

Vivienne Westwood Creates Theatrical Costumes for amfAR Gala in Salzburg

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The amfAR Gala made its Austrian debut in Salzburg on Sunday, August 24, bringing together nearly 400 global figures from art, culture, politics, and business at the historic Salzburg Residence. In a special collaboration, Vivienne Westwood, under creative director Andreas Kronthaler, designed the evening's costumes, blending the Salzburg Festival's operatic archives with the house's rebellious couture spirit.

The gala performance was based on **Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Jedermann"**, a play central to the Salzburg Festival. Kronthaler reworked costumes once worn by opera singers and actors — deconstructing, combining, and re-sewing them with contemporary Westwood pieces — to create what he called **"a new story in the unmistakable style of the house."**

"Salzburg has a special meaning for Vivienne and me, and Vivienne Westwood is honoured to be part of the amfAR Gala, taking place here in Austria for the first time. The costumes will be auctioned to raise funds for the important research and the ongoing fight against the global AIDS epidemic. Theatre is vital," said Kronthaler.

? Symbolism in Costume Design

The 18 costumes reflected the core themes of "Jedermann": life and death, power and humility, possession and loss.

- Buhlschaft, traditionally a singular role, appeared in three transformations symbolising past, present, and future

 each marked by a striking red dress. From a chiffon-corset blend with beaded motifs, to an elegant sequined gown, to a dramatic silk taffeta "Bird of Paradise" design, the trilogy charted her evolution.
- Death was reimagined in a commanding black corset dress with beaded shoulders, fringed sleeves, and a sweeping taffeta train.

 Other looks combined Elizabethan silhouettes with Westwood's signature corsetry, layered feathers, oversized crystal embellishments, and embroidered florals.

? Fashion for a Cause

Following the performance, the costumes were **auctioned alongside other items**, raising **over €500,000** in support of amfAR's ongoing fight against the global AIDS epidemic.

With its fusion of **historic costume archives** and **avant-garde Westwood DNA**, the gala proved that fashion can both **celebrate theatrical heritage** and **drive meaningful change**.

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