

November 10,1993

MEMORANDUM FOR CAPRICIA MARSHALL

FROM: Kim
SUBJECT: Kennedy Center Honors

"The Kennedy Center Honors", originated in 1978, is almost universally considered to be one of most prestigious programs on television. The awards are made to performing artists on the basis of life time contributions to the and American culture. The first year honorees were Richard Rodgers, George Balanchine, Marian Anderson, Arthur Rubenstein and Fred Astaire.

The event raises both money for the Kennedy Center and its profile as it celebrates American artistry. CBS (the only network to ever air this event) pays the Center a license fee to televise the program one time. The network then tries to recoups its outlay through advertisers (I believe AT&T was initially a big underwriter, but General Motors has been the program's major sponsor for the past ten years.) The stars work for union minimum. After all the bills are paid, the leftover goes to the Center.

The honorees selection process begins with an "artists committee" of famed performing artists who make recommendations. A smaller committee then pares down the list and the final selections are voted on by the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees.

The gala (as reported by the media), begins with a reception at the White House. The program at the Kennedy Center usually opens with the voice of John F. Kennedy. The artists are seated in the Presidential box, each wearing his or her medal. Each artist is given a separate tribune that includes a biographical film and special performing material. I believe there is also a dinner-dance afterward, usually held in the Kennedy Center foyer.

As mentioned previously, it appears there is a reception at the White House preceding the Kennedy Center event at which the President makes remarks. (If the First Lady speaks, it's not reported.). The focus for the media, however, appears to be on the artists. While the articles did refer to the presence of the President and the First Lady, the mention was more as a statement of the event's prestigiousness and less on what they did or said. (The one exception was in '88 when President-elect Bush made a surprise appearance on stage in tribute to out-going President Reagan.)

CLOTHING: Black tie. (I know, this doesn't answer your question of long or short black tie.) Everyone follows this rule – except for Katherine Hepburn who wore black trousers and black Reeboks.

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Newsday

December 29, 1992, Tuesday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: PART II; Pg. 39

LENGTH: 458 words

HEADLINE: TV SPOTS

BYLINE: By Ben Kubasik. STAFF WRITER

BODY:

More, More 'Long Island Lolita'

File this under, say, dubious public service: Cable's USA Network, in an unusual, quickie deal, will show CBS' "Casualties of Love: The 'Long Island Lolita' Story" two more times within a week of the CBS airing. CBS will premiere the film Sunday, opposite ABC's "The Amy Fisher Story"; USA's showings of the CBS-Amy Fisher movie are scheduled for Jan. 7 (9 p.m.) and Jan. 10 (2 p.m.). USA program vice president Neil Hoffman said he obtained the film quickly because CBS had bought a one-time-only showing from Columbia Pictures TV instead of the usual two airings over two-to-four years. Hoffmann said he wanted the film now because of widespread interest in the Fisher case.

' Kennedy Center' Versions

Producers George Stevens Jr. and Don Mischer have made two versions of CBS' 15th annual " Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts." One is what the network is ready to air tomorrow night at 9; the other is locked in a Los Angeles vault. The latter could still be shown, Mischer said yesterday, if Fred Astaire's widow, Robyn, ended demands to be paid if film or still photos are used of her husband dancing with Ginger Rogers, one of this year's honorees. "Something like this has never happened before," said Mischer. "Film studios, rights holders, and performers have always waived their rights so the honors program could go on. The show every year would not be possible without volunteers. Performers return their scale payments to Kennedy Center. " Audiences at the actual performance in Washington on Dec. 6 did see Rogers-Astaire film and photos, but Astaire was removed from the broadcast version after Robyn Astaire's demands. There's some question about whether Robyn Astaire has any legal claim to the Astaire materials, but Kennedy Center lawyers apparently are unwilling to let the version with Astaire be shown without her OK. Other honorees on TV's classiest annual event are jazz artist Lionel Hampton, actors Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, cellist-conductor Mstislav Rostropovich and choreographer Paul Taylor.

Lowdown on J. Edgar

"The Secret File on J. Edgar Hoover" on PBS' "Frontline" (Feb. 9) promises to dissect the late FBI director's private life and show how the master of political blackmail was vulnerable to blackmail himself. The hour, its producers say, includes evidence of the underworld's knowledge about Hoover's sex life, including details of a homosexual relationship.

Jackie's Sour Grapes

Tonight's "Jackie Thomas Show" episode on ABC finds temperamental new TV star Jackie as a guest on "The Arsenio Hall Show" in a segment filmed on Hall's set. Tom Arnold's Jackie uses the occasion to complain about his writers.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1992 Daily Variety Ltd.
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Daily Variety

December 29, 1992 Tuesday

SECTION: REVIEW

LENGTH: 740 words

HEADLINE: The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the
Performing Arts (Wed. (30), 9-11 p.m., CBS)

BYLINE: Todd Everett

BODY:

A production of the Kennedy Center, taped at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Producers, George Stevens Jr., Don Mischer; associate producer, Michael B. Seligman; director, William N. Cosel; writers, Bob Shrum, Stevens Jr., Sara Lukinson, John Ellard Froom; musical director, Nick Perito; lighting director, Bill Klages; editor, Mike Weitzman; production designer, Bob Keene.

Host: Walter Cronkite.

Honorees: Lionel Hampton, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Ginger Rogers, Mstislav Rostropovich, Paul Taylor.

With: cast of "Crazy for You," Sally Field, Robert Redford, the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, Betty Comden, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Herbie Hancock, Aretha Franklin, Milt Jackson, Golden Men of Jazz, Gary Burton, Howard U. Jazz Ensemble, Pierre Dulaine, Yvonne Marceau, American Ballroom Theater, Ann Reinking, Jacques D'Amboise, Edward Villella, Cynthia Gregson, Cyd Charisse, Maria Tallchief, Fayad & Harold Nicholas, Gregory Peck, Yo Yo Ma, Massed Celli, Choral Arts Society of Washington, Watkins Mills Elementary School Choir.

Nominally a celebration of artistry, this year's edition of the Kennedy Center Honors became more newsworthy for the absence of film clips of this year's honoree Ginger Rogers dancing with longtime partner (and previous honoree) Fred Astaire--the late dancer's estate wouldn't grant gratis usage of footage it controlled. Sometimes you get the idea that behind-the-scene politics of these events would make for more involving TV fare than the awards themselves.

Fifteenth edition of annual Kennedy Center event is the 10th under sponsorship of General Motors, which deserves a hand for

the support of a classy, entertaining show as CBS's annual toe-dip into culture.

Add a juggler or a puppet Italian mouse, and show could have been an "Ed Sullivan Show" rerun.

While the absence of the Astaire clips is notable, it gave the producers the opportunity to spotlight Rogers' work in such films as "Gold Diggers of 1933," "Stage Door" and "Kitty Foyle."

Cast of current Broadway show "Crazy for You" perform "I Got Rhythm," featuring Susan Stroman's dazzling choreography; and "Embraceable You," with Jodi Benson singing the number that Rogers introduced in show's original form, 1930's "Girl Crazy."

Dancers Pierre Dulaine and Yvonne Marceau join members of American Ballroom Theater dance troupe for pair of Gershwin songs, "Cheek to Cheek" and "I Won't Dance" that presumably are intended as a substitute for missing Rogers-Astaire footage; segment is capped by line of noted dancers and choreographers, including Ann Reinking, Edward Villella and two surviving Nicholas Brothers.

Remainder of show balances artistic and commercial concerns, with obvious ratings-grabbing names Sally Field, Aretha Franklin and Robert Redford having at least some connection with the performers they honored, though Tom Selleck could only admit to being a fan of Rogers.

A little more time could have been spent explaining exactly why jazzman Lionel Hampton and choreographer Paul Taylor merit their awards; reasons given here are at best sketchy. And would Woodward or Newman be more or less meritorious without the other?

Taylor, whose experimental, modernistic choreography is performed by several international companies including his own, is represented by excerpts from "Company B," his interpretation of several songs popularized by the Andrews Sisters.

In addition to watching clips from many of their films, Newman and Woodward are serenaded by members of the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a facility for youngsters with life-threatening illnesses.

Most interesting bio may be that of cellist Rostropovitch, declared a "nonperson" by Communist government of his native Soviet Union before emigrating to the U.S.

Classical musician's segment is reserved for the show's end, with performances by cellist Yo Yo Ma, Washington (D.C.) Choral Arts Society and an ensemble of 79 cellists.

Hampton segment consists of vibist Milt Jackson soloing on his own "Bags' Groove," Gary Burton on old Benny Goodman Quartet number "Seven Come Eleven," and Burton with Howard University Jazz Band on Hampton's signature "Flyin' Home."

