

thecity

It can never hurt to wear footwear that sparkles, a rapper learns that the best promotion is his own promotion and we want your City Quiz answers!

SCENE

SHE'S NOT IN KANSAS

But that didn't stop Sonja Bata from hitting the town in ruby slippers



SHINAN GOVANI

Who knew that the Yellow Brick Road ends up on the Bridal Path? There she was off to see the wheeler-dealers. By she, I mean the grande dame of shoes, **Sonja Bata**. And by wheeler-dealers, I mean the smart crowd that gathered on Tuesday night at a non-garret of a home on Park Lane Circle

Bata, who's spent a life reconciling passion with family business and family business with theatrics, turned heads with her ruby red slippers, care of *The Wizard of the Oz*. Did everything but click her heels. Looked smashing in a pair that's rumoured to be among seven that were made expressly for **Judy Garland**. Was overheard saying that the curator at her Bata Shoe Museum had a fit, so to speak, when she got the message asking for the shoes!

A little bit of magic was certainly in order for the party held at the home of energy czarina **Rebecca MacDonald**, and held to benefit the charity Free the Children. It was called the White Knight gala, and in attendance, for instance, were doughnut multi-millionaire **Ron Joyce**, buttery fortune-keeper **Belinda Stronach** and at least four of five CBC "Dragons," **W. Brett Wilson**, **Kevin O'Leary**, **Robert Herjavec** and **Arlene Dickinson**.

Ben Mulroney and **Jessica Brownstein**. **John Tory** and **Barbara Hackett**. **Craig** and **Mark Kielburger**. The power couples kept coming! **Mike "Pinball" Clemons**. **Suzanne Rogers**. **Suzie McNeil**. Names, names, names.

Overseeing it all was **Ron White**, who knows a thing or two about shoes. Free the Children, a Toronto-based school program, is an outgrowth of his Ron White Foundation. Local impresario **Jeffrey Latimer** was the evening's chair, and the entertainment, which went down on a covered indoor pool, included performances by the **Canadian Tenors**, the unreal **Ethan Bortnick** (a kid who's been mixing with **Oprah** and **Jay Leno** of late!) and that very jazzy prodigy **Nikki Yanofsky**.

The energy was warm and sufficiently fuzzy. Enough to melt the heart of any Tin Man.

Scene! Heard! Ticketed!

■ **Sandra Oh**, that powerhouse of acting, grabbed a little dinner on Tuesday at Grace on College Street.

■ The philosopher ghost of Rideau Hall, **John Ralston Saul**, was seen running out

to his car recently on Avenue, near Davenport, where a cop stood, stage left, with a yellow ticket.

■ Groupie-collecting *Fight Club* writer **Chuck Palahniuk**, here on Charles Street this week pumping his latest, *Pygmy*, tossed around a couple of hundred big, inflatable penguins, as expected. One person noted that the book launch was more like "adult day care."

■ Food Network face **Anna Olson**, pitching these days for Home Hardware, is all about bamboo. "Bamboo," she says, "is where it's at as far as cutting boards go, because it's both antibacterial and a renewable resource."

■ **Taylor Thomson**, a people-mingling heiress, was seen the other evening on Air Canada from New York to Toronto.

On another note:

Hello! Canada editor **Ciara Hunt** has an antenna for beauty — but, obviously, she has an antenna for controversial beauty, too! As part of an ingenious/awkward hat trick, two of her 50 Most Beautiful Canadians, found in an all-new skin-deep issue, are now mired in tricky headlines!

There is, for instance, the dynastic **Kiefer Sutherland**, about whom tales of designer-head-butting were emerging just as *Hello!* began to hit stands. There is, for instance, parliamentarian **Ruby Dhalla**, for whom the Nannygate saga was just picking up speed as *Hello!* began to hit stands.

And, as well:

Rappers, actors, foodies — all were welcome at the opening on King of Conviction, which used to be *Bite Me* (briefly), which used to be *Thuet*. By the time you read this, they may have changed the name again — to *My Bad* or *Single Ladies* or *Comme Çi Comme Ça* — but I think *Conviction* is here to stay, partly because it is both a restaurant and a TV series.

Whatever it's called, it's always been tasty — and now it comes with 13 ex-cons. Yes, that's right! Thirteen ex-cons, that is to say, are working at the restaurant, and guests can go to dinner while getting their 15 minutes of fame as cameras capture all the action in the kitchen and dining room. Think of it all as *Oz* meets *Ratatouille!*

"The pizza is pretty freaking amazing," said a spy who was at the opening five-course dinner last Friday. That would be the pizza with the in-house cured meats. Among those sampling the pie, and so much more, was everybody from *k-os* to **Franco Prevedello** to **Carlo Rota** to **Jacob Richler**. And, by all accounts, the ex-cons proved to be both attentive servers and capable cooks.

