

Fashion design



*Jean Muir
Evening dress and hat
1971*

Moire rayon jersey, lined with crepe de Chine

In August 1971 Vogue magazine illustrated six designs from Jean Muir's latest collection, including this classic dress. The description ran: 'isn't it romantic? tucked or gathered bodices springing great or greater sleeves'. With its top-stitching, carefully tucked bodice and softly pleated skirt, the fluid dress characterises the designer's meticulous attention to the dictates of cloth and methods of construction.

This evening dress and matching hat form part of the Cecil Beaton Collection, brought together by the society photographer Sir Cecil Beaton (1904-1980). With great energy and determination, Beaton contacted the well-dressed elite of Europe and North America to help create this lasting monument to the art of dress. The Collection was exhibited in 1971, accompanied by a catalogue that detailed its enormous range.

The bodice is given additional weight by a crepe de Chine lining and the voluminous, bat-wing sleeves are elasticated at the wrists. The matching domed hat, designed for Jean Muir by Graham Smith has a shape-forming interlining of foam and the deep plaited band is padded.