The members of "Golden Men of Jazz," who play during Hampton segment but are never into'd, are pianist Junior Mance, bassist Arvell Shaw, trombonist Al Gray, trumpeters Harry "Sweets" Edison and Andrew McGhee and drummer Bobby Durham.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 28, 1992

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The Houston Chronicle

December 26, 1991, Thursday, 2 STAR Edition

SECTION: HOUSTON; Pg. 11

LENGTH: 685 words

HEADLINE: CBS' " Kennedy Center Honors' recognizes artistic
excellence

BYLINE: GREG DAWSON; Orlando Sentinel

BODY:

CBS helps the television year go out on a lovely note -- several, in fact -- as it airs "'The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts'" tonight. The show will air at 8 p.m. on Channel 11.

This is the 14th renewal of an event that helps reorient us toward that which is truly meritorious and sublime.

For two glorious but all-too-fleeting hours we bask not only in artistic excellence, but also in the needed reassurance that excellence is sometimes still rewarded in America, even if it's never featured on the cover of People magazine.

Of the seven honorees tonight, it's likely that most viewers could readily identify only two -- country music legend Roy Acuff and actor Gregory Peck.

Broadway musical writers Betty Comden and Adolph Green, tap dancers Fayard and Harold Nicholas, even choral conductor Robert Shaw, are names that belong in any book of cultural literacy but probably would draw blanks from most viewers.

One reason, of course, is that we've been watching too much TV, which has had little use for the sorts of entertainment represented by those names, at least since "'The Ed Sullivan Show'" went off the air.

" Kennedy Center Honors'" has become television's sole conservator and showcase for artistry that might otherwise vanish from our collective consciousness. Plus, it's always a great show, supremely entertaining and unabashedly schmaltzy as show-biz friends and proteges honor the honorees with inspired performances.

" Kennedy Center Honors'" always leads the league in blown kisses, to and from the balcony (even besting the Miss America

pageant), and in some years it leads in tears. This year's group proves more stoic, but the occasion is no less moving.

My favorite moment is violinist Isaac Stern's lyrical rendition of "'Danny Boy'" in tribute to Peck, whose roots are Irish. Peck remains dry-eyed throughout, but when the camera zooms in at the end, there's a clenching of the jaw, a pursing of lips, a glistening of the eyes.

Gregory Hines and six other contemporary tap masters salute the Nicholas brothers with a dazzling ensemble number. The tribute to Acuff, who needs help standing to acknowledge the hurrahs, features Emmylou Harris, Bill Monroe and Chet Atkins.

A startlingly aged Gene Kelly poignantly salutes Comden and Green for the screenplay that made him immortal, at least in reruns.

"'Because of you,'" he says, "'somewhere tonight, on some screen, I'm just singin', singin' in the rain.'" With unfailing showmanship, the producers save the Shaw tribute for last. Soprano Sylvia McNair performs "'All the Things You Are'", by Jerome Kern, and in the balcony Shaw seems transfixed, almost as if he were breathing with McNair.

The grand finale, though, is the "'Hallelujah'" chorus from Handel's "'Messiah'", performed by a quartet of choral groups including the U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club and the Morehouse College Glee Club, with which Shaw works closely in Atlanta.

The apple-cheeked Shaw can barely contain himself, his head bobbing joyously, a man transported by beauty, as Handel's majesty rises up from the stage to meet him.

Finally, this celebration is a welcome opportunity to hear the Kennedy name invoked without "'assassination'" or "'rape'" in the same sentence. The night begins with Kennedy's voice, preserved in all its audacious, pristine idealism.

"'I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty. I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization, as well.

"'And I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.'" A tumultuous generation later, that no longer feels like a certainty. But for two exultant hours tonight, "'Kennedy Center Honors'" reminds us why it's not an impossibility, either.

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The New York Times

December 26, 1991, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

Correction Appended

SECTION: Section D; Page 18; Column 3; Cultural Desk; Word and Image Page

LENGTH: 491 words

HEADLINE: Review/Television;
A Big Round of Applause at the Kennedy Center

BYLINE: By STEPHEN HOLDEN

BODY:

Those occasions when show business and official Washington rub shoulders for the world to see are not all that common. But when they do occur, as at the Kennedy Center's annual televised gala honoring the lifetime achievements of American artists, show business tends to turn pompous, while official Washington becomes folksy. And in "The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts," a two-hour special that airs tonight at 9 on CBS, the blend of oratory and corn is thoroughly engaging, if a bit overblown.

Taped on Dec. 8 in the Opera House at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, with George and Barbara Bush in attendance, this year's gala honors the musical comedy writers Betty Comden and Adolph Green, the fraternal tap-dancing team of Fayard and Harold Nicholas, the country music giant Roy Acuff, the actor Gregory Peck and the conductor Robert Shaw.

Produced by George Stevens Jr. and Don Mischer, directed by William N. Coseland with Walter Cronkite as host, the show follows the same general formula in sketching out the life and achievements of each person honored. A formal tribute by famous friends and admirers is followed by a well-selected montage of biographical film clips. Each segment ends with a lavish production number.

In honor of Comden and Green, Patti LuPone and Howard McGillin sing an elaborate medley of their Broadway lyrics. For the Nicholas Brothers, Gregory Hines leads a convocation of tap dancers they influenced. Mr. Acuff is saluted by a host of country music luminaries, including Chet Atkins, Emmylou Harris and Bill Monroe, who perform songs associated with him. Mr. Peck's Irish ancestry is remembered in a performance of "The Londonderry Air" by the violinist Isaac Stern. And several large

vocal ensembles converge to sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" in honor of Mr. Shaw.

The show's most iconoclastic moment, also part of the Shaw tribute, is a vigorous performance by the Morehouse College Glee Club of a Nigerian Christmas song, "Betelehemu." The evening's high point in terms of sheer razzle-dazzle is the performance by a grinning Keith Carradine and the red-white-and-blue-outfitted chorus of "Our Favorite Son," the knee-slapping choreographic centerpiece of Comden and Green's hit Broadway show, "The Will Rogers Follies."

Both in its selection of honorees and in the opulent, happy-go-lucky style of its production numbers, "The Kennedy Center Honors" implies a great deal about official cultural values in the George Bush era. Only one of the seven artists, Mr. Shaw, comes from the world of high art. The others represent the thoroughly commercial worlds of Broadway, the movies and country music. In every case, the entertainment offered is vigorous, hearty and extroverted. Echoes of the jingoistic praise that Mr. Cronkite lavishes on Mr. Peck -- that he's an "American's American" -- reverberate throughout the show.

CORRECTION-DATE: December 27, 1991, Friday

CORRECTION:

A caption yesterday with a picture by The Associated Press, about the telecast of "The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts," misidentified the man at the center in the back row. He was George Stevens Jr., who produced the program, not James D. Wolfensohn, chairman of the Kennedy Center.

GRAPHIC: Photo: James D. Wolfenson, back row center, chairman of the Kennedy Center, with this year's Kennedy Center honorees. With him were, back row from left, Gregory Peck, Betty Comden, Adolph Green and Robert Shaw. Front row, from the left: Harold Nicholas, Fayard Nicholas and Roy Acuff. (Associated Press)

TYPE: Review

SUBJECT: TELEVISION; REVIEWS

NAME: HOLDEN, STEPHEN

TITLE: KENNEDY CENTER HONORS: A CELEBRATION OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

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Orlando Sentinel Tribune

December 26, 1991 Thursday, 3 STAR

SECTION: STYLE; Pg. D1

LENGTH: 693 words

HEADLINE: ' KENNEDY CENTER HONORS' IS SUBLIME ENTERTAINMENT

BYLINE: By Greg Dawson, Sentinel Television Critic

KEYWORD: TELEVISION REVIEW

BODY:

CBS helps the television year go out on a lovely note - several, in fact - as it airs The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts (9 to 11 tonight, WCPX-Channel 6).

This is the 14th renewal of an event that, coming on the heels of a season when Merry Christmas often meant Meretracious, helps reorient us toward that which is truly meritorious and sublime.

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"And I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit."

A tumultuous generation later, with American society in rudderless ferment, that no longer feels like a certainty. But for two exultant hours tonight, Kennedy Center Honors reminds us why it's not an impossibility, either.

TYPE: REVIEW

COLUMN: TELEVISION

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The Christian Science Monitor

December 27, 1990, Thursday

SECTION: MEDIA; Pg. 12

LENGTH: 273 words

HEADLINE: WORTH NOTING ON TV

BYLINE: Alan Bunce

BODY:

FRIDAY

Kennedy Center Honors (CBS, 9-11 p.m.): A wonderful event, for all its hotair and pomposity, because it salutes people in the performing arts who richly deserve the dignity and visibility provided by the special setting. This year's tributes - hosted by Walter Cronkite - go to Dizzy Gillespie, Katharine Hepburn, Rise Stevens, Jule Styne, and Billy Wilder.

