



Lyne Tremblay of Cabaret Deco doing her Liza Minelli impression for the SSO fundraiser at Carlu.

Research for a cure now has energetic and savvy advocates



Gillian Cosgrove

Schizophrenia is not a fashionable, feel good cause, like breast cancer or AIDS. It has no celebrity spokespeople.

It has suffered from a Dickensian "let's-keep-them-in-the-closet" stigma. Until now.

The organizers of the first annual Iris Ball have just pulled off a spectacular fundraising gala with panache and sass. The ball, the new logo (the iris) and new slogan ("A reason to hope. The means to cope") are part of a brave effort by the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario to re-brand and reach out beyond the 20,000 families it serves. Judging by the elegance of the

evening at art deco Carlu, the SSO has come along way from its humble beginnings in a church basement in Oakville 25 years ago.

All too often I have suffered through interminable evenings of indifferent food and self-congratulatory blather. But the Iris Ball last Saturday was a treat. The highlight: a world class performance by Cabaret Deco, with husband and wife team John Evans and Lyne Tremblay celebrating the decadent nightlife of

the jazz era. This featured his wicked impersonation of Noel Coward (with a touch of Christopher Plummer at his most droll) and hers of Josephine Baker, Marlene Dietrich and Liza Minnelli in Cabaret. The Scott Marshall Zeitgeist Sextet jazz band was outstanding. Certainly, this is the best little show in Toronto in a long, long time.

Prominent in the blue-ribbon crowd were Camilla Dalglish, the philanthropist; her most-eligible-bachelor

nephew, Garfield cuts a wide swath Kenneth, son of early detection and Mitchell, former head of regard less of class. Rosemary Makhan of intervention. the family's Weston That doesn't make the Burlington's son, died In 2005, SSO will foundation; Peter and individual stories any in his sleep at 25 from a focus on detecting Elsie Southam; Bob and less heart-rending severe medication schizophrenia's Trudy Bundy; Martyn Sarah Brooks a interaction. To ease her "ignition point" in Weir, an organizer of beautiful brainy pain and to raise money young poeple, because the gala and his wife, woman who loved for education about the earlier it is Lynn Fletcher, the fashion and travel, schizophrenia, she has diagnosed and treated, investment banker; and suddenly, at 25, sewn a spectacular the better the outcome. Len Wall, the hyper- became introspective, quilt, of the things her Doubt there's a need? active, hyper-caring troubled and son loved best: frogs, Schizophrenia victims president of the SSO. A withdrawn. The disease woodland creatures and occupy more hospital no-show was George attacked her so fiercely nature in all its glory. beds than any other Smitherman, the bully that she could not She has donated it to medical or surgical boy (ac- cording to follow the treatment the SSG for auction. condition in Canada. hospital workers) prescribed. Despairing The loudest applause The disease costs Health Minister. of ever regaining her was for Jesse Bigalow, Canadians more than But behind the fun rewarding life, she 26, "the strength and \$2.3-billion a year in lurked the inescapable made a choice to end it hope for our health costs and reality that last year. In her community:' He got another \$2-billion in schizophrenia is memory, her gutsy schizophrenia five support services. Yet "youth's greatest parents, Martin and years ago, spent six research into the disabler." It strikes Kathy Brooks, have months in hospital and causes and the "cure is between 17 and 25 launched Sarah's has gradually rebuilt his pitifully underfunded. when life holds its Scarves, a program to life. Now, he volunteers Sadly, the only major greatest promise. We all knit and sell colourful for Beyond the corporate, sponsors of know someone who has scarves to raise money Cuckoo's Nest, a of the gala were foreign lost a friend, a son or a for the early detection program teaching high drug companies. daughter to and diagnosis of school students about Where are the Bay schizophrenia because it schizophrenia. schizophrenia.