



Press Release from Bournemouth University

27 July, 2009

Further information:

Charles Elder / Charlotte Knight

Tel: (01202) 961032 / (07768) 771870

E-mail: press@bournemouth.ac.uk

BU Masters student reigns Supreme

A postgraduate student from Bournemouth University (BU) has the enviable task of organising a touring exhibit of original costumes worn by The Supremes.

Yvonne Hellin-Hobbs from Briantspuddle in Dorset is currently working towards her Masters degree in Museum Studies but for the next few weeks, her attention is fixed on 'The Story of the Supremes From the Mary Wilson Collection' at the Assembly Rooms in Bath.

The highly-acclaimed exhibit, which originally appeared at London's Victoria & Albert Museum last Autumn, is presented in collaboration with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in the United States. More than 50 original stage costumes worn by The Supremes, from the collection of founder member Mary Wilson, feature in the display which charts the changing image of the group throughout their extraordinary career.

Mary herself came to the UK to formally open the exhibit and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Motown Records. She personally thanked Yvonne for making the exhibit look "so fabulous".

"It's wonderful to come here and to see The Supremes story exhibited through these gowns and other items in such a glamorous setting," Mary enthused. "It really proves that dreams do come true."

Whilst this is Yvonne's first position as Exhibition Officer, she is no stranger to working closely with clothing and other artefacts after spending over 20 years in the film and television industry.

Her screen credits as wardrobe mistress, costume supervisor and assistant costume designer encompass everything from period dramas to modern science fiction classics. Films she's worked on include blockbusters like *Fifth Element*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Alien III*. She has also worked in television on programmes such as the BBC's *Silent Witness* and *Sea of Souls*. More recently, Yvonne has set up a project called 'Timeline' which centres around photographing reconstructions of period settings and events.

In Bath, it will be Yvonne's attention to detail that takes the stage as visitors to The Supremes exhibit view some of the most famous and fabulous outfits in entertainment history.

"I've spent virtually all of my working life surrounded by costume so this exhibition feels like a natural step for me to test my talents and abilities," said Yvonne, from Briantspuddle in Dorset. "I also can't believe that I have the opportunity to meet and collaborate with Mary Wilson. I grew up with The Supremes - they are from my 'era' - so I feel privileged to be working so intimately with the clothing and memorabilia that's been assembled to tell their story.

In addition to the 52 dresses, the exhibition displays original photographs, film footage, magazines and other items to explore the inspirational role that The Supremes played in changing racial perceptions.

"This exhibition is not just about the frocks," she continued. "It's a timeline of the racial problems of the 1960s in the US and represents what The Supremes ultimately achieved.

"I wouldn't have been able to do this sort of work without the skills I've picked up during my Masters degree in Museum Studies," she added. "I've assisted in the curation of several exhibitions as a volunteer and on placements from the University, but this is a step up from what I've previously experienced. In the future, I hope to continue to develop my career as a freelance exhibition designer working on projects like this one around the country and abroad, if the opportunity arises."

Yvonne, who will complete her studies in September, is also organising the national 'New Professionals' conference in London for museum students later this year.

Editor's Notes:

1. 'The Story of the Supremes from the Mary Wilson Collection' is open at the Assembly Rooms in Bath until 31 August, 2009.
2. Further information about the exhibition is available online: http://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk/exhibitions/future_displays/the_story_of_the_supreme_s.aspx by telephone: (01225) 477173 or email: fashion_bookings@bathnes.gov.uk
3. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to The Guardian University Guide 2009 & 2010 (www.guardian.co.uk/education)
4. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) BU is the 4th most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*).

ENDS

27 July, 2009

Please contact the Bournemouth University Press Office:

Tel: (01202) 961032 **Mob:** (07768) 771870 **e-mail:** press@bournemouth.ac.uk