TUESDAY

From Vienna: The New Year's Celebration (PBS, 2:30-4 p.m.): This live show - musically and visually dazzling - is being aired for the seventh time in the US and will likely to be seen by some 750 million people worldwide. Claudio Abbado leads the Vienna Philharmonic in the Golden Hall of that city's historic Musikverein - and host Walter Cronkite guides viewers on a trip through Prague.

WEDNESDAY

...Talking With David Frost (PBS, 8-9 p.m.): The first of six monthly shows - conducted by one of the medium's most thoughtful and expansive interviewers - is a conversation between Frost and President and Mrs. Bush at the midpoint of his term. But also get ready for later guests as varied as Robin Williams and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Carnegie Hall at 100: A Place of Dreams (PBS, 9-10 p.m.): "Practice, practice," as the old joke explains, is how you get there. And artists have been doing so ever since the acoustically superb auditorium opened in 1891. To trace its fascinating history, this salute taps rare footage of the greats and offers reminiscent comments by a fascinating spectrum of artists like Ray Charles and the late Leonard Bernstein.

Please check local listings for all programs, especially on PBS.

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Chicago Tribune

December 26, 1990, Wednesday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL
EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 24; ZONE: C; OVERNIGHT/YEAREND. East coast
notes

LENGTH: 1372 words

HEADLINE: Social scene finds a new consciousness

BYLINE: By Lisa Anderson and Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

It was the best of times and the worst of times for the East Coast social whirl this year - best as in Barbara Bush, Shelby Foote and Katharine Hepburn; worst as in the Trumps, society groupies like author Dominick Dunne and, yes, even Princess Diana.

The glitzy junk-bond aristocracy that thought itself the marvel of the public eye during the Reagan era found that, in 1990, the public didn't much care which of them went to whose party wearing what. In fact, America seemed to be wishing that they would just go away (as, thanks to federal prosecutors, a number of them did). That's not to say the East Coast was bereft of merry-making this year. It was just that the merriment tended to take place on a smaller, more discreet scale.

Indeed, the most celebrated and satisfying social occasions this year involved meaningful things like architecture, literature, art, music, theater and international understanding. They celebrated people who do, not simply people who have.

Consider Prince Charles, who has become a one-man royal crusade against the ugliness of modern architecture and the champion of preservation of the beauty of the old. Not content with cutting ribbons and bestowing royal nods and waves in parades, the heir to the British throne brought his concerns to the United States and gave full, withering voice to them at a gala black-tie dinner held by the American Institute of Architects at Washington's beautiful old National Building Museum. If stung by the criticism in his after-dinner remarks, his audience was charmed by his delivery and by his praise of modern American architects whose works manage to enhance rather than despoil their surroundings.

One of the very nicest events of the year was the warm, cozy and very literary reception given at Washington's Folger

Shakespeare Library that same month in honor of novelist E.L. Doctorow's winning the Pen/Faulkner Award for fiction. The genial, gentle author of gangster epic "Billy Bathgate" rejoiced over playwright Vaclav Havel's becoming president of Czechoslovakia and suggested that writers could do as good a job of running the government as congressmen. He might have added that Congress took as long in reaching agreement on steps to end the budget crisis as most authors do in writing a book.

First Lady Barbara Bush had a warm, cozy literary evening of her own in New York's venerable, velvet-draped Pierpont Morgan Library in September. One should perhaps say it was a literary evening of First Dog Millie's, because the occasion was the book party for the best-selling White House memoir "Millie's Book" - which Mrs. Bush insists was only dictated to her by Millie.

The literary types were back at the Folger again in October for the Pen/Faulkner annual readings, dedicated this year to the author's "sense of place." Novelist/historian Shelby Foote, uncomfortable in his pop celebrity stemming from his role in the PBS series "The Civil War," noted that legendary Southern author William Faulkner "would have run barefoot over broken glass to avoid a gathering like this."

The most sought-after invitations any year are those to White House state dinners, and the most sought-after in 1990 were those to the state gala thrown in June for visiting Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and his effervescent wife, Raisa.

At the White House dinner the Reagans gave for the Gorbachevs in 1987, the most glittering thing there was the continuously icy stare an indignant Nancy Reagan directed toward the impulsive Raisa. The Bushes treated the Gorbachevs like old pals, and the friendship between Mrs. Bush and Mrs. Gorbachev blossomed into something truly marvelous when they both jetted off to Boston the next day to take on the graduating girls of Wellesley College - some of whom, later recanting, had protested Mrs. Bush giving the commencement address as a mere "wife of. . . ." The deafening applause Wellesley gave both ladies at the end of their remarks had to be the high point of the year on many counts.

The other state dinners in 1990 weren't quite so memorable, though defrocked CBS morning TV anchor Kathleen Sullivan rather vividly stuck in some minds by showing up at a state feed in April in a lower-than-low-cut gold lame evening dress that Fredericks of Hollywood wouldn't have dared design.

Except for inaugurations, the brightest occasions any year in Washington are the celebrations attendant to the annual Kennedy Center Honors, awarded for life contributions to the performing arts. This December the honors went to actress Kate Hepburn, opera star Rise Stevens, director Billy Wilder, jazz great Dizzy Gillespie and songwriter Jule Styne, and it was Hepburn who stole the show. Megastars in their own right, like Glenn Close,

approached Hepburn as they might divine royalty. Hepburn was simply her old outspoken self. When a longtime friend, writer Garson Kanin, remarked on her 50 years as a star at the celebrity-jammed awards banquet, Hepburn shot back across the room: "It's 60 years, Garson!"

There were so many stars crammed so tightly together at the Museum of the Moving Image testimonial dinner for comedian-turned-director Mike Nichols, held at New York's Waldorf Astoria in March, that it seemed less a party than a riot. Gentlemanly Harrison Ford and ladylike Sigourney Weaver stood out for keeping their cool amongst all the pressing flesh and strobe lights. Things calmed down when the multitude finally sat down at their tables, especially when Hume Cronyn began telling jokes as old as he is.

A far more refreshingly breezy affair was the party at New York's Rainbow Room in June in which Helen Gurley Brown was honored by media pals for her 25 years as editor of Cosmopolitan Magazine. Supermodel Carol Alt turned up in a dress so revealing as to make even Cosmo cover girls look frumpy. It was also Ivana Trump's first big public outing as the estranged wife of the Donald, only many didn't recognize her as she had just redesigned herself to look like Brigitte Bardot.

There were so many face lifts in evidence at the jam-packed book party for author "An Inconvenient Woman" Dominick Dunne at New York's "our crowd" Cafe Mortimer's in May that a plastic surgeon would have thought he was experiencing a nightmare in which all of his patients had come back to haunt him. The hair color of choice was ash blond. Names were dropped in such mass profusion it was impossible to hear them.

If parties like that served as little more than the last gasps of the nouveau crowd, probably the worst affair of the year was the October dinner in Washington honoring visiting Princess Di of Britain.

The event was held to raise funds for three worthy charities, but the British organizers of the evening got so pushy and charged so much (\$2,500 a plate to eat in the same room with the princess, \$3,500 to actually meet her) that a number of prominent American society ladies indignantly refused to attend, including several who were on the dinner committee.

So few did come that the huge banquet hall looked as empty as the cavernous dining chamber in the movie "Citizen Kane." Princess Di reportedly was not amused at being stiffed in this way, and Mrs. Bush reportedly was a little steamed at the absentees for making such a public stir out of their boycott, even if it was a bad show.

The annual Costume Institute gala at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in December, for years the party season's first

important stop to see and be seen, turned out to be a low-key affair where the former "glitterati" could be more accurately dubbed "glimmerati," so shorn of jewels and furs were they.

One of the most successful parties of the year actually took place a few days earlier and may well have set the tone for many party seasons to come. It was late November's gala benefit for AIDS kicking off "7th on Sale," the fashion industry-sponsored three-day sample sale extravaganza for the New York City AIDS Fund. Some 900 guests ate, drank and shopped till they dropped more than \$1.4 million for the cause in one night alone. Because everything, down to the table napkins, was donated, every cent went to the charity. That's success in the no-frills '90s.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO (color): Princess Diana at a Washington fundraiser that charged guests \$3,500 each to actually meet her. Tribune photo by Ernie Cox. PHOTO (color): Cosmopolitan's Helen Gurley Brown chats with Barbara Walters at at June bash honoring Brown's 25 years with the magazine. PHOTO (color): Novelist/historian Shelby Foote achieved a pop celebrity from his role in the PBS series "The Civil War." AP Laserphotos. PHOTO (color): Actress Sonia Braga arriving at this year's low-key costume ball at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

PHOTO: Convivial first ladies Barbara Bush and Raisa Gorbachev in June at Wellesley College's commencement.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The San Francisco Chronicle

DECEMBER 23, 1990, SUNDAY, SUNDAY EDITION

SECTION: TV WEEK; Pg. 3; JOHN CARMAN

LENGTH: 633 words

HEADLINE: Honoring the Best

BYLINE: JOHN CARMAN, CHRONICLE TELEVISION CRITIC

BODY:

Two nationally televised awards programs stand head and proud shoulders above the crass clamor of People's Choice Awards, comedy awards, music awards, Emmy Awards and even Oscars.

They're the American Film Institute annual award program and "The Kennedy Center Honors" program, both characterized by a pleasing blend of dignity and intimacy.

One of them, "The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts," will be on CBS this week, at 9 p.m. Friday on Channels 5, 10, 12 and 46.

The AFI salutes and the Kennedy Center programs share another common element. George Stevens Jr. conceived both of them, and produces both -- Nick Vanoff is his co-producer of the Kennedy Center programs.

Pressed to explain what makes these programs distinct, Stevens said over the phone, "I was fortunate to grow up around and be tutored by a talented father with good taste. In all my work, I feel his presence over my shoulder."

His father, Oakland native George Stevens, who died in 1975, directed such diverse films as "Gunga Din," "Woman of the Year," "Shane," "Giant" and "A Place in the Sun."

The younger Stevens added, "We don't get phone calls saying, can you book Milli Vanilli?"

The "Kennedy Center Honors" program, always shown on CBS, originated in 1978 with Richard Rodgers, George Balanchine, Marian Anderson, Arthur Rubenstein and Fred Astaire as that year's honorees.

This year's ceremony, hosted as usual by Walter Cronkite, was taped December 2 at the Opera House of the Kennedy Center in Washington. This year's honorees for their contributions to the performing arts:

* Actress Katharine Hepburn, 83, who'll be saluted from the Kennedy Center stage by Angela Lansbury, Lauren Bacall and Glenn Close.

* Film director Billy Wilder, 84, whose tribute will be handled by Jack Lemmon, whom Wilder directed in "Some Like It Hot."

* Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie, 73, of the puff adder cheeks and bebop sound. Bill Cosby will lead the salute to him.

* Mezzo-soprano Rise Stevens, 77, who'll be hailed by Marilyn Horne as "the first great exception" to the rule that sopranos and tenors are opera's biggest stars.

* Jule Styne, 84, who wrote the scores for such Broadway hits as "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," "Bells Are Ringing," "Gypsy" and "Funny Girl." Choreographer Jerome Robbins will lead the tribute to him.

It's a relatively easy night for the batch of honorees. An earmark of "The Kennedy Center Honors" is that none of them has to take the stage or utter a word. All they have to do is watch from their box seats.

At the inception of these achievement awards, Stevens said, it was decided that "none of the honorees would be asked to sing for their supper, so to speak."

The selection process begins with an "artists committee," dozens of famed performing artists who make recommendations for the coveted Kennedy Center medallions.

Stevens said a smaller committee then pares down the list, and the final selections are voted on by the Kennedy Center board of trustees.

The award is an honor that virtually no contributor to American culture is likely to refuse. But one star, Stevens said, rejected offers for years.

That star is the eccentric Hepburn, no lover of pomp. Stevens, whose father directed Hepburn in "Woman of the Year," intervened this year to persuade her to accept.

"She and I had a telephone conversation," Stevens said, "and she finally said, 'Oh, all right, yes,' and hung up. I guess she just decided it was time."

But Kate Hepburn wasn't about to dissolve all of her iron merely to have people make a fuss over her.

Stevens said she arrived at the prestigious ceremony three weeks ago clad in black trousers and shod in a pair of black Reeboks. After all, black is formal, isn't it?

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Chicago Tribune

December 29, 1989, Friday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL

EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 20; ZONE: C; OVERNIGHT/YEAREND: Washington notes

LENGTH: 515 words

HEADLINE: Bushes usher in new era of capital galas

BYLINE: By Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

LEAD: Certainly the most memorable after-hours moment in the nation's capital this year came on the cold, starry night of Jan. 20, when newly sworn President George Bush and his lady Barbara appeared in the midst of the Beaux Arts splendor of the newly restored Union Station for their very first dance at their own inaugural ball.

BODY:

Certainly the most memorable after-hours moment in the nation's capital this year came on the cold, starry night of Jan. 20, when newly sworn President George Bush and his lady Barbara appeared in the midst of the Beaux Arts splendor of the newly restored Union Station for their very first dance at their own inaugural ball.

"You saw it here first," Bush said. "A lousy dancer, trying to do his best, dancing with the First Lady of the United States."

They didn't dance for long - though the orchestra played "I Could Have Danced All Night" - but they danced in a way that made it obvious they would cherish the moment as much as any of the 6,000 people in the station watching them. They went on to repeat the scene at seven other inaugural balls, but the first time was the best.

Stars of the performing arts have a way of shining particularly brightly when in Washington. Christopher "Superman" Reeve and Kelly "Top Gun" McGillis, among others, comported themselves with both luminescence and dignity at last May's very black-tie dinner in the National Museum Building that honored Kevin "A Fish Called Wanda" Kline with the Shakespeare Theater at the Folger's annual Will Award - the aplomb of the occasion uninterrupted even when musical star Sharon Scruggs kicked off a shoe during a Shakespearean routine and nearly hit McGillis in the head.

McGillis shone radiantly in her own right at the opening night party following her triumphant debut in the Folger's production of "Twelfth Night" in September.

A few weeks later, the Folger Library's Great Hall was the setting for an extraordinary evening of readings, reminiscences and confessions as such great American authors as William Kennedy, Eudora Welty and William Styron recalled their beginnings as writers before a black-tie audience at the annual Pen-Faulkner Awards dinner.

The annual Kennedy Center Honors awarded to singer Harry Belafonte, film star Claudette Colbert, ballerina Alexandra Danilova, musical comedy queen Mary Martin and composer William Schuman in December drew more glamorous names to Washington. At a reception at the White House, First Lady Barbara Bush turned to Belafonte and gushed, "I'm just wild about Harry."

It was very much a Russian year in the capital. In February, Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony thrilled Washington music lovers with a stirring concert performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's 8th (or "Leningrad") Symphony. In June, National Symphony Orchestra conductor Mstislav Rostropovich led a gigantic assemblage of more than 300 musicians and singers jammed together on the Kennedy Center concert stage in a thunderous rendering of the symphonic theme music for Russian director Sergei Eisenstein's classic film, "Ivan the Terrible."

But Washingtonians took most warmly to their hearts the Soviet Union's Red Army Chorus and Dance Ensemble, who, despite the Red Army's bloody history, made themselves particularly lovable by cavorting all over town, ending their concerts by singing "God Bless America" and even serenading Bush from the White House lawn.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO (color): The newly sworn President and the First Lady enjoying themselves during the inauguration. Tribune Photo by Paul F. Gero. PHOTO: AP Laserphoto. Author Eudora Welty and writer Killy Kelley at the Pen/Faulkner Awards party in Washington.

PHOTO: AP Laserphoto. Princess Diana in gold-trimmed ecru gown dazzled New York at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

PHOTO (color): Reuters photo. Malcolm Forbes and Elizabeth Taylor greet hundreds at his \$2 million birthday bash in Tangiers.

PHOTO: Reuters photo. A dancer demonstrated "Vogueing" for the first time to New Yorkers at an AIDS benefit in May.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Times Publishing Company
St. Petersburg Times

December 29, 1989, Friday, City Edition

SECTION: FLORIDIAN; prime-time pick; Pg. 5D

LENGTH: 209 words

HEADLINE: Prime-time pick

SOURCE: TV DATA

BYLINE: JON BURLINGAME

BODY:

The 12th annual Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts, which is not only one of the nation's highest honors but traditionally one of TV's classiest specials, airs at 9 p.m. on WTVT-Ch. 13. Walter Cronkite once again is the host. Honored at the black-tie gala taped Dec. 3 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., are actress Claudette Colbert, composer William Schuman, singer-actor Harry Belafonte, ballet star Alexandra Danilova and singer-actress Mary Martin. Those paying tribute include, in the Colbert segment, actors Gregory Peck, Lynn Redgrave and Don Ameche; in the Schuman segment, pianist Van Cliburn, actress Kelly McGillis and conductor Leonard Slatkin, a Schuman protege who leads the Juilliard orchestra in the composer's New England Triptych; in the Belafonte segment, actor-director Sidney Poitier and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu; in the Danilova segment, choreographers Jerome Robbins and Jacques D'Amboise; and in the Martin segment, actress Bernadette Peters and Miss Martin's son, actor Larry Hagman.- JON BURLINGAME, TV Data

GRAPHIC: BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO; WALTER CRONKITE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: November 10, 1992

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The Washington Post

December 29, 1989, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE D3

LENGTH: 718 words

HEADLINE: TV Preview;
The Class of 'Honors'

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Megan Rosenfeld, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

It is not easy to give a good tribute -- one that is neither phony nor maudlin, that explains the virtues of the honoree without making everyone else squirm, that is personal but not embarrassing. In these respects, the Kennedy Center Honors, a telecast of which airs tonight at 9 on Channel 9, is exemplary. This is a broadcast with class, and -- given the limits of the format -- a moving and entertaining two hours.

