

Party photos of the week: The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala



(Photos by Nolan Bryant for The Globe and Mail)

On May 30, The National Arts Centre in Ottawa played host to the 23rd Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala, an evening where pomp and pageantry was on full display in celebration of this year's Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award recipients. As a guest of fine jewellery brand Birks, I was seated for dinner at their table in the salon

room, an intimate, hexagonal-shaped space that houses an Alfred Manessier tapestry, which made a lovely backdrop for the many guests in blue- and red-hued frocks, including Vicki Heyman, the elegant wife of the U.S. ambassador to Canada, Bruce Heyman, honorary gala chair Suzanne Rogers, singer-songwriter Sarah McLachlan, Birks' Montreal-based VP of marketing and communications Eva Hartling (my host for the evening), and gala co-chair Kate Alexander Daniels.



Sarah McLachlan and Geoff Courtnall.

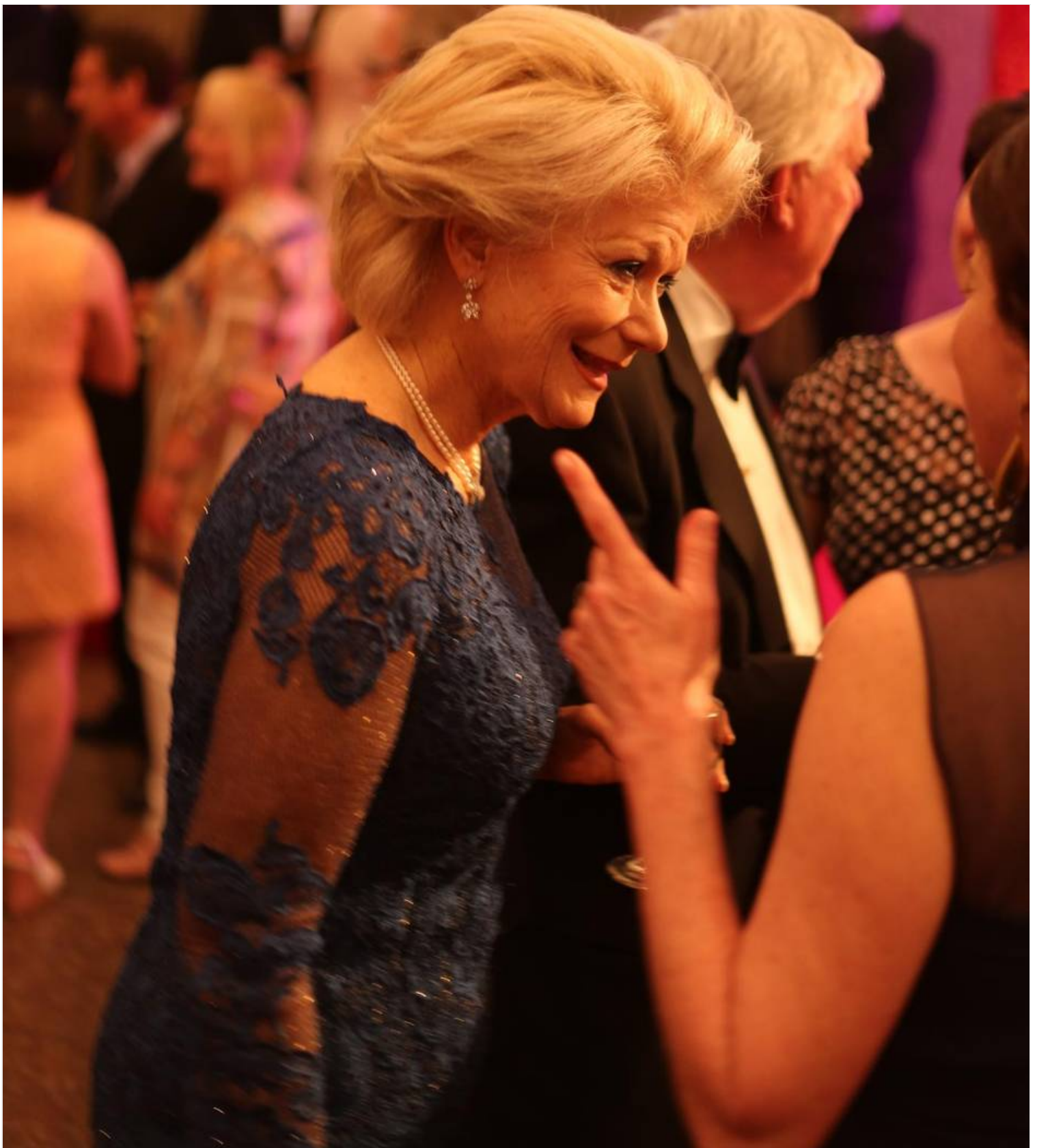


Eva Hartling, Birks' Montreal-based VP of marketing and communications.

Post-dinner, guests were ushered into the NAC's Southam Hall to join a larger crowd of culture enthusiasts, coming together in anticipation of the performances ahead. Guests included the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien and his wife, Aline; gala committee co-chair Salah Bachir and his husband, artist Jacob Yerex; NAC board chair Adrian Burns; Peter Herrndorf, National Arts Centre CEO, and wife Eva Czigler, senior director of talent development at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Doug Knight, chair of the GGPA Foundation and his wife, Shelley Ambrose, publisher and executive director of the Walrus magazine; and NAC Foundation CEO Jayne Watson.



Gala committee co-chair Salah Bachir.



NAC board chair Adrian Burns.

Their Excellencies The Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and Sharon Johnston were joined in the State Box by the Lifetime Artistic Achievement

laureates Oscar-nominated filmmaker Atom Egoyan, actress and director Diana Leblanc, composer and conductor Walter Boudreau and actor R.H. Thomson, as well as NAC award recipient and filmmaker of the moment Jean-Marc Vallée and Michael M. Koerner, recipient of the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism.



The Right Honourable David Johnston and Mary Dailey Desmarais.

Actor Colm Feore, the returning host of the show, took to the stage and the tributes ensued. Highlights for many included the poignant tribute to R.H Thompson, and a performance to honour Walter Boudreau, who wore his signature red Converse sneakers to conduct his brilliantly bizarre work, *Asylum Waltz*, with the NAC orchestra and Alain Lefèvre on piano. After the gala, the celebration continued as guests headed to the rooftop for drinks and dancing overlooking the Rideau Canal.



Past GGPAA recipient Veronica Tennant.

They included interior designer Henrietta Southam, daughter of NAC founder Hamilton Southam; past GGPAA recipient Veronica Tennant; Victoria Jackman, executive director of the Hal Jackman Foundation; Shangri-La Hotel's Alex Filiatrault; Manulife

Financial's Jeronimo de Miguel; Mary Dailey Desmarais and Paul Desmarais III; and presenting sponsor Enbridge Inc.'s D'Arcy Levesque and Eric Prud'homme.



Shangri-La Hotel's Alex Filiatrault with Manulife Financial's Jeronimo de Miguel.