

Leslie Harlib's Social Scene: Symphony gala plays up Italian theme

Leslie Harlib
Marin Independent Journal

Article Launched:

Syrup-warm sunny autumn weather set the perfect tone for Marin Symphony's gala dinner party Sunday night that helped launch the orchestra's 54th season.

The party, held in an open-sided tent pitched outside the Marin Center in San Rafael, drew 200 guests. Having the open tent was a fine idea; it turned the Civic Center's lagoon and fountains into a soothing live backdrop.

Because the orchestra's program featured "The Pines of Rome" and "The Fountains of Rome" by Ottorini Respighi in the second half, the pre-concert dinner had an Italian theme.

Caterer Stacy Scott, whose team created the decor and the food, played off the idea of "abondanza" (abundance) and put drama on the tables with huge candelabras and mounds of fresh grapes, figs and pomegranates overflowing their containers.

Breaking with Marin Symphony's opening gala tradition of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres served buffet-style, the three-course Italian dinner featured assorted seasonal antipasti and main dishes that included chicken scallopini, grilled wild king salmon, coal-roasted lamb, gratin of eggplant and zucchini with four cheeses and butternut squash risotto.

The family-style meal created a feeling of down-home community - a fun contrast to the tuxedos and gowns that were the costumes of choice for most guests. Among them: Marin Symphony's president of the board Dr. James Boitano and his wife Caroline, of San Rafael; Steven and Ann Borden, Dick and Alison Fletcher and Shelley Munson, also of San Rafael; Ida Baugh and John Harrington and Steven and Susan Machtinger, all of Tiburon; Matt Taddei of Novato; Massey and Barbara Bambara of Corte Madera; Renee Rymer and her husband, Antonio Clementino of Fairfax; and Andrea Schultz of Kentfield.

Events to come

- Saturday, Oct. 14: Celebrating its one-year anniversary, the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park is having a Starlight Evening from 7 to 10 p.m. The party includes champagne, hors d'oeuvres, and swing dancing to the big band sound of the San Francisco Starlight Orchestra. Dance lessons, exhibition tours and a no-host bar will round out the evening. Tickets are \$55. For reservations, call 1-866-775-3485.

- Oct. 17: It's Carnevale Italiano at the Westin St. Francis' grand ballroom in San Francisco to benefit the Arthritis Foundation. Beginning with a reception and silent auction at 10:30 a.m., there's a luncheon at noon followed by a live auction and fashion show at 12:45 p.m. Tickets begin at \$100. For reservations, call 356-5480.

- Also on Oct. 17: The annual Celebrity Pool Toss at the Phoenix Hotel in San Francisco raises funds to help children in San Francisco's Tenderloin District. It starts at 6 p.m. Among this year's celebrities to be chucked in

the drink are San Francisco Giants senior vice president Jack Bair; S.F. Supervisor Chris Daly; S.F. Fine Arts Museums director John Buchanan Jr., and S.F. Film Society executive director Graham Leggat. The evening includes a variety of foods from top restaurants, an open bar and entertainment. Tickets are \$125. For reservations, call 358-3937.

- Oct. 19: From 7 to 11 p.m., it's a fall fund-raiser and 35th anniversary celebration for San Francisco Parks and Recreation Centers. The party will be in a big tent on the Marina Green. Tickets start \$250 and include dinner, dancing and more. For reservations, call 750-5107.

If you have news about the fund-raising and benefit scene in Marin County, write to Leslie Harlib, Marin Independent Journal, P.O. Box 150, Novato 94948; phone 382-7340; fax 884-1478; e-mail iharlib@marinij.com.