Of course, the first requirement of a successful tribute is to have worthy tributees. And for televisibility, it is wise to have them come from different disciplines -- the old variety show structure. Here we have Mary Martin from Broadway, Claudette Colbert from Hollywood, Alexandra Danilova from classical dance, Harry Belafonte from popular music, and William Schuman from classical music. Among them they symbolize spunk and ham, elegance, dedication to art, art informed by political commitment, and the influence of great teaching.

Of the five, Schuman is the only one who is shortchanged a bit, suffering, perhaps, from not being a household word and because classical musicians playing their instruments don't make for very dramatic video; nor do accomplishments such as heading the Juilliard School and Lincoln Center, or winning a Pulitzer. Danilova is not well known outside the ballet world, but dancing is very telegenic.

The show is divided among the honorees, each getting a tribute from a well-known friend, a biographical sketch with film and photographs, a performed tribute, and a second personal toast. Some of the choices -- such as having Washington's Eastern High School choir sing "We Are the World" for Belafonte -- are inspired. The U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club, on the other hand, which sings "There Is Nothing Like a Dame" for Martin, demonstrates the difference between performers and, well, glee clubs. They are awfully cute, though.

Originally performed on Dec. 3, during the weekend President Bush was meeting Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in the turbulent seas off Malta, the program harnesses some of the emotional afterglow of glasnost by hauling out the Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble, which despite its incongruity creates high spirits with high jumps. At the end the ensemble sings a Russian-accented "God Bless America," joined by the cute Middies, the Eastern choir, the Watkins Mill Elementary School chorus from Gaithersburg and, ultimately, the entire hall full of celebrities and near celebrities, all singing their hearts out.

The crowd, which the camera scans every now and then in Oscar style, includes faces that seem famous but you can't quite place them. Was that Maureen Stapleton clapping her hand to her mouth in surprise when the Soviets started "God Bless America?" Was that Cicely Tyson gasping at the arrival of Archbishop Desmond Tutu? Some were obvious -- a dignified Helen Hayes, a beefy Sen. Ted Kennedy, a silver-haired Jimmy Stewart -- but with others the worlds of politics and show business flowed into one well-groomed but unidentifiable blur. In any case, they all got a lot of exercise applauding and standing up during the show.

There are lovely moments, such as Jacques D'Amboise demonstrating how Danilova taught him to bow in classical ham style, complete with the "aw, shucks" nod of fake humility. There is nostalgia, of course, such as the replay of the flying scene from "Peter Pan" (with D'Amboise's daughter Charlotte as a creditable Peter) and Colbert's famous hitchhiking scene from "It Happened One Night." And there are unintentional moments, such as Colbert and Martin helping Danilova to her feet.

But for all-around impact, Belafonte's segment is the most indelible, first for the clearly heartfelt and eloquent tribute from Sidney Poitier. And if it was disconcerting to have Tutu presented to a crescendo of applause, rather like the entrance of a movie star, his thoughtful comments quickly retrieved the mood. Perhaps it is Belafonte himself who adds the resonance -- a man who has gone beyond entertainment to art by virtue of his commitment to causes that once put him at odds with the establishment now honoring him. There is a glistening in his eye that becomes a tear by the time the full multinational crowd of children finishes singing -- and who could blame him.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, HONOREES MARY MARTIN AND HARRY BELAFONTE.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Society

The Christian Science Monitor

December 29, 1988, Thursday

SECTION: Arts and Leisure; TELEVISION; Pg. 17

LENGTH: 1078 words

HEADLINE: Tributes flow to Kennedy Center honorees

BYLINE: By Louise Sweeney, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

DATELINE: Washington

HIGHLIGHT:

Farewell to the Reagans, Bob Hope and his 'Thanks' draw smiles - and tears

BODY:

THE glittering bouquet for the performing arts known as the Kennedy Center Honors airs tomorrow for its 11th year over CBS. This year it's poised somewhere between quotes - Bob Hope's "'Thanks for the Memory'" and novelist Katherine Anne Porter's tart comment on why societies down through history bother with the arts: "'The arts are what we find again when the ruins are all cleared away.'"

There are whiffs of nostalgia throughout this year's two-hour gala tribute, "'The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts.'"

We see the honorees through the soft-focus lens of the past:

*There's actress Myrna Loy dishing up snappy repartee and looking utterly glamorous in the 1930s detective hit "'The Thin Man.'"

*And comedian George Burns cutting up in a 1929 jazz-age film short, "'Lamb Chops,'" with his delightfully dithery wife and partner, Gracie Allen.

*Choreographer Alvin Ailey is saluted with a performance of his early masterpiece, the 1960 "'Revelations.'"

*Violinist Alexander Schneider appears in a film clip of a few ecstatic moments playing Bach with his friend Pablo Casals.

*We see Kennedy Center founder/chairman Roger Stevens huddling with Leonard Bernstein to save the new 1957 musical its backers wanted to scuttle, ''West Side Story.''

In the tradition of the Honors, these are people who ''throughout their lifetimes have contributed significantly to American culture through the performing arts.''

The taping took place earlier this month in the vast scarlet Opera House at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. It was a black-tie affair, with an invited audience that included stars of stage, screen, and bipartisan politics. Secret Service agents and metal detectors were thick as confetti because not only the President and Mrs. Reagan were there in the presidential box with the five honorees, but President-elect George Bush made a surprise appearance on stage with an ''Auld Lang Syne'' tribute to the president, taking his last bow at Kennedy Center.

President Reagan, caught unawares and unmiked, projected his voice in a booming one-liner heard throughout the hall: ''Beats getting an Oscar!'' Nancy Reagan, in a white lace and black sequin outfit, wiped tears from her eyes.

So it was '' Thanks for the Memory,'' that familiar Bob Hope theme song which he walked on stage with, on many levels. But it was also a witty, literate, and entertaining look at some of the performing artists whose work may be left when, as host Walter Cronkite quoted Miss Porter, ''the ruins are cleared away.''

Kathleen Turner pranced out on stage in a black sequin pants suit and praised the red-headed actress: ''Myrna Loy is the first actress brave enough to put sass on screen.''' Jimmy Stewart was quoted as having once said ''There's got to be a law against any man who doesn't want to marry Myrna Loy.''' After the verbal applause for the art of her acting, they rolled out Bobby Short and his piano for a serenade to the '30s ambiance of Loy's films that included Cole Porter's ''Isn't It Romantic.''' Then came the title song from Porter's '30s musical ''Anything Goes,'' done by the road company of the Lincoln Center revival. It included some terrific tap dancing done by a razzle-dazzle cast starring Leslie Uggams, who tried gallantly to fill the original Ethel Merman role but lacked her brassy talent for stopping the show.

In show-biz terms, the most arresting part of the TV show was the dancing: that tap number, the vintage soft shoe tribute that hoofers Tommy Tune and Anne Reinking did as homage to ex-vaudeville star George Burns, and the ecstatic dances from ''Revelations'' done by Ailey's American Dance Theater. The women dancers whirled on stage in Panama straw hats and long, banana colored dresses, the men in black pants with banana and black vests, to perform numbers like ''Rocking My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham,'' afire with a joyous gospel exuberance. Framing them on stage, a choir from Howard University. The less tele-visual nature of the careers of some of this year's honorees may have

been more of a challenge than in some previous years for long-time producers George Stevens Jr. and Nick Vanoff, who have won two Emmy Awards for Honors telecasts in the past.

Even the less flamboyant TV moments, though, under Dwight Hemion's deft direction, had their special charm. There were the touching moments when violinist and teacher Alexander (Sasha) Schneider, was introduced with warmth and a little schmaltz by friend Isaac Stern before a group of Schneider's students from orchestras around the nation played Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, with Stern as first violinist. When was the last time you heard any of the Brandenburgs on network TV?

And then there was the loving tribute to Roger Stevens, the "modern-day Medici," as Hal Holbrook called the founder, and recently retired chairman of Kennedy Center. "He's so unassuming, he was once called the faceless lamb among the celebrity lions."

In a scene reminiscent of "Our Town," the stars and creators of the arts Stevens has brought to Kennedy Center gathered on stage, along with members of the Center "family", from red-jacketed ushers, who marched down the aisles, to stagehands who rolled in on a tall ladder.

Actors like Faye Dunaway, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Gene Hackman; dancers like Maria Tallchief, Edward Villella, Jacques D'Amboise; playwrights like Edward Albee, Garson Kanin, Arthur Kopit; writers like Adolf Green and Betty Comden, opera stars like William Warfield, Frederica von Stade, Dorothy Kirsten, applauded Stevens as he took his final curtain call.

