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# MONTECITO MISCELLANY



by *Richard Mineards*



Richard covered the Royal Family for Britain's Daily Mirror and Daily Mail, and was an editor on New York Magazine. He was also a national anchor on CBS, a commentator on ABC Network News, gossip on The Joan Rivers Show and Geraldo Rivera, host on E! TV, a correspondent on the syndicated show Extra, and a commentator on the KTLA Morning News. He moved to Montecito ten years ago.

## Phil Thrill



(from left) Event sponsors Steve Lyons, Jill Shanbrom, Julianna Friedman, Bill Shanbrom, Anne Towbes, Cindy Lyons, Scott Lyons, and maestro Zubin Mehta (photo by Kimberly Citro)

The Arlington Theatre was sold out when the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under iconic maestro **Zubin Mehta** made its Santa Barbara debut.

Although India-born Mehta, 81, has performed in our Eden by the Beach a number of times as conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1962 to 1978, the 81-year old IPO, founded by Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman, had never ventured here until the popular program, UCSB Arts & Lectures, put the enticing perfor-

mance together in honor of the late banker and philanthropist **Michael Towbes**.

The concert, which had heavy security with burly men patrolling the aisles and audience members being frisked and their bags searched at the entrance, had a number of sponsors, including **Sara Miller McCune**, the **Shanbrom** Family Foundation, Michael's widow, **Anne Towbes**, **Julianna Friedman**, **Steve and Cindy**

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Sun Ae and Andrew Mester, Natalie Myerson, event sponsor Julianna Friedman, and Tom Dain (photo by Kimberly Citro)



Arts & Lectures ambassador Maxine Prisyon, councilmember Milton Warshaw, and members of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (photo by Kimberly Citro)

**Lyons, and Charles and Merryl Snow Zegar.**

Israeli **Amit Poznansky's** Footnote, Suite For Orchestra, launched the program with Mozart's Linz Symphony No. 36 in C Major and Schubert's 1828 The Great Symphony No.9, written in the final year of his 31-year life, completing the impressive show.

Mehta, who still has a home in L.A., has been at the helm of the orchestra since 1977 and was appointed director for life in 1981. It was certainly a unique moment to savor, given he retires next year after conducting more than 3,000 concerts during the past five decades.

He was also at the New York Philharmonic for a record 13 seasons.

Among the cultural throng gathering for the concert and the after-party were **Dan and Meg Burnham, Richard and Annette Caleel, Morrie and Irma Jurkowitz, Leslie Ridley-Tree, Harry and Judi Weisbart, Mary Dorra, Allan Ghitterman, Susan Keller, Barbara Ben-Horin, Scott Reed, and Lea Luria.**

*Can't Beat It*

Michael Jackson has been dead for eight years, but the King of Pop is still raking in the money, topping *Forbes*

magazine's list of the highest-earning dead celebrities for the fifth consecutive year with \$75 million.

The singer's earnings are boosted by the Las Vegas Cirque du Soleil show, Michael Jackson One, a stake in the EMI publishing catalog, and the new greatest-hits album *Scream* released in September, among other endeavors.

Two singers join Jackson – who used to live at Neverland in Los Olivos – with Elvis Presley coming in at fourth with \$35 million and reggae star Bob Marley fifth with \$32 million.

Golf legend Arnold Palmer, who went to more heavenly fairways last year at the age of 87, is the second-highest earner, netting in \$40 million, in part through sales of his AriZona lemonade iced tea, and his branded apparel line.

*In the Books*

Literati and glitterati descended on Santa Barbara Public Library when the august institution celebrated its centenary, helping to raise more than \$150,000.

More than 300 guests attended the bustling bibliophile Cocktails & Culture bash hosted by the five-year-old public library foundation and



Centennial Gala Committee members Kristan O'Donnell, chair Zora Charles, Elizabeth Bowman, co-chairs Dianne Duva and Katie Szopa (photo by Heidi Bergseteren)



Library director Jessica Cadiente, Foundation Board president Anne Howard, and director Ellen Pasternack (photo by Heidi Bergseteren)



Les Charles, Zora Charles, gala chair, Angela Charles, Glen Charles at the Papa's Pilar Rum station. (Angela Charles is Mrs. Glen Charles and the widow and second wife of Jack Hemingway, son of Ernest and father of Margaux and Mariel.) (photo by Heidi Bergseteren)

co-chaired by the tony triumvirate of **Zora Charles, Dianne Duva, and Katie Szopa.**

After opening its renovated children's library two years ago, there are big plans ahead with a teen center, children's library endowment, a new library plaza, a second-floor patio, and renovation of the historic entry doors, costing a total of more than \$4 million.

"We're preparing ourselves for the 21st century," says library director **Jessica Cadiente.**

"Access to digital resources and digital literacy skills are now required for full participation in today's society. Last year, our library provided nearly 300,000 computer sessions and over 1,500 one-to-one computer coaching sessions.

