

SOCIAL NOTES



PHOTOS: BURNEY LIEBERMAN SEGAL CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS AT THE SAIDYE

Star of the evening, E. Leo Kolber, with Leonor Segal and Paul Martin.



At the Saidye bash: Gerry Sheff, Harold (Sonny) Gordon and Alvin Segal.

E. LEO KOLBER shows he can take the heat from high-ranking roasters at Saidye gala

Let's make no secret of this success



RON DIAMOND COURTESY OF GALA DES ÉTOILES

Istanbul's Ilhan Karabacak wows the crowd with a belly ballet at the Gala des Étoiles.



TYREL FEATHERSTONE THE GAZETTE

Dance party: Heather Ogden (standing, from left), Karen Kain and Alicia Amatriain with (seated) Victor Melnikoff and Patricia Barker.

As promised last week, it's "That's Entertainment Day!"

The roast with the most. Entre "the many thousands" nous, this year's gala for the Segal Centre for Performing Arts at the Saidye, chaired by **Leonor Segal** (with **Alvin**) and corporate wonder boy **Sonny Gordon** (with **Hanka**) had a secret weapon. A human one. Now before we reveal his highly guarded identity, let it be known that the evening (which raised an unprecedented \$1.3 million for the centre) would have been a roaring success even without his magnetic presence.

The decor, directed by visionary **Danielle Bitton**, was breathtaking, transforming Windsor Station ballroom into a muted party paradise where oversized crystal candelabras perched atop creamy damask table settings and Kloda's hypnotic multi-hued lighting chased away pre-celebration stress. The menu, masterminded by fête connoisseur **Phil Bloom** (and prepared by the Queen Elizabeth's exemplary team) was equally mesmerizing, featuring culinary coups like a hearty filet mignon bathed in an irresistible green peppercorn sauce accompanied by a stellar selection of gourmet tarts and mousses for dessert.

Clearly, the gala was world class. It's just that the secret weapon took things over the top to that magical place in event history where years later, recollections of the evening inspire the most robust belly laughs.

OK, OK! Drum roll please: This year's Segal Centre secret weapon was ... cherished honoree, passionate centre supporter, the honourable **E. Leo Kolber** (attending with radiant **Roni Gandell**), who is now official one of the city's preeminent "roastees!"

And boy did the glittering register of live and pre-taped roasters (think daughter **Lynn Halliday**, **Sam Minzberg**, **Guy Savard**, **Myer Bick** and past PMs **Jean Chrétien** and **Brian Mulroney**) have their deliciously devilish way with the former senator, business leader and über-phil-anthropist. For your entertainment, some Kolberisms to remember:

■ **"Rabbi" Harry Baikowitz** (attending with wife **Susan**): "Most people know that golf is a leg game. And those who have the privilege of seeing Leo's legs can attest to the fact that had he been a horse, they would have shot him many years ago."

■ **Brother Sam Kolber**: "As truth would have it, Leo doesn't have some idiosyncrasies, he has them all. All idiosyncrasies aside, although he is a class act, who else would step out of the shower to pee?"

■ **Power Corp. powerhouse John Rae**: "Desperate for more information about Leo, I was forced to not only go out and purchase Leo's book, but to read it as well, thereby, dramatically increasing both the sales of the book and percentage of people who have actually read it."

■ Dear friend **Charles Bronfman**: "I'm



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

thinking of the hosts of this evening, Leonor and Alvin (Segal). You guys would honour anyone to raise some money. So you raised a million and half bucks on this guy's back, I don't even know who he is."

■ **Former PM Paul Martin**: "Congratulations to the organizers. This room, this hall is filled with people. Of course, if you wanted to accommodate a large crowd, you could have held this (event) at Leo's house."

Post-roast (elegantly emceed by **Derek Drummond**) there was more, namely a surprise performance by New York based comedian **Freddy Roman**, whose hilarious antics provoked further paroxysms of laughter. "I, too, read the book Leo," Roman enthused "It's the only book I've read where the word 'I' appears 12,408 times."