He also heard one of his favorite songs, the upbeat "Tomorrow" from another hit musical he rescued, "Annie," sung by Rachael Graham in the title role and the dog Sandy who contributed a few woofs.

At this writing, a finished tape of the show is not available for review, so segments mentioned here may be edited. The one scene you're not going to see happened afterward, when a woman dressed in a black sequined gown and a woman dressed in a white sequined gown became entangled at the shoulders in what can only be described as sequin gridlock.

After vain attempts to separate them, it was suggested that they dine together at the gala dinner following the taping: winter salad, veal cassoulet, and chocolate meringues served on tables covered with red and green tartan tablecloths and Christmas decorations.

GRAPHIC: Picture, Applauding the Reagans from the Kennedy Center stage were President-elect George Bush, producer George Stevens Jr., singer John Denver, actress Cicely Tyson, and comedian Bob Hope.

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December 27, 1985, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: First Section; Editorial; A16

LENGTH: 319 words

HEADLINE: Let's Hear It for Irving Berlin

BODY:

"obody writes popular songs," Irving Berlin once said. "Popular songs are songs that become popular. That's all there is to it."

And not just anybody honors popular songwriters. The popular songwriters, it seems, are the songwriters honored by the Kennedy Center. Is that all there is to it? You would be excused for thinking so.

For the past eight years, the Kennedy Center has bestowed honors on artists for the achievements of a lifetime in a glamorous televised awards ceremony. The recipients have included songwriters Richard Rodgers and, this year, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. But Irving Berlin, now 97 and the author of more than 1,000 songs -- "White Christmas," "Easter Parade" and "God Bless America" among them -- has yet to join the growing list of Kennedy Center honorees. Renee E. Renzi, whose letter appears on this page, wonders why. So do we.

The reason, evidently, has little to do with Mr. Berlin and the songs he began selling as early as 1907. Roger Stevens, the Kennedy Center's chairman, says he's been trying to "get Irving Berlin for years." But the rules stipulate that the award be granted only to those artists who can attend the ceremony, and Mr. Berlin, who lives in New York, has not felt up to the trip. The ceremony is a big fund-raising event for this city's renowned cultural center, which is why the people in charge want the stars in their seats during the show. "Box-office moxie," Mr. Stevens calls it.

All right -- rules are rules. And it's not as if Mr. Berlin had escaped all official notice: President Eisenhower presented him with a gold medal in 1955 and President Ford with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, in 1977.

Still, it does seem to us that rarely have prize and prospective recipient been better matched than in the case of Mr. Berlin and the Kennedy Center honors. Just this once couldn't they bend the rules?

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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December 27, 1985, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Style; B1

LENGTH: 904 words

HEADLINE: TV Preview;

Kennedy Center Honors: Class Act;
A Gala Affair, But Few Misty Moments

BYLINE: By Tom Shales, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Walter Cronkite emceed it despite a terrible backache, former CBS chairman William S. Paley later told friends he'd wept repeatedly during it, and actor Rex Harrison strolled out on stage in the midst of it lost and bewildered until a crew member rushed in from the wings and nudged him toward the podium. Another year, another spectacular edition of "The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts."

You won't see Harrison's bewilderment (it will be edited out) or Paley's tears or hear Uncle Walter say "Oh, my aching back" (he'd strained his back earlier in the day) on the two-hour CBS version of the show, which airs tonight at 9 on Channel 9, but you will see almost everything else the audience in the Kennedy Center Opera House saw on Dec. 5, when the event was taped, except that the taped version is tighter, brisker and, in fact, a better show all around.

It's all very nice, lustrous and splashy, and even the audience is star-studded -- from Larry Hagman to Brooke Shields to Teddy Kennedy to, of course, our nation's contented couple, Ronald and Nancy -- and yet it's not as good as in years past, and it lacks a satisfying number of big, grand emotional moments. There's a dearth of wowzers.

About the only really sentimental heart-tugger is the finale, when massed troops of the American armed services sing "Thanks for the Memory" to Bob Hope and recall how much his wartime visits entertained and warmed them in years past. Even Hope gets visibly misty on camera, and what seemed appallingly schmaltzy in the hall plays much better scaled down to TV size. But still, it's not as if Hope hasn't been thanked for these memories before.

On the other hand, breathes there a soul who would really begrudge the old boy the honor?

"The Kennedy Center Honors" remains among the few televised awards ceremonies with some dignity and stature to them. The question now is whether the dignity and stature are standing in the way of putting on a really big show and honoring all the people who deserve honoring.

Hope is, after all, the only real television star honored in the eight years of the Kennedy Center event, and his television work is barely mentioned in the tribute, which concentrates instead on the war shows and his hilarious movies. This year's other honorees are singer-actress Irene Dunne (who was kept from the ceremony by a sudden illness), Broadway composing team Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe ("My Fair Lady"), opera star Beverly Sills and offbeat choreographer Merce Cunningham.

Those in the arts world applaud the center's choice of Cunningham, whose work was and is avant-garde, because it means a maverick is getting an overdue Establishment bravo. One of his kooky ballets is excerpted, however, and it proves at best baffling. While Cunningham may deserve the honor, the choice makes it all the more irksome that the center still has not seen fit to cite such American television giants as Lucille Ball, Milton Berle or Jackie Gleason in all its years of doling out the accolades.

It would be my contention that Uncle Miltie in his baggy pants has contributed at least as much to American culture as has Merce Cunningham in his tights. And Berle always got his laughs on purpose. Ball performed in movies as well as TV, and Gleason is a multit talented giant whose work is as enviable and lasting as Chaplin's or Keaton's.

But each year the nominating ballots for the Honors go out mainly to figures in classical music, ballet, theater and film. These people are not likely to nominate television performers because they're just not hoity-toity enough. A center source does say, however, that Carol Burnett "will probably get it in time," perhaps because she shows up every year to pay tribute to someone else. This year it's Sills.

Certainly there are too many awards shows on TV that already shower so-so stars with empty huzzahs. But "The Kennedy Center Honors" is, after all, not just a Washington event but a television event. Surely it would be an act of graciousness and justice if, say, Lucy were to be included in next year's batch of honorees.

Highlights of this year's show include opera star Frederica von Stade's sung tribute (of Jerome Kern tunes) to Dunne. An 8-year-old classical pianist, Leah Yoon, is an impressive charmer, though she picked a dull piece to play; as it happens, the plucky little tyke ended up on the cutting room floor. Chevy Chase, who rambled during his tribute to Hope, has been edited into a more concise and funnier presentation. Kirk Douglas does a

particularly professional job in another Hope tribute, whereas Harrison and Louis Jourdan come across as sloppily grandiose in their paeans to Lerner and Loewe.

Disappointments? Yes. One might have thought Julie Andrews, the first "Fair Lady," would have shown up for the Lerner-Loewe salute, but she didn't. And for remarks about Hope's art, it would have been wonderful for Woody Allen to make one of his very rare TV appearances, since he is an avowed Hope buff.

George Stevens Jr. and Nick Vanoff do a magnificent job of producing the show each year, and Don Mischer's TV direction is somehow both official and intimate. It is a welcome oasis of class and style. But this year's program is a tad flat, and it suggests the whole structure of honor-giving might be looked into so that the honor roll better reflects the talents America really loves best.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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December 27, 1985, Friday, Late City Final

Edition

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LENGTH: 523 words

HEADLINE: TV WEEKEND;

KENNEDY CENTER PAYS TRIBUTE TO 6 IN THE ARTS

BYLINE: By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

BODY:

CONSIDER this for a fail-safe entertainment recipe: Open the show with the National Anthem and the voice of John F. Kennedy declaring, "I look forward to an America that will reward achievement in the arts as it rewards achievement in business"; cut to shots of President Reagan sitting in his Kennedy Center box with Mrs. Reagan, while Walter Cronkite walks out on stage to serve as narrator; then, for a finale two hours later, bring on several military choral groups to sing a rousing medley of "The Army Goes Rolling Along," "The Marine Corps Hymn" and "Anchors Aweigh." There is more than one way, obviously, to get an audience to stand up and salute.

The occasion is the eighth annual presentation of "The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts," taped in Washington on Dec. 8 and now being shown, after appropriate editing, on CBS this evening at 9. Being honored this year for "lifetime achievement" in the arts are Beverly Sills, Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner, Irene Dunne, Merce Cunningham and Bob Hope. Once again, the special has been co-produced by Nick Vanoff and George Stevens Jr. and directed by Don Mischer.

The formula is by now familiar, but still effective. There are clips from an earlier White House reception at which the President personally addressed the artists and invited guests. Then, back in the Kennedy Center, each of the honorees, while sitting in a box next to the President, is given a separate tribute that includes a biographical film and special performing material, followed by a standing ovation from the audience in formal dress.

