

Celebrating Gisele Ben-Dor's 10th year with symphony

ON THE TOWN: Lorraine D. Wilson

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Born in Uruguay, Maestra Gisele Ben-Dor has a special love for South American music. Thus, it was easy to choose the tango as the theme for the dinner-dance to honor her 10th anniversary as music director of the Santa Barbara Symphony orchestra. In addition, the Tango Festival in February will culminate with the symphony concert "The Soul of Tango."



The black-tie celebration was held in the ballroom of the Four Seasons Biltmore and was the creation of Symphony League members led by Gillian Launie and Sally Vito.

The benefit for the symphony was sold out and featured a fast auction that included diamond and ruby earrings, donated by Michael Bryant and Teresa Raymond, with the high bid from Ralph Edebow -- a gift for his wife Nancy, he said. George Krebs won the baton to lead the orchestra at the Fourth of July concert.

The Tim Buley Band kept high-steppers on the dance floor, stopping only for the beautiful and sensual tango performances of Sandor and Parissa when many guests stood around the room to get the best view.

Nina and Lew Venegas were there as well as Helene and Jerry Beaver, Charles and Barbara Greene, Diane and Doug Morgan, board member Linda Brown, Mike and Jennie Petlow, Richard and Susan Aberle, Rod and Becky Brown, Joan Nobel with Dr. Ray Rieman (off to Cuba in a week), Martha Sales, Beatriz Antillon, Colleen and Bruce Booth, Ron and Sharon Wolf, and Stan Aslanian with his fiancée Colette Covington. He proposed the evening before.

"I did it down on one knee," Stan proclaimed. All of us at the table toasted their happiness.

This night was made for romance.

Gisele Ben-Dor, left, was honored on her 10th anniversary as conductor of the Santa Barbara Symphony orchestra at a tango-themed dinner-dance with performances by Sandor and Parissa.



John Robinson, executive director of the symphony, with Linda Hedgepeth, president of the Symphony Orchestra Association board, celebrated the opening of the season.



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Jeanette Parent, left, member of the symphony board, with Hal Harrigian and Gerry Nettleton at the gala.

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Joseph and Gillian Launie, left, with Sally Vito and Roy Prinz at the dinner-dance. The two Symphony League women were co-chairwomen of the event.

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The spirited auctioneer was Erin Graffy de Garcia, at the gala with her husband, Jim Garcia.

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Tango dancers Sandor, born in Buenos Aires, and his partner, Parissa, thrilled guests with three performances during the evening.

LORRAINE D. WILSON / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

