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BLAZE OF GLORY

Florence Welch (NEAR RIGHT, wearing Alexander McQueen) with gala cochairs Colin Firth (in Tom Ford) and Stella McCartney (in her own design) at the Café Carlyle, NYC. Welch: hair, Oribe for Oribe Salon Miami Beach; makeup, Alice Lane at Jed Root, Inc. Details, see In This Issue.

Photographed by Mario Testino.
Sittings Editor: Phyllis Posnick.





REVEL, REVEL

AT THE MET'S COSTUME INSTITUTE GALA, HOLLYWOOD AND FASHION LUMINARIES CAME OUT IN WHIMSICAL CREATIONS AND TOUCHES OF TARTAN TO CELEBRATE THE ASTONISHING OEUVRE OF ALEXANDER McQUEEN. PLUM SYKES TAKES IN THE SCENE



Shalom Harlow, in Mafchesa.

Marc Jacobs and Robert Duffy, in Scottish kilts.

Tartan-sashed waiters in the museum's Egyptian wing.



Doutzen Kroes, in Giambattista Valli, on the dogwood, moss, and heather-lined great staircase, designed by Raúl Avila.

Photos by Lindsay Klein MacLennan
for The Hollywood Thomason



Rachel Roy (in her own design), with Amar'e Stoudemire and Hamish Bowles (in Alexander McQueen).



Jennifer Lopez, in Gucci.



Saoirse Ronan, in Rodarte.



Kristen Stewart, in Proenza Schouler.

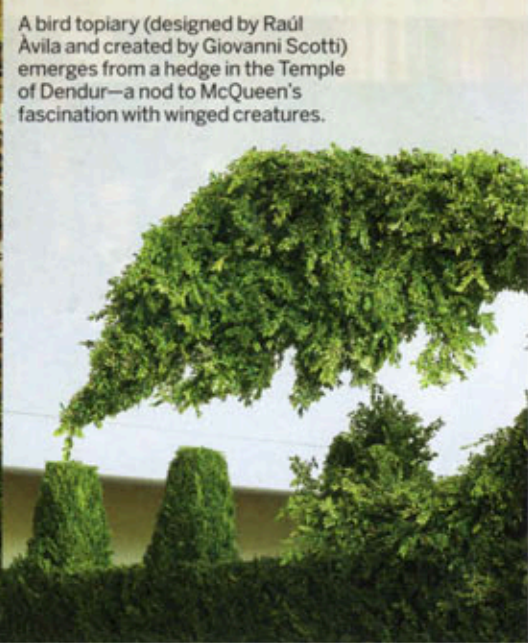
Here are four things that went through my mind when I received my invitation to the Met ball celebrating the opening of "Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty":

1. Oh, my God, I'm so excited to have been invited.
2. Oh, my God, what am I going to wear?
3. Oh, my God, I can't possibly wear anything I own.
4. I'll borrow something.

It was early March. I had oodles of time, I thought. Little did I know then that pretty much every McQueen dress in London and New York had been spoken for. The store in New York was rumored to have stopped taking orders after January. Allison Sarofim had had her tailor working on the tulle beneath her train for weeks already. Still, the McQueen studio in London said they had things they could lend me. Just one criterion, I told them: Please don't send me a sample size—I had a baby eight months ago, and there was no way I would fit into a runway piece. That night an incredible chiffon column beaded with Swarovski crystals arrived. Even though it looked tiny—sample size-ish, in fact—the dress was so beautiful that I tried it on. Well, sort of. I mean, it got over my head and my upper torso. But it wouldn't go down over my hips. It wouldn't even go back over my head. I tussled with the dress to get it off, to no avail. No one over the age of twelve could fit into this garment! What on earth was I thinking? After a horrendous hour of thrashing about, I found my scissors. I chopped through the zip and cut the back seam until the dress finally fell off. I ended up choosing a chic little beaded crimson McQueen dress made of jersey. It had some stretch.

Luckily for the A-list Cinderellas in New York, most of them are sample size—and on the night of the Met ball they were having a lot of fun getting dressed up. Amanda Harlech, having put on her black couture Chanel gown in her hotel room, went to show Karl Lagerfeld. He told her that her hair needed more height and produced an

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY MATTIOLI
STYLING: MARY MAZUR
HAIR: JANE ROSS
MAKEUP: JANE ROSS

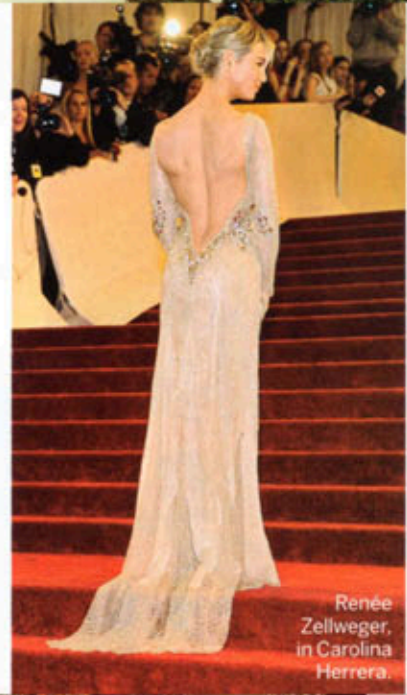


A bird topiary (designed by Raúl Avila and created by Giovanni Scotti) emerges from a hedge in the Temple of Dendur—a nod to McQueen's fascination with winged creatures.

In the Great Hall, an allée of cherry trees leads to a 30-foot oak, reminiscent of those on McQueen's estate in Sussex, England.

exquisite diamond feather to add to the collection of diamond clips already in her hair. Daphne Guinness, who wore McQueen, chose to dress in the window of Barneys New York. "She's very shy," said women's fashion director Amanda Brooks. "I think she drank an entire bottle of tequila. She was biting her nails when she came out."