"The library also started loaning personal Wi-Fi hotspots so library users can check out the Internet. It is less about building collections and more about building connections."

Among the tony torrent of library lovers were **Salud and Jillian**



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Celebrating the opening night for the Opera Santa Barbara with the production *Manon* are OSB board and sponsors Robert Ooley, Don Gilman, president; Nancy McAleer Golden, board chair; Rodney Baker, Janet Garufis, CEO/president Montecito Bank and Trust, and Eric Smalls (photo by Priscilla)

Carbajal, Larry Feinberg and Starr Siegele, Hannah-Beth Jackson, mayor Helene Schneider, Lois Capps, Meryll Brown, John Glanville, Nancy Gifford, Caroline Thompson, Jeff and Margo Barbakow, Marc Appleton and Joanna Kerns, Barbara Ben-Horin, Judy Foreman, Carole Ridding, Geoff Green, Mahri Kerley, Michael and Hattie Beresford, and Eric Friedman.

*Opera-tunity Knocks*

Opera Santa Barbara kicked off its 24th anniversary season at the Granada with Jules Massenet's enchanting five-act comic opera *Manon*, which featured an expanded orchestra under artistic director **Kostis Protopapas** and some of the most sumptuous costumes – from an Opera Australia production – in the decade I have been attending.

Soprano **Sarah Coburn**, who has

performed at the Met with **Placido Domingo**, was a delight as *Manon*, as were her support cast of **Harold Meers, Alex DeSocio, Colin Ramsey, and Benjamin Brecher.**

Kudos also goes to scenic designer **Keith Brumley** and lighting designer **Marcus Dilliard.**

Prior to the show a dinner for 90



Nati Smith, Caroline Thompson, and Sarah Stokes (photo by Bob Craig)

Kostis Protopapas, conductor and choral master with delighted OSB seasonal sponsors Jack Mithun and Mercedes Millington (photo by Priscilla)



The victorious Imperial team: Scott Wallin, Kelli Martinez, and Kyle Eckert (photo by Bob Craig)



Discussing the captivating voices and costumes during an intermission of "Manon" are opera aficionados Mary Tonetti Dorra, Jon DuPrau, Nancy Schlosser, and Sue Larsen (photo by Priscilla)

guests, among them **Leslie Ridley-Tree, Mary Collier, Joan Rutkowski, Janet Garufis, Mary Dorra, Robert Lieff, Robert Weinman, Jim and Stephanie Sokolove, Steven Sharpe, Bob and Sandy Urquhart, Roger and Sarah Chrisman, Terry and Pam Valeski, Nancy Golden, James Ballantyne and Duncan Mellichamp,** was hosted in the McCune Founders Room.

Clearly a VIP aria.

*Impressive Imperial*

Liquid assets ruled when Montecito botanical wonderland hosted its second annual Spirit of Lotusland with 130 guests wanting to be shaken and stirred.

The judges – **Diana Starr Langley, distillers Anthony Caspary and Ian Cutler, and Gwen Stauffer, the gardens' chief executive** – had to choose from mixology wonders created by

bartenders from Alcazar, Loquita, Les Marchands, The Lark, and the winner, The Imperial, with its concoction High Tea, made from Wilder gin, Earl Grey tea, citrus tea, lemon and lime juice, St. Germain, citrus bitters, thyme, honey syrup, and kumquat marmalade.

The creative mix also won The People's Choice award.

Among those turning out to sip and savor were **Nancy Gifford, Nati Smith, Daniel and Belle Hahn Cohen, Caroline Thompson, Sam and Yasmin Zodeh, Veronique Chevallier, Tom Barton, Ron Caird,**

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Beth Anne Christensen, Susie Cronin, Allison Armour, Nancy Gifford, and Vee Noelle Cole (photo by Bob Craig)

**Sarah Stokes, Mark Taylor, Joe Fazio, Pat Shepard, Ernie Witham, and Nancy Upton.**

*Chosen Ones*

Just in time for Yuletide, TV mogul **Oprah Winfrey** has released her 20th annual Favorite Things list.

Among the gifts is a handy \$299 device preventing and stopping snoring and the most expensive item, a \$2,175 Samsung 55-inch TV that resembles artwork on the wall when turned off.

There are also several Martone Cycling bikes from around \$1,200 – perfect for cycling around Santa Barbara, says Oprah – a Nespresso Creatista Plus espresso maker for a hefty \$599, and a \$270 Philips Sonicare DiamondClean Smart 9500 series toothbrush.

*Culinary Crooner*

Santa Barbara culinary wizard **Andy LoRusso** not only sings for his supper, but exercises his considerable vocal chords while cooking it.