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Sonja Bata's shoes are rumoured to be among the seven pairs made for Judy Garland for *The Wizard of Oz*.

VITO AMATI / PIMENTEL PHOTO

ON THE TOWN

Only as popular as his name suggests

BY BEN KAPLAN

It's one thing for a rapper to call himself "Famous," but it takes something else for that name to represent reality. At a concert for *Naughty by Nature* at Circa, the Richmond Street mega-club that has a DJ in the washroom, 22-year-old Ashton Bishop showed he has the chutzpah needed to turn his moniker into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"I have to hustle because as hard as I work, that's how big I can get," says Famous while erecting a souvenir stand for merchandise sales a few hours before he performs. Wearing a fitted Blue Jays cap and a T-shirt reading "I Rap Now," which he is also selling for \$20, Famous greets *Naughty by Nature* fans as old friends — and does his best to drum up sales.

"I know it's a recession, baby, that's why I'm selling three CDs for five bucks," says the rapper, who, by day, works as an on-air personality at *Flow 93.5*. "Look at you! I know you can spare five loonies and still have enough money for drinks."

Between sips of his ever-present rum and Coke, Famous bounds onstage to excite the crowd (in addition to performing, he is also the evening's host), then hustles back to his table where he's selling his Juno-nominated CD, *I Rap Now* (hence the T-shirts).

Born in Scarborough and now living near the lakeshore and Yonge Street, Famous has opened shows for *Busta Rhymes*, *Kardinal Offishall* and *Nas*. His pride grows like *Manny Ramirez* on steroids when asked about his career.

"Rapping is my nine to five,

it's how I eat," Famous explains, and only stops smiling when asked to pose for a picture on a fan's Facebook page. "I get paid to rap! It's a lot of fun, guy."

Onstage, Famous is as personable as he is at the merchandise table. He had a hit with *Fourth Biggest City*, a song about Toronto's notorious screw-face embrace of local artists, and he easily wins over the seen-it-all crowd with witty local references and self-deprecating charm. He plays for almost 40 minutes and then is back behind his table.

"What are you saying, ma?" he asks a young woman. "You good?"

"Real good," she says. "I just saw you. You're an amazing performer!"

Turns out, the girl is good enough to not only buy three mixed tapes, but also a shirt for her boyfriend.

Famous smiles goodbye to his new fan, then waves his empty glass in the air so his friend from the radio station can see — the universal symbol for "get me another."

Last year, when the rapper was working at *Champs* in the Scarborough Town Centre, he used his commission to buy tickets to shows by groups like *Naughty by Nature*. But, as it says on his CD and T-shirt, he raps now, so during *Naughty by Nature*'s set, he's working instead of taking in the gig.

"I should take off — I'm doing *eTalk* tomorrow," he says, "but I'll stick around. People might want something after their set."

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JIM ROSS FOR NATIONAL POST

Famous prepares to become even more famous.

CITY QUIZ

In this recurring feature, Sarah Lazarovic tests your knowledge of this city — its places, faces and public spaces. Can you solve this week's question? Be the first to email the correct answer to todo@nationalpost.com and win a prize!

Gravity will be defied this weekend. Where?

LAST WEEK'S winner, Alex Stack.

ANSWER: GROWN UP SCIENCE FAIR

SARAH.com

SHINAN'S BOLDFACE INDEX

■ Calm, collected and keeping his cool, **Kiefer Sutherland**, pictured, was taking in the view from the rooftop bar of the Park Hyatt Toronto last weekend. ■ People are less interested in **John Macfarlane's** genes than they are his jeans. The latest issue of the *Ryerson Review of Journalism* says *The Walrus* editor might wear the same denim to work that he dons when he's rocking out, and former *Walrus* publisher **Ken Alexander** suspects Macfar-



lane might iron his jeans. ■ **Douglas Coupland** admitted, via Twitter, that he watches *American Idol*. ■ **Ryan Gosling** likes to rent his own movies, but he's not so great at returning them on time — late fees were charged for his rental of *Lars and the Real Girl* from Los Angeles's Video Hut. ■ College Street's *Trattoria Giancarlo* was entertaining bookish types recently: **Louise Denny**s and **Ric Young** were spotted there, as was **Sarah Fulford** and **Stephen Marche**.