

THE SEEN

Sensual Ballet Pushes This Elegant Ball to Stratosphere: Shadow Dancers and \$1.85 Million for MFAH

BY SHELBY HODGE

PHOTOGRAPHY ©MICHELLE WATSON/CATCHLIGHTGROUP.COM

10.11.16



The scene at MFAH Grand Gala

Part divine elegance and part sensual ballet splendor, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Grand Gala Ball embraced a Degas oeuvre, heralding the artist's upcoming retrospective. But it was much more than mere black-tie grandeur.

Consider that late in the evening, gala chair **Laurie Morian** and pal **Karol Barnhart** displaced the ballet dancer performing in the shadow box, rising behind the band, to gyrate in their ballgowns for a few beats of the Jordan Kahn Orchestra. And consider that guests packed the dance floor until the bewitching hour.

As ball chairs, Laurie and **Reed Morian** could not have been luckier with the theme celebrating Degas and his dancers. Traditionally, the gala salutes an exhibition or piece of art in the museum's collection. The Degas exhibition provided bright inspiration.

While ethereally costumed dancers struck ballet poses atop a rose covered pedestal in the museum foyer, it was the mammoth silhouette projections of a modern ballet dancer pivoting across museum walls that rocked this night.

In addition, thousands of pastel-hued roses, orchids and hydrangeas dressed tabletops and covered walls and columns while above the dance floor a "chandelier" of ribbons wafted in the air conditioning. A nightclub style atmosphere prevailed with the rare addition of banquette seating and rectangular dinner tables.

"Laurie's touch has made this year's event memorable," MFAH director **Gary Tinterow** said. "Her knowledge and love of ballet has given the evening a special focus, and her passion literally brought our Degas retrospective alive."

Tinterow also gave “a big Texas thank you” to **Todd Fiscus** of Todd Events for creating and donating the splendid decor. As Fiscus explained the unexpected generosity, his company serves three philanthropic causes — the arts, the AIDS fight, and homelessness — in both Houston and Dallas, his home base.

City Kitchen once again presented a remarkable dinner that was extravagantly supplemented by a special selection of wines. **Cristina** and **Lee Hudson** donated the white wine from their vineyard in Napa Valley while **Lisa** and **Ralph Eads** contributed red wine from their vineyard in Bordeaux.

Relishing the luxe environment were MFAH board chairman **Rich Kinder** and **Nancy, Janice** and **Bob McNair, Shahla** and **Hushang Ansary, Cherie** and **Jim Flores, Courtney** and **Christopher Sarofim, Diane Lokey Farb, Tina** and **Joe Pyne, Sarah** and **Bill Morgan, Phoebe** and **Bobby Tudor,** and **Cynthia** and **Tony Petrello.**

It seemed the A-listers in attendance was endless with **Lynn Wyatt, Jamie Niven, Isabel David, Linda** and **Dr. Walter McReynolds, Pat Breen, Carol** and **Mike Linn, Laura** and **Mike Sweeney, Vesta** and **Dr. Pedro Frommer, Lucinda** and **Javier Loya, Dancie** and **Jim Ware, Nancy** and **Butch Abendshein,** and **Heidi** and **Sen. Ted Cruz.**

In the end, the vibrant gala raised \$1.85 million for museum coffers.

Here’s a quick clip of the scene:



toddevents • 2 weeks ago

+ Follow



Great job tonight @jordankhanorchestra for @mfahouston .. Thousands of yards of ribbon and projections of modern ballet dancers for the dance party celebrating the work of Dega

▶ 4,689 views 💬 24 comments

Instagram



MORE FROM

STYLE

S

INTERIORS

I

CULTURE

C

ARTS

A

[ABOUT](#) [TEAM](#) [ADVERTISING](#) [CONTACT](#) [PARTNERS](#) [NEWSLETTER](#) [TERMS & CONDITIONS](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)
[YOUR CALIFORNIA PRIVACY RIGHTS](#)

©2016 URBAN PUBLISHERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED