

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

[NY HEARD & SCENE](#)

Subdued Angel Ball Raises \$3.7 Million for Cancer Research

News of Oscar de la Renta's Death Toned Down Party Vibe



Monday night's Angel Ball, hosted by the Gabrielle's Angel Foundation. *J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN*

By **MARSHALL HEYMAN**

Updated Oct. 21, 2014 4:42 p.m. ET

When news broke of the [death of fashion designer Oscar de la Renta](#) on Monday evening, it brought the occasionally raucous Angel Ball down to earth.

“He was the epitome of class and taste,” said the fashion designer Tommy Hilfiger, huddled with his wife, Dee, and the longtime fashion editor Hal Rubenstein. “He was a true world-class gentleman.”

“There are no words,” said Stephanie Winston Wolkoff, who has worked at Vogue and as the fashion director of Lincoln Center.

At the Angel Ball, an annual fundraiser thrown by Denise Rich to raise money for a cancer research foundation created in honor of her late daughter, Gabrielle, the de la Renta news spread over Twitter, email and old-fashioned table-hopping during a performance by Nile Rodgers, one of the evening's honorees. (He sang "Le Freak" and "Everybody Dance.")

Ms. Rich's friend, Star Jones, took to the podium to ask for a moment of silence for Mr. de la Renta, who had been diagnosed with cancer in 2006. The evening's medical-research goal now seemed particularly poignant, she said.

Just a half-hour earlier, Ms. Jones had overseen the pledge drive for the organization.

"Let's raise some money and then I'll get out of your way," she said. "You know I need a lot of money."

She was able to extract thousands of dollars from guests who are usually used to either being a. the entertainment or b. just plain fabulous, including Natalie Cole, LaLa Anthony, Tina Knowles and nightclub impresario Richie Akiva. Mr. Hilfger also donated money.

Cipriani Wall Street was surprisingly jammed for this particular event, which raised \$3.7 million. We can point to two reasons for this.

First, over the years, Ms. Rich, a longtime songwriter, has amped up the performance factor at the Angel Ball. This year's event had more in common with a Clive Davis Grammy party than your typical banquet-hall rubber-chicken night.

This may be at the expense of the actual rubber chicken. Main courses, many guests noticed and complained, didn't start arriving until well after 10 p.m. But there were distractions, including two songs by [Alicia Keys](#), an energized medley by Mr. Rodgers and closing performances by Jamie Foxx and Ludacris.

Second, with the knowledge that cancer affects so many people and industries world-wide, Ms. Rich's party honors a diverse cast of characters. Nascar driver Jeff Gordon, who heads a foundation for pediatric cancer, was the evening's "Angel of Light."

Mr. Rodgers was the "Angel of Hope." Yousef Al Otaiba, the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the U.S. and his wife, Abeer, were named "Angels of Inspiration." And Jho Low, the Hong Kong-based chief executive of Jynwel Capital Limited, was Monday's "Angel Gabrielle."

Ms. Rich "called me and said 'you're one of the honorees,'" said Mr. Low.

"I'm just a baby," the 32-year-old added, but having lost a grandfather to cancer, he said one of his goals is to encourage activity from more young "millennial philanthropists" around the globe.

Other guests at the party included the jeweler Lorraine Schwartz, Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds, Sofia Vergara, Kris Jenner, Boris Becker, Ivana Trump and Bethenny Frankel, who recently rejoined the cast of “The Real Housewives of New York.”

“I’m in the right place for it,” said Ms. Frankel, referring to her frame of mind. She also, coincidentally, happened to be wearing a gown by Mr. de la Renta, which, [she tweeted](#), she’d waited four years to wear.

“It’s nice to wear a fancy dress,” she said earlier in the evening. “I don’t go out much to these, so I never get to wear these things.”



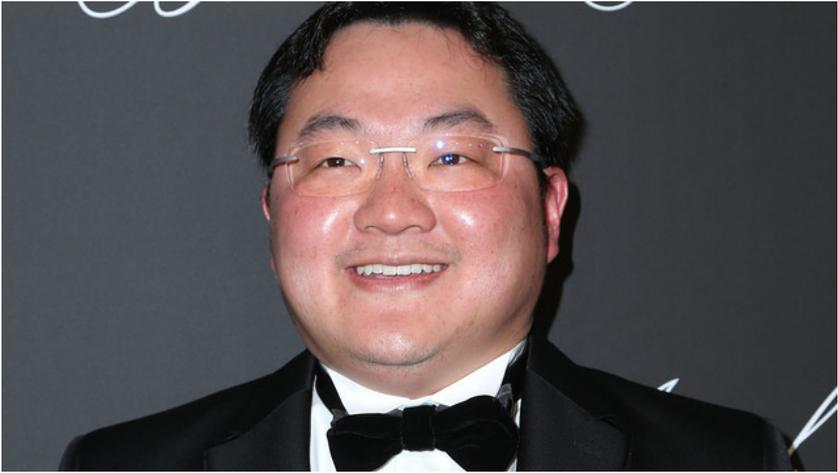
Peter Cervinka with host Denise Rich J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN



Amy and Brian France J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN



Ingrid Vandebosch and honoree Jeff Gordon J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN



Honoree Jho Low J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN



Blake Lively and Lorraine Schwartz J. GRASSI/PATRICK MCMULLAN