

# **Costumes worn by Danny La Rue on display on Howe Street**

**Glamorous costumes worn by the late “grande dame of drag”, Danny La Rue, have gone on display in Edinburgh.**

The highlight is La Rue’s iconic “Carmen Miranda” dress, which the entertainer wore as a tribute to the singer, dancer and actress known in the 1940s and 50s as the “Brazilian Bombshell”.

The brightly coloured ensemble includes an extravagant towering fruit-laden headpiece.

Hollywood and Broadway star Miranda was famous for her exotic style and signature fruit filled headpieces in films like the 1943 movie *The Gang’s All Here* in which she sang *The Lady In the Tutti-Frutti Hat*.

The vibrant costume is one of three worn by La Rue during performances in his heyday on show at George Pirie Antiques in collaboration with the Fringe Festival.

La Rue, who was born in Cork, Ireland, was one of Britain’s highest paid entertainers and the first drag act to appear in the Royal Variety performance.

He captivated audiences with glamorous portrayals of figures like Carmen Miranda, Marlene Dietrich, Elizabeth Taylor and Zsa Zsa Gabor. He died in 2009 following a career spanning five decades.

Designed by La Rue's longtime friend Annie Galbraith, the three outfits offer a rare glimpse into the world of the performer.

Antique specialist George Pirie, who will make them available for sale after their display, said: "The dynamic spirit of the Edinburgh fringe festival inspired our Danny La Rue costume display, celebrating his flamboyant and glamorous style.

"La Rue was a huge celebrity and a real trailblazer who was entertaining people in costumes like these long before programmes like TV's Drag Race.

"The festival atmosphere perfectly compliments La Rue's theatrical flair."

La Rue was born Daniel Patrick Carroll, in Cork in 1927, but moved to London with his family when he was nine.

He moved into show business after leaving the navy and made his West End debut in the mid-50s. In 1969, he became the first drag act to feature in the Royal Variety Performance, in which he also appeared in 1972 and 1978.

He also became the first man to appear as a female character in a major musical when he took the role of Dolly Levi in Hello Dolly! in a 1982 production which eventually transferred to the West End.

GEORGE PIRIE ANTIQUES  
22 HOWE STREET EDINBURGH

## Danny La Rue

Born, 1927, Cork, Ireland

**Entertainer who elevated female impersonation to an art form.**

Dazzling costumes and sharp wit, La Rue captivated audiences with his glamorous portrayals of figures like Marlene Dietrich and Zsa Zsa Gabor. His career spanned five decades, making him beloved in British entertainment. Among his most memorable ensembles was the vibrant **"Carmen Miranda" dress**, a colourful tribute to the Brazilian bombshell, complete with an elaborate fruit-laden headpiece. Many of his costumes, including this one, were designed by his long-time collaborator, Annie Galbraith, who helped bring his extravagance to life. La Rue's performances were celebrated for their humour and elegance, earning him popularity with celebrities and royalty.

This display showcases some of his most iconic costumes, celebrating the legacy of a performer who brought joy and sophistication to the stage.

*This is inspired by and in collaboration with Edinburgh Fringe Festival.*



Danny La Rue outfits on show and for sale at George Pirie Antiques Edinburgh.

1/8/24 PHOTO Alan Simpson





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