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A Little Night Music

Missives from the Jet Set

JONATHAN SOROFF

PHOTO CREDIT: FEATHERSTONE CENTER FOR THE ARTS GALA: FELICIA MURRAY; SHEHERAZADE MEETS CLARICE ASSAD: MICHAEL DWYER

The Party's Not Over Till the Fat Lady Sings

(Left: Susan Copen Oken at the Featherstone Center for the Arts gala; Left MiddleKate Taylor at the Featherstone Center for the Arts gala; Right Middle: Valerie Sonnenthal and Kanta Lipsky at the Featherstone Center for the Arts gala; Right:The tents at the Featherstone Center for the Arts gala)

Opera might not be the first thing that leaps to mind when someone mentions Martha's Vineyard, but the ***Featherstone Center for the Arts*** honored island resident **Judy Belushi Pisano** with a fundraiser featuring **Wendy Taucher's** hilariously off-kilter take on the art form, ***Impresario Now!***

Guests sipped a superb Californian chardonnay and kibbitzed before taking their seats for a performance that was nearly as clever as Bugs Bunny's "Kill Da Wabbit!" cartoon. Present and accounted for: the incorrigible **Linda Comstock**, blue-blooded shutterbug **Felicia Murray**, exotic equestrienne **Francesca Kelly** (of Vineyard Haven and Rajasthan), arts booster **Bonnie Berger**, the island's poet laureate, **Arnie Reisman**, and his stunning other half, **Paula Lyons**, force of nature **Jacqui Budd**, debonair retiree **Sherif Nada** and the ethereal **Mary**, party pair **Bob and Mary Crane**, theater patron **Gerry Yukevich**, the incomparably chic **Susan Copen Oken**, film producer **Mary Chiochios**, and a pair of copulating dragonflies who enjoyed themselves immensely.

After the performance, a delicious buffet dinner was served beneath a tent, where the following was overheard: "I'm leaving the day before the president arrives. That's not a coincidence."

In fact, there was much talk of the first family descending on the island (and how to avoid their entourage and the crowds they attract). But the evening's funniest exchange came when one guest asked a woman why her husband wasn't there. "Are you kidding?" she said. "It takes the jaws of life to pry him off the beach."

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Truer Words

(Left: Nabeel Abboud-Ashkar and Swanee Hunt at Sheherazade Meets Clarice Assad; Middle: Christopher Wilkins and Clarice Assad at Sheherazade Meets Clarice Assad; Right: Paul Grogan, Adrian Madaro, Jo Frances Meyer and Jeff Makholm at Sheherazade Meets Clarice Assad)

William Congreve was right when he wrote, "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast," which is basically the premise behind the ***Boston Landmarks Orchestra***'s ***Charles Ansbacher Music for All Award***.

Named for the organization's founder, the award honors individuals who have fostered reconciliation through classical music, and it was bestowed on Arab-Israeli musician **Nabeel Abboud-Ashkar**, the founder of the Polyphony Foundation—a group that facilitates dialogue between Palestinians and Jews through classical music. Presenting the award was the late Ansbacher's wife, former ambassador to Austria, human rights activist and iconoclastic Texas heiress **Swanee Hunt**, whose chef (the delightfully blue-haired **Matthew Pidge**) prepared a sumptuous picnic that was served on the lawn in front of the Hatch Memorial Shell.

Among the high-powered crowd on hand: éminence grise **Graham Gund**, mustachioed muchacho **Jonathan Warburg**, Boston Foundation head honcho **Paul Grogan**, board member **Elyse Cherry**, board chair **Jeff Makholm**, the unsinkable **Mary Kakas**, state Rep. **Adrian Madaro**, Ansbacher's brother, **Ted**, and his wife, **Barbara**, tall drink of water **Bill Nigreen** and fashion historian **Kathleen McDermott**, WCRB-FM (99.5) afternoon host **Chris Voss**, gorgeous grad student **Iman Abdul-Musawwir**, her comrade in arms, **Tyler Miller**, and one person (namely yours truly) who suggested that the easiest solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict would be to give Florida to the Palestinians (this was met with mixed reactions).

The free concert that followed, ***Sheherazade Meets Clarice Assad***, included a world premiere by brilliant Brazilian composer **Clarice Assad**, along with pieces by Ravel and Rimsky-Korsakov, and the audience went home pleased.

The evening's funniest remark, meanwhile, happened when someone told the following joke: "A gluten-free, vegan CrossFitter walks into a bar. What does he brag about first?"

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