

# **Analysis of the Works of Jenny Beavan and Suggestions on Dress Design Based on the Her Works**

**Lee, Myung Ock · Lee, Hee Hyun**

Professor of Kwandong University

Assistant Professor of Samsung Art & Design Institute

## **1. Introduction**

Jenny Beavan is an experienced costume designer who produces costumes for Hollywood and English films. Beavan was born in 1950 in London, U.K., where she studied Design. Beavan started her career as a member of the team that created the costumes for Placido Domingo and Kiri Te Kanawa in the opera Carmen in 1973. After working as a stage costume designer, particularly in operas and ballet productions, Beavan finally branched out to costume production for films.

The costumes she designed for the films that she was commissioned for weren't just a reproduction of historical costumes but enhanced versions of such costumes, with a touch of elegance and femininity. Her designs influenced dress design in the modern fashion industry.

In this work, the costumes that Jenny Beavan created for films will be studied and modern dress designs incorporating elements of these film costumes will be suggested.

## **2. The Works that Jenny Beavan Created for Films**

Starting as a designer in Merchant Ivory Productions, established by Ismail Merchant and James Ivory in 1979, Beavan was a member of the costume production teams for a series of English literary films produced by the company. Eventually, she gained a reputation as a film costume designer. She produced the costumes for *The Bostonians* (1984), *Maurice* (1987), *Howard's End* (1992), *The Remains of the Day* (1993), and *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) in succession. In 1987, she won the Best Costume Award in the Academy Awards for the costumes that she made for the movie *A Room with a View*.

The films produced by Merchant Ivory Productions are famous for the harmony between literature and film that can be found in them. Most of the films produced by the film outfit have graceful lyricism and beautiful scenes. Although their heroes and heroines are decayed noblemen, they manifest the noble ways of the English, conducting themselves with utter refinement. Beavan created costumes suitable for such heroes and heroines, costumes that were products of her innate sensitivity and creativity and whose breathtaking appearances were enhanced by the lyrical beauty of the heroes and heroines who wore them in such films.

Beavan created the costumes for *Ever After*, the Cinderella story produced and directed by

Hollywood's Andy Tennant in 1998. She then surpassed her achievement in such film with the costumes that she created for *Anna and the King*, another film directed by Tennant in 1999. 20th Century Fox's *Anna and the King* (1999) was a totally different experience for Beavan, who created costumes for elegant English noblemen from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The film was set against the backdrop of a kingdom in an Oriental country, therefore requiring costumes different from the English costumes that she was accustomed to. The film required about 6,000 costumes and a total of 27,000 costume pieces. For these costumes, she used exquisite colors such as red and gold, the royal colors of the kingdom of Siam, as well as the traditional textiles of the Eastern region, a complete departure from her style up to then. The costumes that she created for *Anna and the King* were a huge success, as the film was nominated for Best Costume in the 2000 Academy Awards. She had the distinct honor of being nominated for Best Costume in the Academy Awards for two straight years, the second for the film *Gosford Park* in 2001.

Beavan further developed her creativity in the film *Alexander* in 2004. The spectacular and epic story based on the life of one of the greatest men in the ancient times was unfamiliar to her. She proved herself to be a skilled costume designer, though, as she was able to express the ancient women's brand of femininity and the ancient men's brand of masculinity through the costumes that she created for the film.

Truly, Beavan transcends the boundaries of time with the costumes she creates for films. To date, she has produced costumes for over 40 films and TV dramas. She will continue creating costumes that will lend a sense of realism to the roles portrayed by the actors and actresses of historical film epics.

### **3. Dress Design Using the Works of Jenny Beavan**

This author produced a modern dress that adopted the style of the early-19th-century Chinese gowns shown in the film *Sense and Sensibility*. The dress is complemented by a thin and soft pleated cotton muslin muffler worn around the neck. The elegant silhouette of the dress, an effect produced by its wide skirt and deep neckline, is its main design element. Moreover, this author incorporated in the dress certain elements of the works in the 2005 S/S Collection of the designer Valentino Garavani, who emphasizes the elegance and beauty of women in his design theme.

### **4. Filmography**

The Black Dahlia (2006) (*filming*)

Untitled Casanova Project (2005) (*post-production*)

Alexander (2004)

Timeline (2003)

Byron (2003) (TV)

Possession (2002/I)  
The Gathering Storm (2002) (TV)  
Gosford Park (2001)  
Gosford Park (Germany)  
Anna and the King (1999)  
Tea with Mussolini (1999)  
Te con Mussolini, Un (Italy)  
Ever After (1998)  
Metroland (1997)  
Metroland (Spain)  
Emma (1997) (TV)  
Jane Eyre (1996)  
Jane Eyre (France)  
Sense and Sensibility (1995)  
Jefferson in Paris (1995)  
*Jefferson a Paris* (France)  
Black Beauty (1994)  
The Remains of the Day (1993)  
Swing Kids (1993)  
The Blackheath Poisonings (1992) (TV)  
Howard's End (1992)  
The Bridge (1992)  
Impromptu (1991)  
Mountains of the Moon (1990)  
Back Home (1990) (TV)  
The Deceivers (1988)  
A Summer Story (1988)  
Maurice (1987)  
Lord Mountbatten: The Last Viceroy (1986) (mini) TV Series  
Masterpiece Theatre: Lord Mountbatten - The Last Viceroy (USA: series title)  
A Room with a View (1985)  
The Bostonians (1984)  
Cox and Box (1982) (TV)  
The Gondoliers (1982) (TV)  
H.M.S. Pinafore (1982) (TV)  
The Lass That Loved a Sailor (UK: subtitle)  
Iolanthe (1982) (TV)  
The Peer and the Peri (UK: subtitle)  
The Mikado (1982) (TV)  
The Town of Titipu (UK: subtitle)

Patience (1982) (TV)  
Bunthorne's Bride (UK: subtitle)  
The Pirates of Penzance (1982) (TV)  
The Slave of Duty (UK)  
Ruddigore (1982) (TV)  
The Witch's Curse (UK: subtitle)  
Trial by Jury (1982) (TV)  
The Yeomen of the Guard (1982) (TV)  
The Merryman and His Maid (UK)  
A Fine Romance (1981) TV Series  
Jane Austen in Manhattan (1980)  
Hullabaloo Over Georgie and Bonnie's Pictures (1978) (TV)