George Christy

P eople should know, Dr. David Boyer. “We miraculously saved my eyesight; I’m indebted to him forever.” So reveals producer Arnold Kopelson about this distinguished ophthalmologist with six local Retina Vitreous Group officials manned by nine colleagues. “I was terrified. Panicked from the torn retina. When all else failed, Dr. Boyer came into my life, and his expertise and instant care has now given me perfect vision.

Others “saved” by his diagnosis and treatment agree how fortunate we Californians are that Dr. Boyer’s with us in Los Angeles to look after our well being. He is kind and considerate and patient, with astounding knowledge in his retina vitreous field. “Truly a miracle worker,” adds Arnold Kopelson. Dr. Boyer is consistently recommended to patients by leading ophthalmologists such as Dr. Tony Nesburn and Dr. Kristin Nesburn.

A collector of contemporary art, Dr. Boyer and wife Susan never miss Ava Fries’ Angels’ Night biannual gala at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza, where we met some years ago. Hosted by Ava’s Center Theater Group Affiliates, the event raises big bucks for our Center Theater Group, and this is where we became aware of the doctor’s celebrated career.

Ava and husband Chuck, the “Godfather of the Television Movie,” are prominent collectors as well, their Beverly Hills mansionette’s a repository for new and established artists. Ava corrals the talents—many new friends, to contribute their works for auction. An original idea in behalf of her Angels’ Night fundraisers, which she established 20 years ago to support CTG’s productions. Along with its educational division which introduces young people from childhood to pre-vision into the magic and power of theater.

Long ago we crowed Ava and Chuck the CTG’s “Queen of Angels,” and long may she reign with her creative fundraising prowess. Husband Chuck continues to execute produce their rewarding and glamorous evenings.

A city without the arts is a lost city. A city without soul. And midway during the evening, CTG’s artistic director Michael Ritchie thanked the city fathers for coming together 50-years ago to create our world-renowned Music Center. Which has given us the Ahmanson Theater, Mark Taper Forum and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for world-class presentations. Of theater, opera, music and dance events.

Michele Lee emceed this week’s Angels’ Night program with its Roaring Twenties theme, featuring the Crystal Dancers performing to Tom Griep’s Orchestra. And honoring “angels” the philanthropist Brendell Gottlieb, entertainment attorney Patty Glaser, the hard-working Roberta Haft, who loves her backyard llamas and peacocks. In times past, Roberta mentioned that one llama goes yoga sniffing perfumes—“such a sweetheart … do you think he’s gay?”

Tracie Bennett, whose riveting portrayal of Judy Garland in End Of The Rainbow this year at the Ahmanson will be long remembered, was presented with the Distinguished Artist Award by Michael Ritchie. In thanking all, Tracie quoted Mom’s advice “to be kind, sincere, and be seated.”

Ava and Chuck were missed, Ava regretfully indisposed for the evening, with Chuck attending to her comfort at home. Nonetheless, their enthusiasm for our cultural continuity was reflected in the crowd. Among the many were the evening’s co-chair Kim Peterson, CTG’s director of development Yvonne Bell, who emceed the auction which raised $1 million. And who arrived with her Scottish kilt-wearing husband Derek Bell, the helicopter pilot covering news for CBS and Channel 9.

Other CTG supporters: Stan Frilech, Lyons and George Schlatter, Jolene and George Schlatter, Cecile and Norm Krevoy, Tim Regler, Frank Mottek, Prince Frederic, whose wife to Zsa Zsa Gabor. Mary and Fred Willard, Carol and Stephen Roundtree, Sam-Madre, Howard Robinson, Derrek and Amanda and Alexis Halt.

Tablecloth of gold, silver, platinum and bronze angel donors filled the ballroom. As did the flocks of patron saints who contributed to the silent and live auctions, with the evening’s “take” rising to $1 million. Through the years, Ava and her CTG Affiliates have raised $7 million.

More than a million dollars was raised to benefit the Dream for Future Africa Foundation, founded in 2010 by the Ethiopian-born Gelila. “Our primary focus is an economic sustainability for African families, whose children are thrust into the working world without training,” she says. “We wish to create this perfect night. Another big reason to love her.”

We sat with Denise Flanders, the manager of the Dorchester Group’s Hotel Bel-Air with its popular Wolfgang Puck Dining Room. She arrived with her food and wine director Stephanie Lacroix.

Denise is a native of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, a brief drive from that “most livable” city of Pittsburgh with its fine universities and museums and where those three rivers converge: the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio. We would note that Denise’s hotel career dazzles. From overseeing New York’s Pierre to Chicago’s Olympic, and the list goes on. She enjoys walking our Los Angeles canyons, and strolling the beaches on sunny days.

Author William Stadiem was a tablemate. Bill’s mom, Beatrice, has resided at the Fireside Convalescent Hospital in Santa Monica for eight years, where a family member of ours has also looked after. By the bright and indefatigable staff that includes rehab director Jessica Palkamp, occupational therapist Jessica Hendrick, speech pathologist Kira Morris, the Fireside is legendary for its rehab successes, and Bill gives the Fireside “a thumbs up.” He lives nearby, and brings Mom home every afternoon for lunch. Bill, how lucky can you get?

Italia Vogue editor Franca Sozzana was feted by Wolfgang and Gelila Puck at Spago to raise funds for the Dream for Future Africa Foundation.

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