

Saratoga Trunk an Aladdin's cave of costumes



Customer Mary-Frances Doherty trying on one of the Saratoga Trunk outfits

THE owner of Scotland's largest vintage clothing store helped to kit out stars in the newly-released blockbuster *The Adventures Of Greyfriars Bobby*, it emerged yesterday.

David McLay, boss of Glasgow's Saratoga Trunk, yesterday revealed how his vast collection of vintage dresses, hats and shoes have even adorned the cast of Madonna's big screen hit *Evita*, and the stars of Ewan McGregor's film *Young Adam*.

And parts of the outfit worn by Natalie Portman as Queen Amidala in the recent *Star Wars* movies also started off in the Glasgow warehouse.

Situated just off the M8, on Hydepark Street, Anderston, the collection has grown since its humble beginnings as a stall in the city's Barra's market in the 1970s.

It was first started by Mr McLay's mother, fashion buyer Cathie McLay, more than 30 years ago, and he has vowed to carry on her life's work since her death in 2004.

Mr McLay, 34, said: "I've been told it's the largest col-

lection of original vintage clothing in Scotland, and possibly in Britain."

The Adventures Of Greyfriars Bobby enjoyed its world premiere in Edinburgh last week. Starring a host of familiar faces, including *Lord Of The Rings* favourite Christopher Lee and *Father Ted* actor Ardal O'Hanlon, the film tells the famous story of loyal dog Bobby who stood by the grave of his late master in the city's Greyfriars churchyard for 14 years.

At Saratoga Trunk the stars mix with ordinary members of the public. The band Franz Ferdinand are frequent customers and late country legend Johnny Cash was also a visitor with his wife June Carter.

Duncan Mills, who has worked in the trade for 30 years said he sold Cash a solid silver belt buckle that had belonged to an earl from the Perth area.

He said: "It had JC on the front of it. And Johnny said, 'This is my belt, I've not got cash on me, can you bring it to the hotel?'"

"I went to the Marriott and said 'Is Mr Cash in? I've got something important for him."

"Up I went and June and he were in and I had a coffee with him. They left me three tickets for the show, right in the centre of the arena."

Mr McLay, 34, said he is keen to carry on his mother's life's work, which began with her buying a handkerchief.

He said: "We have thousands and thousands of dresses."

"We have clothes from Victorian times right up to the 1990s, but with a special emphasis on the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s."

"*Star Wars* took a lot of stuff - parts of clothing like trimming or lace panels, sometimes jackets. The woman that did it was a good friend of my mother's. We emphasise we didn't actually do the costume, but she took parts of our clothes to make the costume."

"I'd say the main thing we supply to is operas and variety. It's very important, but then we cater for the public as well. If someone wants to come off the street then great, but if

they phone in advance often we can help them more. But it's not appointment only."

"Some mistake it for a charity shop, but it's not."

"We are antiques, a vintage clothing shop and a costume hire shop all at once. And our prices are very competitive."

His colleague May paid tribute to her friend, the late Cathie McLay, who she claims knew all there was to know about vintage clothing and fabric.

She said: "I've been involved for about 20 years, but it was mostly Cathie. She started with a handkerchief, that's what she always told me to say. And this is all her collection, because I came into it quite late. We've got so much, even for the men there are shirts, suits, top hats and shoes."

"The public is important because we don't get a film every week. We get a lot of themed parties and mystery nights, balls and amateur dramatic groups as well as weddings. You can buy or you can hire some stuff for a night or a couple of days."