



Dolly Tree

A Dream of Beauty by Gary Chapman

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A long lost artistic genius of the Jazz Age, Dolly Tree was famous on both sides of the Atlantic, for her extravagant creations that appeared in stage shows, cabaret, couture and film in the glamorous 1920s and 1930s. It is now time for her to be reclaimed as one of the great British dress-designers of the 20th century.

Dolly Tree (1899-1962) was an illustrator and costume designer during the 1920s and 1930s and was a prime example of the New Woman. Her artistic flair touched so many stage and screen personalities that even if you have never heard of her before you will be familiar with her elegant creations for such movie stars as Myrna Loy, Jean Harlow, Judy Garland, Maureen O'Sullivan, Rosalind Russell and many other MGM players.

She was unique in the breadth and scale of her productivity by working in London, Paris, New York and Hollywood and having several distinctive careers designing for the legitimate stage, cabaret, couture and film. Very few of her contemporaries could match her myriad achievements.

Dolly Tree's creativity had a profound impact on fashion and her modern approach to dress designing with its chic air of simplicity has given her creations a timeless quality that can still be glimpsed at in modern couture.

- The first biography of the British costume designer Dolly Tree.
- Based on extensive research in London, Paris and New York over 30 years.
- Includes over 100 colour and over 500 black and white photographs.
- Reproductions of some of her early artwork and costume designs.
- Photographs of her creations as seen on the stage, in cabaret and on film.
- The life of a very creative woman who forged a career in a man's world in the frenetic Jazz Age of the 1920s and 1930s.
- Insight and detail of nightlife and the entertainment world in London, Paris, New York and Hollywood in the golden age of stage and screen.
- The first English person and the first woman to design for the Folies Bergere.
- She created the quintessential 1890s look for Mae West in *Diamond Lil* which was later immortalised on the screen.
- She dressed innumerable Hollywood stars like Myrna Loy, Jean Harlow, Judy Garland, Maureen O'Sullivan, Rosalind Russell and Carole Lombard.
- Like the recent celebration of Hollywood designer Orry Kelly, who has been reclaimed as a great Australian national figure, it is time that Dolly Tree was reclaimed by Great Britain on the same basis.



Gary Chapman has always been fascinated by the 1920s and the Jazz Age, and his degree in archaeology left him with a passion for uncovering the truth about his subjects. After living and working for many years in London, Gary now lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire. He is fortunate in being able to pursue his various passions – publishing, marketing books, writing, the Jazz Age and making cakes.

Some of Dolly Tree's creations

From left to right, top to bottom : a sketch from 1918; design for Queen of Secretaries from the Folies Bergere (1921); Dorothy Dickson in *The Cabaret Girl* (1922); a postcard design from 1918; a scene from *Round in 50* at the London Hippodrome (1922); Betty Compson in the 1923 British film *Woman to Woman*; a sketch for Jean Harlow in her last film *Saratoga* (1937); Dolly Tree and an actress looking at sketches in the MGM costume department (late 1930s) and Myrna Loy in *Evelyn Prentice* (1934).