His first book, *Sing & Cook Italian*, based on recipes from Naples and Sicily, was a best seller and now, 25 years later, he has published a 250-page work, *Sing & Cook*, which has added recipes, stories about his colorful life, suggestions of what to sing while cooking, and links to his own songs online.

Former R & B singer Andy, who moved to our Eden by the Beach in 1977, has quite the international menu, including Prairie oysters from the Calgary Stampede, bangers and mash with onion gravy from the U.K., and Menemen from Istanbul.

“It makes the whole exercise in the kitchen that much more enjoyable,” Andy told me at a bijou launch bash at Tecolote, the bustling bibliophile bastion in the upper village.

*No Guts, No Gory*

Given it was the night of Halloween, it was difficult to discern the audience members from the performers when the talented Out of the Box Theatre Company staged *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Center Stage Theater.

I last saw the production in 1976 at the Kings Road Theatre, near my Sloane Square apartment in London’s Chelsea, and have seen the movie version of the show myriad times in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

It is classic camp of the most glorious kind and the Santa Barbara cast was well up to the task with **Alex Allen** as Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, **Zachary Allen Thompson** as Riff Raff, **Dillon Yuhasz** as suitably nerdy Brad Majors, **Mitchell Lam Hau** as Rocky,



(from left) Frank Tabar, vice president, Karen Regan, principal, Jennifer Winnewisser, Miranda Alvarez, Judith Raimondi, Nicole Borden, sister Helen Wolkerstrofer, and vice president Del Rudeen

and **Melissa Marino** as the cinema usherette.

Additional props were banned from the theater, but extras sitting nearer the stage more than made up for it in the **Samantha Eve**-directed production.

As keyboardist **Sio Tepper** and guitarist **Nate Salman** accompanied, the energized cast, including **Allison Lewis, Jenna Scanlon, Marisol Miller-Wave, Kelly Sparman, William Schneiderman, and Todd Tickner**, sang firm favorites such as “Sweet Transvestite”, “Touch-A-Touch-A-Touch Me”, “Science Fiction Double Feature” and “Damn It, Janet”.

It was wonderful to do “The Time Warp” again. An absolute cracker!

*Profitable Nonprofit*

Records were being broken when the popular nonprofit CALM, which helps 2,400 children and families suffering domestic problems, hosted its sixth annual Fostering Love lunch at the Coral Casino, with a record 240 guests helping raise a record \$150,000.

**Stephanie Sokolove** chaired the bustling beano with radio host **Catherine Remak** as emcee, with three inspirational speakers – husband and wife **Bill Poett** and **Laura Ciel**, and Santa Barbara events planner **Tyler Speier**, who, with his wife, **Taylor**, adopted a one year-old girl, **Emma**, to go with their own two children, **Wesley** and **Lucy**.

Among the supporters for the cause were **Bob** and **Patty Bryant**, **Missy DeYoung**, **Janet Garufis**, **Anne Gersh**, **Geoff Green**, **Das Williams**, **David Selberg**, **Penny Jenkins**, **Gerd Jordano**, **Lauri Leis**, **Jean Schuyler**, **Maryan Schall**, **Cecilia Rodriguez**,

**Marci Wolfe**, **Petra Matinova**, and **John Glanville**.

*Easel-ly Done*

Farmers and Merchants Trust Company has dedicated a conference room wall at its new Santa Barbara branch to young artists from local schools.

The inaugural exhibit is works from students at Bishop Diego High School. “We look forward to more art works on display in due course so that the public can see the talents of these young people,” says **Frank Tabar**, senior vice president.

*Fashion Statement*

Montecito TV talk-show host **Ellen DeGeneres** is expanding her fashion empire, not to mention her real estate acquisitions, as I’ve chronicled here.

The former Oscars host, who started her own brand, ED, two years ago selling adult wardrobe staples, accessories, home goods, and shoes, has now started designing baby clothes.

In a collaboration with Bed Bath & Beyond’s Buybuy Baby, Ellen has created outfits, bibs, furniture, and other accessories, all with a positive image.

She has focused on the comfort and functionality of her offerings, she says of her brand.

“Babies love to be swaddled and should always be surrounded by love and kindness,” says Ellen. “I created my baby collection with that thought in mind. The line is filled with whimsical and fun pieces.”

Sightings: Actress **Carol Burnett** checking out Oliver’s...Comedian **Steve Martin** noshing at Pierre Lafond...Actor **Billy Baldwin** at Lama Dog in the Funk Zone

Pip! Pip!

Readers with tips, sightings and amusing items for Richard’s column should email him at richardmin eards@verizon.net or send invitations or other correspondence to the *Journal*.

To reach Priscilla, email her at priscilla@santabarbaraseen.com or call 969-3301.

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*Rocky Horror Show* a monster smash at the Center Stage (photo by David Bazemore)