at this period [3]. As a

result, the palette of colours that could be used to manufacture gowns was significantly altered. This era fell within the Romantic era, which also fell under the Victorian era. The crinoline and modest sleeves that blew up around the arm were also invented at this time.



CIRCA 1850

### Ballgowns in 1860–1864

Skirts had developed an overall bell shape but with extra fullness at the back.<sup>[3]</sup>



CIRCA 1860

### Ballgowns in 1865–1867

Skirts were adjusted to lose their front form and lie flatter against the body while adding fullness to the sides and back using pleating techniques. A lengthy train was frequently sewn at the back of the skirt. [3]



**CIRCA 1867**

### **Ballgowns in 1868–1878**

For the next 10 years the fullness in the back of the skirts increased further with the use of the bustle.<sup>[3]</sup>



**CIRCA 1870**



**CIRCA 1875 BUSTLE**



The dress is a good representation of a gown from circa 1880

### Ballgowns in 1878–1884

Since the fullness in the back of the garment no longer required it, the bustle fell out of favour. Instead, the material was collected and dropped down the rear, where it finished in a lengthy train

### Ballgowns in 1890–1900

The hourglass form, characterised by a small waist, evolved. It was done by having a skirt with a cone-like form that was fitted at the waist and grew fuller at the bottom. [3]



CIRCA 1890



**Christian Dior ball gown and evening glove, 19654, at the Indianapolis Museum of Art**

### **Ballgowns in 1950s**

Ball dresses were formerly used for parties and private gatherings, but by the middle of the 20th century, private occasions had become public ones. Traditional events lost significance as the century went on, and others like charity events took their place. Galas and red-carpet occasions are venues for pricey dresses to be shown in public in 21st-century society. When Elizabeth II stopped holding formal court functions in Britain in 1957, the more open events, such a charity ball, gained appeal since anybody who could afford a ticket could attend. [4]

Usually from a designer's collection, designer clothes were customised suit the wearer. To prevent two individuals from wearing the same dress, designers must know where it will be worn. [4]. However, the likelihood of matching increases if the original wearer chooses to wear the dress to another event afterward. Designers in the modern era must be aware that the internet and paparazzi will both criticise and praise their creations.

### **Ballgowns in 1980s**

The time of the puffy sleeve is now upon us. The 1980s were simply the decade in which women tried to integrate into the predominately male corporate world. This emphasis on success paved the groundwork for an era when "intensity dressing" became popular among night-time fashions. As did Bold shading and extravagant patterns, they opted to aggravate the night-time attire's traditional lineage.

### **Ballgowns in 2000s**

Even while the nightwear of the era has come closer to its original heritage, it has undergone so much that, aside from wedding gowns and formal evenings, we don't seem to find any use for it anymore. Design is a flexible and never-ending form of human expression that directs and reflects societal concerns in any given location at any given time. Charles James, who is regarded as America's finest fashion designer, was an ace craftsman. Harold Koda, director of the Met Costume Institute, described him as one of the innovators who "completely revolutionised the metier of style arrangement. He became highly recognised for his beautiful

clothing for women, especially his finely engraved ballgowns. They were worn for a long period during the "season" both at home and abroad by the most exquisite women of social orders. He persuaded them to give them to family when they finished wearing them.

### The Elements of Ladies' White Tie Attire

Ladies are obliged to wear a ball gown to occasions where males are expected to wear white tie dress, per the laws of etiquette and attire. The components of women's white tie clothing may consist of:

- Ballgowns, which must be full-length (to the floor)
- dance footwear such as ballet slippers, ballet flats, or formal high heels.
- Jewellery: Earrings and a necklace are required; bracelets and rings are optional. Except for jewelled models with faces covered so that they resemble bracelets, watches are not seen to be suitable.
- If gloves are used, they should be opera length.
- Other appropriate accessories include a stole, cape, cloak, or opera coat.

### Conclusion:

A ball gown has a fitted bodice with a voluminous skirt. This type of dress is flattering on every figure, and it gives the legs free movement, compared with fitted cuts. The shape slyly camouflages the hips, waist, and midsection, while drawing attention to the beauty of a full, floaty skirt.

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