



Society Education Arts Drive a Busy Social Season

Crain's

December 10, 2007



Maggie Daley with student apprentice Lonyae Thomas at the After School Matters party in September. Photo: Stephen J. Serio

Business leaders, educators and arts advocates were the stars of a fun-filled, musical social calendar this fall.

Civic leaders and corporate supporters ushered in the season by saluting the 117th opening night of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with an Italian-themed bash. Maggie Daley followed with her party for After School Matters, the arts-apprenticeship program for high school students. Once again, the party took over U.S. Cellular Field, welcoming more than 2,000 guests and raising \$2.5 million.

The opening of the 53rd season of the Lyric Opera of Chicago heralded the end of a week of down-to-the-wire contract negotiations with musicians and production staff to avoid a strike. Patrons were elated to obtain seats for the sold-out performance of "La Traviata" and the Opera Ball that followed at the Hilton Chicago.

The Museum of Contemporary Art celebrated its 40th birthday with a party that saluted each decade of its existence, a performance by rock legend Patti Smith and a dinner by Wolfgang Puck. Catholic middle schools San Miguel Schools held its benefit at the MCA as well, where its exhibition, "Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967," provided a festive backdrop.

Providence-St. Mel School celebrated its 29th year as a not-for-profit independent high school, and the Midtown Educational Foundation honored Madison Dearborn's John A. Canning Jr. with its Reach for Excellence Award. The Art Institute of Chicago treated friends to a first look at its noteworthy exhibition, "Jasper Johns: Gray," while the Illinois Arts Alliance honored the Merchandise Mart's Christopher G. Kennedy for his arts advocacy.

Two Chicago fixtures were honored near the end of the season: Retiring LaSalle Bank Chairman Norman Bobins was feted by the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, and the Spertus Institute celebrated the completion of its dazzling new building on South Michigan Avenue.

As the holidays approached, the Spirit of St. Nicholas Ball for Catholic Charities closed out the season until spring, when Social Whirl breezes in again.



King Harris, chairman of Harris Holdings, from left, with wife Caryn, and Connie and E. David Coolidge III, vice-chairman of William Blair & Co., at November's Art Institute wing-ding. Photo: Erik Unger