As an awards event, this occasion is unfailingly heartfelt and dignified. These recipients represent the very best of American artistic achievement, their careers spanning decades. The first honorees in 1978 were Marian Anderson, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Richard Rodgers and Arthur Rubinstein, and that level of overall excellence has since been maintained admirably.

Some passing changes in the telecast can be noted. Art Buchwald is not on hand this year to offer his satirical comments on political antics in Washington. Also, this marks the first time that one of the honorees is not present. Suffering from a bad back, Miss Dunne was unable to attend, but her film career is reviewed affectionately by James Stewart.

Carol Burnett praises Miss Sills, Mikhail Baryshnikov pays tribute to Mr. Cunningham (''he reinvented dance and then waited for the audience - it was a long wait''), Rex Harrison thanks Lerner and Loewe for ''My Fair Lady'' and, for reasons that are not entirely clear, Kirk Douglas is the celebrity chosen to offer an homage to Mr. Hope. It is Mr. Hope, of course, who triggers the choruses of military songs as his years of entertaining the troops abroad are recalled. Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam step forward to offer their personal thanks to the extraordinary entertainer.

In the end, President Reagan flashes a thumbs-up sign to the choral groups and Mr. Cronkite reminds us that ''that's the way it is.'' The honorees come up for one final bow and standing ovation.

GRAPHIC: photo of Beverly Sills

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CULTURE

ORGANIZATION: KENNEDY CENTER (WASHINGTON, DC)

NAME: O'CONNOR, JOHN J; SILLS, BEVERLY

Proprietary to the United Press International 1980

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SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 79 words

HEADLINE: CAGNEY HONORS

BYLINE: By JOAN HANAUER, United Press International

BODY:

Television viewers get front row seats Dec. 27, thanks to CBS, to the tribute to Jimmy Cagney that was part of the Kennedy Center Honors program. The honors this year went to Cagney, Lynne Fontanne, Leonard Bernstein, Leontyne Price and Agnes de Mill e at a sell-out show at Washington's Kennedy Center. Mikhail Baryshnikov and John Travolta introduce the cast of the Broadway musical ''Tintypes,'' who perform ''Yankee Doodle Dandy'' and ''You're a Grand Old Flag.''

GRAPHIC: PICTURE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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HEADLINE: TV WEEKEND;
'SHADOW BOX,' A PRIZE OFFERING FROM BROADWAY

BYLINE: By JOHN O'CONNOR
BODY:

THE holiday season's most outstanding production - indeed, one of the best presentations of the entire year - is about death. Sunday at 9 P.M., ABC is bringing the Pulitzer Prize-winning play ''The Shadow Box'' to television in a production that, in many respects, is superior to the original Broadway version.

Michael Cristofer, the playwright, treads delicately but incisively over the undeniably disturbing subject of terminal illness. His characters are dying of cancer in a California hospice, surrounded by loved ones and coming to the realization that ''people just don't want to let go, do they?''

The play focuses on three groupings of people. There is Joe (James Broderick), the blue collar worker from Newark whose wife (Valerie Harper) cannot face his reality. There is Brian (Christopher Plummer), the unsuccessful writer, caught between the demanding concerns of his former wife (Joanne Woodward) and his present male lover (Ben Masters). And there is dedicated Agnes (Melinda Dillon) caring for her aged mother (Sylvia Sidney) with stories of a favorite daughter who, in fact, has been dead for years.

Directed by Paul Newman, this production has obviously been assembled with extraordinary care. Once in a while an actor is given too much freedom, slipping into the fidgety overplaying that is the hallmark of Actors Studio exercises. But for the most part this is a splendidly controlled realization of Mr. Cristofer's play. Not so incidentally, the adaptation was written by Mr. Cristofer.

The subject of death, of course, is hardly conducive to holiday cheer. It must be stressed that ''The Shadow Box'' is finally invigorating, approaching with utter compassion ''that last moment - absolutely alone, facing an unknown - there's absolutely nothing you can do about it except give in.''

The performances are uniformly superb. Miss Woodward reveals still new layers of expertise as the nasty wife. Mr. Plummer

turns the impossible writer into a terribly moving character. Miss Dillon is incredibly on target as the neglected daughter. I could go on, but the message is: watch ''The Shadow Box'' Sunday.

This afternoon at 4, CBS is introducing something called ''CBS Children's Mystery Theater.'' The aim is a quality program for young viewers. Unfortunately, ''The Treasure of Alpheus T. Winterborn'' is likely to drive the kiddies back to mindless cartoons. The context provides Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as guides to the story, in this case about a boy's search for fortune hidden by a millionaire, Winterborn, whose name adorns every institution in town. The devices are obvious, the show is exhausting. Good intentions are not enough.

Tonight at 9, ''Bill Moyers' Journal'' goes back to 1973 for an interview with Dorothy Day, the remarkable woman who founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Mr. Moyers demonstrated, even then, a rare ability to connect emotionally and intellectually with his guests. Dorothy Day, who died laast month at the age of 83, is a figure of commanding respect.

Tomorrow at 5, ABC's ''Wide World of Sports'' offers 90 minutes of United States amateur and professional figure skaters on a 10-day exhibition tour of China. The company is headed by Peggy Fleming, the 1968 Olympic gold medalist, Linda Fratianne, the 1980 Olympic silver medalist, and Tai Babilonia and Randy Gardner, the 1979 champions in pairs figure skating. It is a special sports presentation that manages to be really special.

Later in the evening, at 9, CBS is carrying ''The Kennedy Center Honors,'' taped on Dec. 7. This third annual ''celebration of the performing arts'' honors, in alphabetical order, Leonard Bernstein, James Cagney, Agnes de Mille, Lynn Fontanne and Leontyne Price. The program opens with the voice of John F. Kennedy, proclaiming the sentiments about the human spirit that are etched in stone at Washington's Kennedy Center. The rest, beginning with shots of President Carter and Walter Cronkite, is indeed a celebration. It gets a bit mushy at times but there's no doubt that it is deserved.

On the other two commercial networks tomorrow night, the menu is dominated by news documentaries. At 9:30, NBC has a white paper on ''Gambling.'' David Brinkley, who seems to have been hauled in at the last moment, is the narrator. Lloyd Dobyns is the reporter. Touring Nevada and Atlantic City, the 90-minute survey covers familiar territory - from Gamblers Anonymous to land ripoffs - but manages to be provocative.

ABC News has a ''Closeup,'' produced by Paul Altmeyer, on policemen. The attitude is frankly sympathetic as the gruesome stress statistics are kicked off on divorce, alcoholism and suicide. Detroit, Philadelphia and Boston are the target cities.

This is a riveting and sorely needed profile of the men in blue.

Finally, on Sunday, there are two other efforts of note. The ''Lou Rawls Parade of Stars,'' running from 8 to midnight on WPIX-Channel 11, is a benefit for the United Negro College Fund. And at 11:30 on WNEW-Channel 5, ''The David Susskind Show'' will be given over largely to the singing talents of Jonathan Schwartz, one of New York's best radio personalities.

GRAPHIC: Illustrations: photo of Joanne Woodward and Christopher Plummer

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HEADLINE: THE KENNEDY CENTER AIMS FOR THE HOME AUDIENCE

BODY:

--- Peter Wood is a freelance writer who frequently reports on
the cultural scene.

By PETER WOOD

WASHINGTON, D.C. Question: How do you package high culture on prime-time television? Answer: Very carefully and not too often. The producers of the Kennedy Center Honors gala, a star-spangled salute to five distinguished American performing artists, have been as careful as can be, gift-wrapping opera, ballet and classical music in a glitter of talent, celebrities, shmaltz and grandeur. The result, a highclass cross between "The Ed Sullivan Show" and "This Is Your Life," will be watched this Saturday evening at 9 on CBS by an estimated 12 million viewers - a dismal showing by ordinary commercial television standards but roughly seven times the total number of live patrons the Kennedy Center gets all year.

Besides Zubin Mehta conducting the Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro," an Agnes de Mille ballet and ballet dancers Natalia Makarova and Anthony Dowell in a sensuous pas de deux from "Manon," the home audience will be treated to close-in views of the honorees: Leonard Bernstein, James Cagney, Miss de Mille, Lynn Fontanne and Leontyne Price.

The artists being saluted are seated in the Presidential box of the National Opera House no less, each bedecked with the handsome rainbow yoke of ribbon and brass marking their achievement. (The actual awards had been made the night before at an exclusive dinner at the State Department.) Beside them sit the President and Mrs. Carter, throwing kisses and shaking hands at the appropriate moments, standing and applauding with the rest of the celebrity-studded audience at the conclusion of each film sequence that traces the particular artist's career. Stars of stage and screen and related disciplines are everywhere, on stage and in the audience, neatly cameoed by roving hand-held cameras: Julie Harris, John Travolta, Eli Wallach, Lauren Bacall, Joe Namath, Senator Jacob Javits and on and on.

