

# Party lines: *people, places and politics*

William H. Webster, former director of the FBI and CIA, arrives at the National Symphony Ball (right) with his wife, Lynda. Below: Nadia Manuel makes an entrance with Darina Pavlova, whose Roberto Cavalli gown features tiger stripes and a long fur tail.



## 'Supremes' sacrifice annual Symphony Ball

By Kevin Chaffee  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A quorum of Supreme Court justices — five in all — was expected to dance away the night at Friday's National Symphony Ball. Nary a one showed up, though that was hardly a surprise in light of the court's preoccupation with the presidential election appeal earlier that day.

"They were missed, but we know

the reason why," said ball chairwoman **Hilda Ochoa-Brillembourg**, who, like any charity organizer in Washington, knows not to count on the presence of high government officials at a politically critical time.

During cocktail hour, speculation about the "Supremes" absence was a major topic among guests who count the court's members — especially the "dining out" justices — as personal friends. "They're probably tired and didn't want to put up with a lot of questions about the hearing," said **Wilma Bernstein**, who was only being realistic when she observed that less sophisticated folk may not realize it is a gross breach of protocol to discuss pending court action with any judge, much less one who sits on the highest court in the land.

Attendance from the legislative and executive branches was also

### CORRECTION

A Party Lines photo in Friday's edition misidentified the guests attending the American Spectator's dinner. They were R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., Christopher and Lucy Buckley, Lamar Alexander and Sen. Fred Thompson.





Ben Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, takes to the floor with investment manager Hilda Ochoa-Brillembourg, who co-chaired the ball with her husband, Arturo E. Brillembourg. Lady Catherine Meyer (center) dances with her husband, British Ambassador Sir Christopher Meyer.

Photos by James R. Brantley/The Washington Times

off at the capital's only white-tie event, possibly due to uncertainty about the transition, or post-election blahs in general. Of the few, **Melanne Vermeer**, Hillary Rodham Clinton's chief of staff, certainly looked cheery enough (and why not?), though **Leon Fuerth**, Al Gore's foreign policy spokesman, did look a bit glum.

"I'm escaping the news," he said.

Sen. **Ted Stevens**, the only Senate solon in sight, didn't join an estimated 40 of his colleagues at the court that morning, though he is monitoring the situation there very closely. As far as the upper house is concerned, the Alaska Republican and Appropriations Committee chairman isn't sweating the 17-day period between the

swearing-in of new senators and the presidential inauguration in which the Democrats will have numeric control.

"It will be a relatively calm period, and no one will take advantage of the temporary change," he asserted, adding that Sen. Robert Byrd, the committee's senior Democrat, felt the same way.

Political chatter quickly dissipated when guests took in the striking transformation of the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel's cavernous ballroom. Conceived by Mrs. Brillembourg and local interior designer **Thomas Pheasant** to focus on London's

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# BALL

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new Tate Modern gallery as part of the event's British theme, the decor was both streamlined and spectacular. Black draperies covered all four walls, with 14 video screens superimposed to provide every guest with an unobstructed view of special performances by the Rincones & Company ballet and the Chevy Chase Ballroom Dancers. (Projections of gallery masterpieces

British Ambassador Sir Christopher Meyer wears the distinctive star identifying him as a Knight Commander of his country's Order of St. Michael and St. George.



by Salvador Dali, Damien Hirst and other artists filled the screens throughout the rest of the night.) A snow-white dance floor, 9-foot-tall lanterns illuminated by muted shades of colored light, black silk-covered tables and chairs and masses of flowers — 20,000 roses and 10,000 carnations, a gift of the Colombian government — completed the dramatic effect.

Diplomatic decorations are always a major part of the show, and this year was no exception. **J. Carter Brown**, **Count Peder Bonde**, **Arnaud de Borchgrave** and the ambassadors of Great Britain, Brazil, France, Greece and Italy appeared bedecked with medals, crosses, stars and other regalia, though most were displaying only a part of their stash.

"You mean the men get to pick and choose which ones they wear?" asked an incredulous **Samia Farouki**, who managed to outshine them all with a fabulous ruby and diamond necklace from Repossi, the Monaco jeweler.

Major money was also on display — and in more ways than



one. Names of \$50,000-and-up "Grand Partita" donors got flashed on the walls along with the art, and there was plenty of spirited live-auction bidding for pricey cars and trips among the high-tech crowd, despite the recent stock market slump.

That hardly bothered America Online co-founder **James Kimsey**,



National Symphony Orchestra Musical Director Leonard Slatkin arrives (center) with his wife, opera singer Linda Hohenfeld Slatkin. Left: Kay Kendall dances with Chris Ogden while Washington Ballet Artistic Director Septime Webre glides Linda Fuselier across the floor.

who barely batted an eye while bidding on an opportunity to conduct the symphony at a selected concert next year. "If you let it dampen your spirit, you're a weenie," he said.

His \$40,000 winning bid helped auctioneers raise an extra \$340,000 for the symphony's education programs, bringing the evening's proceeds to a record-breaking \$1 million and change.



# SOCIAL CONCERNS: GOOD WORKS & GOOD TIMES

## NSO BALL BOFFO!

In addition to its emergence as one of the world's finest orchestras, the National Symphony Orchestra has shown a consistent commitment to music education and to community outreach, helping to nurture new artists and to create new audiences for great music. Annually, the NSO Ball helps to celebrate the possibilities. The ballroom at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel was transformed for an evening of music, art and dancing, just as the NSO helps to transform the lives of young people and adults across the United States through the magic of symphony music.



*Cafe Milano's Franco Nuschese with Tracey Ellis.*



*NSO co-chairs, Mr. & Mrs. Arturo Brillembourg and their children.*



*Davis Camdlier proudly danced with his mother Anne.*



*Megan and Bob Gabriel.*