

Superbroker throws a superparty

**Kenneth D. Laub
pulls out all stops
for his 50th**

By CARTER B. HORSLEY

DESPITE the usual cast of characters, it was not the usual real estate banquet.

As Julius LaRosa belted "There ain't no place but here," more than 200 industry titans, politicians and civic leaders settled down a little nervously in the Rainbow Room Sunday night, not sure whether they were in for an evening of parochial boosterism, biting parody or blatant promotion.

The extravaganza put on by superbroker Kenneth D. Laub to mark his 50th birthday and the 20th anniversary of his powerful firm proved to be a little of each.

The tension quickly eased as Jason Graae, a vocal soloist in Twyla Tharp's "Everlast — A Gypsy Run-Thru" with American Ballet Theater, pranced around the large dance floor in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit with long blond tresses, singing how he loves "bouncing my wrecking ball and watching it fall" near "Saks Trump Avenue, Grand Trump Station and AT&T-rump." Donald Trump was not in the black-tie audience, which included such leading real estate figures as Seymour Durst, Sam Lefrak, Howard Ronson, David Solomon, Alan Tishman and Ware Travelstead. Also on hand were City Council President An-

drew Stein, Councilwoman Ruth Messinger, City Club of New York President Sally Goodgold, actor Len Cariou, television newscaster Bill Beutel and designer Oleg Cassini.

The mood got more upbeat as Faith Prince, who received a Tony nomination as best featured actress in "Jerome Robbins' Broadway," sang "The Lady Is Looking Good," taking several liberties with the harbor's famous statue.

It turned decidedly raucous when the cast of Laub's production, titled "Blocks: Confessions of a New York Realtor," broke into "Welcome to the SRO Hotel" where patrons go to hell and "no pets are allowed . . . rooms are no better than a cell but the view is swell . . . and nothing's safe."

Although the show really had no story line and used no sets other than the glamorous, recently refurbished Art Deco glory of the Rainbow Room, it was as slick as any major Broadway production, down to its own "Playbuilt" program fashioned after Playbill.

The professionalism was hardly surprising, given that its cast included many top artists and that Laub himself has been a Broadway angel. Laub, in fact, paid tribute to two late close friends, choreographer Bob Fosse and comedian Dick Shawn.

TV's Roger Grimsby interrupted the show's "horror headlines" to explain that Laub's life personified "sequential monogamy." He introduced the next number, in which Linda Hart,

currently starring as Erma in "Anything Goes" at the Vivian Beaumont, demanded that her mate choose between her and his attache case. It was a rousing number that one audience member suggested might have been funnier if he had asked her to abandon her attache case.

Laub conducted the 18-piece orchestra in the overture, wrote the music and collaborated on the lyrics with Hal Hackady, who wrote the musical "Snoopy."

A "Fugue for a Rainy Day," introduced by Grimsby, who noted that the city had just survived "the wettest drought in my memory," was a sprightly lament for those in need of a cab when just a drop has fallen and all the drivers have "gone off duty."

Laub, who described the show as a "work in progress," appeared on the dance floor to salute Alice, his maid for 20 years, who was in the audience, as well as his parents.

The performers, who also included Larry Hart; singer, Carolyn C. Blair, a star of "Dreamgirls"; Adinah Alexander; and Sandahl Bergman, are friends of Laub and donated their time and talent.

"I never get applause like this when I do a real estate deal," Laub told the audience he had just champagned, dined and entertained — then he sat at the piano for the smashing finale.

That was a beautiful anthem titled "Make Sure It's Still Here for the Children," winning a standing ovation for its lyric, "Let's make love easier to find."



PARTY TIME: Sandahl Bergman, Larry Hart, Julius LaRosa, Faith Prince, Linda Hart feted Kenneth D. Laub (from left).

Bruce Cotler