Little wonder, then, that getting the gala taped for television (a couple of Sundays ago) ranks in complexity with a World War II commando raid. The chief difference is that the event has become an annual affair.

The military analogy works on another level, too. The forces of high culture, long denied the continent of commercial television, have made a strong stand on public television and are actively pursuing the prospects of cable. The gala telecast in prime time on a commercial network is considered by many as a beachhead of sorts. Top CBS brass, looking to the future of their newly announced culture-oriented cable network, which is scheduled to become operational next year, will undoubtedly be studying the ratings of this Honors telecast with extra care. So, too, will the directors of not only the Kennedy Center but the nation's 14 other cultural centers. The ultimate objective, of course, is to establish a nation-wide constituency willing to pay to see cultural programming on subscription television.

A month before the more than 2,000 guests at the gala took their seats in the Opera House, a command center had been set up, appropriately enough, in the Eisenhower Rehearsal Room, a windowless space somewhere inside the six-theater warehouse of the arts that looms like a gigantic marble shoebox beside the Potomac, hard by the Watergate Hotel-apartment complex. Inside the rehearsal hall, temporary walls were set up, phones installed, a refrigerator, copying machines and typewriters brought in.

By mid-November, Nick Vanoff, a veteran producer of television variety specials, had left Los Angeles to meet with his co-producer, George Stevens Jr., already in place in Washington. As chairman of the American Film Institute, a Kennedy Center tenant, Mr. Stevens is an experienced hand at staging this sort of spectacular. For the past eight years, A.F.I. has paid tribute to elder statesmen and stateswomen of film with a Life Achievement Award; these affairs have also been recorded for television and broadcast on CBS, under Mr. Stevens's guidance. Accompanying Mr. Vanoff was Michael Seligman, an associate producer. Don Mischer, the director, moved into his suite on the 10th floor of the Watergate on the 24th. By Sunday, Nov. 30, lighting director Bill Klages, stage manager Shelley Jensen, music director Nick Perito and carpenter Mike Sullivan, all Californians from the glossy world of television entertainment, were in Washington with their various staffs.

On Dec. 2, the giant technical and audio trailer trucks belonging to Orange Coast Video, a Hollywood firm, were backed up to the freight delivery platform in the basement of the Center. Heavy black cables, snaking through the maze-like corridors, were taped to floors and ceilings. Backstage, special banks of lights were added to the house's already elaborate equipment. Hidden microphones and radio receivers were spotted about the set. Four hulking cameras were fixed strategically among the orchestra

seats. As unobtrusively as possible, the Opera House assumed the capability of a television studio.

A day later, the camera and audio crews checked into the Howard Johnson's Hotel across the street from the Watergate. Then the on-camera talent began arriving. Beverly Sills, who was to act as the gala's host, flew in from California on Saturday morning. A small flap occurred when it was discovered in Mr. Stevens's office that the volunteer assigned to meet Miss Sills at the airport, where she had arrived with loads of luggage, had done so in a two-door sedan (compliments of a car-rental agency, one of dozens of businesses to contribute goods and services to the proceedings). Like any of a hundred minor crises that would surface during the next 24 hours, it was dealt with swiftly. Miss Sills was observed arriving at the circular carport of the Watergate like any other celebrity: in a limousine.

Zubin Mehta made it just in time for the award dinner Saturday night. Jason Robards arrived Sunday. Last of all was the cast of the Broadway musical "'Tintypes.'" And that was a chancy bit of timing, inasmuch as they had a matinee to perform that afternoon in Manhattan and were expected in the capital that evening in order to become the centerpiece of what was to be the gala's grand finale: a dandy Yankee Doodle tribute to James Cagney. The split-second "'Tintypes'" entrance merely typified the logistic challenge faced by the producers.

The Kennedy Center Honors program is independently produced by Messrs. Stevens and Vanoff. CBS pays the Center a license fee, as it is called, to televise the program one time. The network then tries to recoup as much of its outlay as possible through advertisers such as A.T.&T. The actual dollar cost of the whole production is privileged information. The most anyone will admit to is that the bills do get paid. The stars work strictly for union minimum - the equivalent, says Mr. Stevens, of giving it away. The event is, after all, a charity. And in the end, if anything is left over - though it is hard to see how there could be - it goes to the Center.

But even without a surplus, the Center considers the disruption caused by the televising of the Honors well worth the Sturm und Drang. First of all, it gives national exposure to the event and to the honorees, whose celebrated names alone are a sort of publicity that nourishes itself. As the Honors celebration gains national recognition, it becomes increasingly easier to command the participation of the performing talent to put the show on and to sign up patrons, sponsors and volunteers. The talent, in turn, provides the bait for the tangible contribution: ticket sales to the gala. They range from \$25 in the second tier to \$200 per seat in the orchestra to \$5,000 for a first-tier box. In addition to the show, ticket-holders attended a dinner-dance afterward, held in the Kennedy Center foyer where the strains of Count Basie and his Orchestra were somehow projected the length of three football fields. The net return to

the Center last year was in the neighborhood of a third of a million dollars. This year promises a similar bounty.

The orchestra seats and boxes were snapped up the moment they went on sale, explained Roger L. Stevens, chairman of the Kennedy Center and its chief executive officer, a pleasant change from the first year when some arm-twisting was necessary. Mr. Stevens (no relation to George) made his fortune in real estate - he once bought and sold the Empire State Building -and is good at twisting arms. He is possibly the most successful fund-raiser of all time. Virtually singlehandedly he raised the millions and engineered the deals that made the Kennedy Center possible in the first place. But the sums needed to support the arts are growing ever larger.

Does Roger Stevens believe the Honors program to be a first step toward putting the enormous resources of commercial television to work for the arts? Not directly. He agrees with John W. Mazzola, president of Lincoln Center, that commercial television offers an outlet for only a very special kind of program - the Honors a typical example. And negotiations are underway for another program - whether with CBS or another major network the Center won't say. The advantages are obvious - lucrative contracts and wide national exposure. On the debit side, to put it bluntly, the mass television audience, subsisting on junk food, has a low tolerance for the sort of gourmet fare the country's arts centers believe it is their duty to provide. This is particularly true for the Kennedy Center, whose trustees are keenly mindful of the Center's responsibility as a national institution, mandated by Congress - though virtually unfunded by Congress, Mr. Stevens is quick to point out.

If commercial television holds only limited possibilities of filling the budget gap without compromising excellence, PBS and cable television are another matter. Here in New York, Channel 13 is constantly reporting larger audiences for its "Live From Lincoln Center" and "Dance in America" series. The Kennedy Center, for its part, not long ago and after 10 years of existence, signed its own first public-television contract, with WQED/Pittsburgh, for four programs a year over a three-year period.

"We were late getting into television," explained Tom Kendrick, director of operations at the Kennedy Center. "We couldn't see the advantage in the beginning. The money was not much and the disruption factor high -cameras in the audience, special lighting." First consideration, Mr. Kendrick explains, went to the live audience and to establishing the Kennedy Center in Washington. That done, the Center's second five years have seen a concerted effort to honor its mandate to reach out nationally with touring companies and the like.

"We have high hopes for WQED," says Mr. Kendrick. "Their approach will be more complex than the 'Live From...' format. We

taped our first broadcast in November, an 80th birthday celebration for Aaron Copland, with Bernstein and Rostropovitch. No broadcast date has been set yet. Other shows may go on live. We are still discussing what they will be.''

As for cable, Mr. Kendrick says it is still very much in the exploratory stage. Yes, the Center has been approached by a variety of cable outfits, including both CBS and ABC. And the revenue potential is indeed large, but the sort of broadcasts that prove possible on cable - and remember no profit, no cable - may not be what the Kennedy Center will want to produce. In any event, the cable industry is in such a snarl these days that Mr. Kendrick estimates that contractual agreements are still years away.

One clear sign, however, that the Center is preparing for its eventual involvement with television was the disclosure last week of the appointment of Chloe Aaron as television consultant in charge of reviewing all the Center's future broadcast projects. Miss Aaron comes from PBS where she was vice president in charge of programming.

In the meantime, neither the CBS brass, the gala's producers nor Roger Stevens could wish for a more gratifying response than that given by a tousle-haired youth who happened to poke his head into a screening room one day a few weeks past. A tape of last year's gala show, which he'd never seen and probably never heard of, was playing on the monitor. He watched for a few minutes from the door and then, hooked, flopped into a nearby seat. When the tape went briefly blank, signaling a commercial pause, he asked what he was watching. Learning, he blurted out incredulously, ''You mean this was shown on prime-time TV? What a surprise? This is really good!'' b

GRAPHIC: Illustrations: photo of crowd at gala at Kennedy Center