Predictably, the audience couldn't get enough. Speaking of which (and this won't come as a shock), 700 prestigious plus turned out for the naughty Kolberama, including such luminaries as the honourable **Stéphane Dion** accompanied by wife **Janine Kreiber**; **Stephen Bronfman** and sig other **Claudine Blondin**; the honourable **Raymond Bachand**; Stikeman Elliott chair/CEO **Pierre Raymond** and wife **Anik**; handsome-man-about-parties **Jeremy Reitman**; ever-elegant **Linda** with Astralicious amour **Ian Greenberg**; BMO Nesbitt Burns chair **Jacques Ménard** and wife **Marie José**; power pair **Nina** and **Harry Hart**; Senator **Francis Fox**; **Pauline** and 2006 honoree **Jeff Segal**; **Elaine Tanguay** with **David Sela**; Delmar International's **Harrison Cutler** (with **Ellie**), **Robert Cutler** (with **Debbie**), **Paul Cutler** (with **Suzanne Costom**) and **Michael Wagen** (with **Gail**); **Marvyn Kussner** and wife **Sheila** (yes, last week's vedettes); Red-bourne Group Holdings' **Peter Coughlin** and wife **Elizabeth**; KPMG associate director **Nathalie Bernier** accompanied by husband **Pierre Coté**; Ernst & Young partners **Michael Stern** (with wife **Alice**) and **Jim Haiman** (with wife **Thao-Phan**); **Alice** and **Joel Raby**; Desjardins Caisse Centrale senior VP **Nguyen Trung** with wife **Mai**; a powerful Paperman posse; **Diane** and SAJO spectac **Sal Guerrero**; Haemosan chair/CEO **Tom Hecht** with wife **Riva**; gala committee chair **Ronnie Roter** and hub **Jack**; **Suzanne** with Fiera YMG Capital CEO **Jean Guy Desjardins**; Olympec developing duo **Derek Stern** (with **Kirsty**) and **Richard Stern** (with **Marnie**); fiery fundraiser/loyal Leo pal **Abe Gonshor**; and

the honourable **Martin Cauchon** with wife **Dorine Péron**.

Hmm, Leo, waddya doing next Aug. 21? This was fun!

Bodytalk: The above is proof positive that there's nothing more soul-enriching than a good giggle, but know what? A good spin (or leap for that matter) performed by some of the world's most gifted professional dancers also does very good things for overall well-being (not to mention a deserving charity like this year's beneficiary Jeunesse, Jécouté).

Just ask the thousands of dance lovers who recently turned out for host/president **Victor Melnikoff's** annual Gala Des Étoiles at Place des Arts. Among the highlights that inspired thunderous applause were a captivating performance by Joffrey Ballet's **Valeria Madonia** and **Sam Pergande** and an unspeakably sexy belly dance by Istanbul's **Ilhan Karabacak** (who knew men belly danced, and like that?!)

Post-performance, a select cluster of VIPs continued on to a by-invitation-only après-gala party (sorry, can't reveal the chichi address) where gala fever, um, escalated. In addition to the usual fine celebrating (enhanced by Bon Appétit's down-home catering), certain dancers let down their guard. Or rather took off their shirts. Like my fave bellyman. And as good as it was from a distance, let's just say Ilhan's aberfric expertise was even more admirable up close and personal.

Guests were impressed (to say the least) namely: **Beatrix Popper**; legendary National Ballet of Canada director **Karen Kain** with producer/actor **Ross Petty**; **Louis Robitaille**, artistic director of Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (who FYI rocked the gala with an entrancing grand opening); Russia's Consul-General **Igor Golubovskiy** with son **Dimitriy**; **Amy Brogan**; mezzo-soprano/impromptu after-party crooner **Louise Guyot**; **Janet Broxup** and **Stanley Baker**; wow choreographers **Aszure Barton** and **Eddy Toussein**; lawyer **Stephen Hart** with dazzling **Darina Groucha**; judges **Barbara** and **Don Seal**; architect **Maxine Marcovitch** with **Alex Chaya**; **Martha** and **Mark Oppenheim**; **Vincent Prager** and artist mom **Eva**; American Airlines' **Ava Heepe** and **Bernardo Falcao**; Victor-in-training, son **Mikhael Melnikoff**; lovely **Louise Salhany**; **Joanne** and **Douglas Cohen**; and a glittering array of dance stars including **Alina Somova**, **Silja Schandorff**, **Patricia Barker** and **Jason Reilly**.

Next year's 25th anniversary gala arabesques on Sept. 4. Ladies, bring your binoculars.

PS: For the full-on 411 on fall fundraisers & fêtes, tune into tomorrow's Fall Social Calendar in Arts & Life.

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