Meanwhile, at the Café Carlyle, cochairs Stella McCartney and Colin Firth and performer Florence Welch were being photographed by Mario Testino. McCartney, a friend of the late Alexander McQueen since their Central Saint Martins days together, wore a burgundy one-shoulder embroidered organza lace dress and a dazzling diamond 1902 Cartier hairpiece. She looked like a screen siren, with a waist to match. (When I asked her how she achieved such a line only five months



Renée Zellweger, in Carolina Herrera.

after giving birth to her fourth child, she sighed and said, "Exercise. Plus, don't eat anything you really want to eat. There's no mystery in it.") Oscar winner Firth was 100 percent Mr. Darcy in real life, and pulled off his black tie like a modern-day Cary Grant. Flame-haired Welch, meanwhile, in a white satin gold-sequined Alexander McQueen cloak, looked like an avant-garde Wizard of Oz. "I'm going to sing 'Rebel, Rebel' tonight," she said.

Between shots, McCartney admitted to nerves about the receiving line. Testino advised, "All you have to say is, 'Hello, hello, hi, hello!' It's not very difficult." Still, to stem her nerves, she started singing the Cockney pub song "Knees Up Mother Brown." "Laurence Olivier used to do that," said Firth. "Go through every song he knew on photo shoots."

Zellweger: KEVIN MAZUR/WireImage; topiary, Great Hall: ERIC BOMAN; all others: HANNAH THOMSON.



Gwyneth Paltrow (in Stella McCartney) and Beyoncé Knowles (in Emilio Pucci).



Raquel Zimmermann (LEFT, in Alexander McQueen) and Caroline Trentini (in Michael Kors).

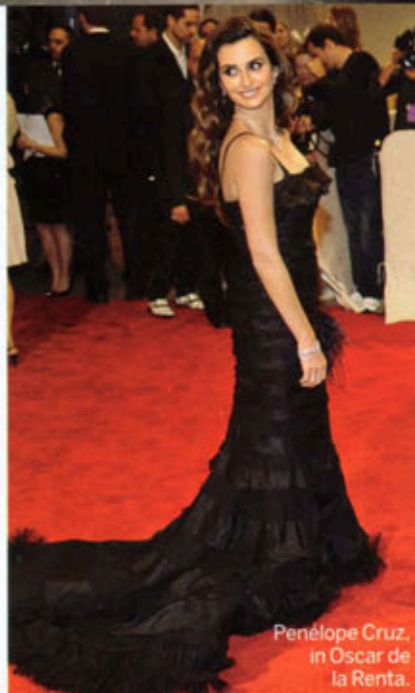


Valentino Garavani, Natalia Vodianova (in vintage Valentino), and Giancarlo Giammetti.



Samantha Boardman (in Vera Wang) and Aby Rosen marvel at looks from McQueen's final collection.

Two hours later and the red carpet outside the Metropolitan Museum of Art was dripping with movie stars, singers, society girls, and the occasional husband. A snapshot: There was Rihanna, in a second skin of black lace designed by McCartney; Fergie in poufy white chiffon by Marchesa; and her new B.F. and next-door neighbor in L.A., Gisele Bündchen, wearing a red taffeta McQueen ball dress embellished with knife pleats as casually as though it were a T-shirt. Her other half, Tom Brady, was in a brand-new ponytail. The red carpet made it clear that the accessories of the night were a) an enormous security guard, and b) a huge train. The fantail train on Tory Burch's vintage Jean Patou frock looked ethereal. Asked if she was inspired by the new Duchess of Cambridge's wedding train, designed by the heroine of the hour, Sarah Burton,



Penélope Cruz, in Oscar de la Renta.

Burch declared, "My train came *way* before Kate Middleton's." Inside the party, the chicest young girls of the night hovered like beautiful birds, literally. Liv Tyler was in exquisite Givenchy Haute Couture trimmed with an enormous hem of ostrich feathers. Model Raquel Zimmermann looked like the Black Swan in a sculpted McQueen from Burton's next collection. A moment after Iman, in gold sequins, greeted Naomi Campbell, in white McQueen feathers, she screeched, "Naomi is shedding all over me!" picking bits of Campbell's fluff off her Stella McCartney jumpsuit. I bumped into Jamie Tisch on the staircase. She was wearing my dress—literally identical—but the long version. We were both really nice about it to each other.

Over dinner, the guests giggled and gossiped and (continued on page 150)



FROM LEFT: Taylor Swift (in J. Mendel), Rosie Huntington-Whiteley (in Burberry), Lily Aldridge (in Ralph Lauren), and Kroes.



"Savage Beauty" curator Andrew Bolton.



Honorary chair Salma Hayek, in Alexander McQueen.

Bottom: ERIC BOMAN. Settings Editor: Lauren Howell; grooming: Anna Birnabe for Dior Homme at Exclusive Artists. Cruz: TIMOTHY A. CLARY/APPI/Getty Images; Hayek: KEVIN MAZUR/WireImage; all others: HANNAH THOMSON.

**THE EMPEROR'S
CLOTHES**

Ensembles
embroidered with
gold bullion and
military braid,
from McQueen's *What
a Merry-Go-Round* (fall
2001) and *Banshee*
(fall 1994) collections.
Photographed by
Eric Boman.



VIDEO: WATCH EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH EVERYONE ON THE
MET GALA'S STAR-STUDED GUEST LIST AT VOGUE.COM.



**INTO THE
MACABRE**

A silk coat and
synthetic
trousers from the
Supercalifragilistic-
expialidocious
fall 2002 collection.
Photographed
by Eric Boman.