

ON THE TOWN

in

The

NEW YORK

March 24, 2005

STEPHEN PETRONIO COMPANY

CRAIG HEMSALA & DOMINIC SINESIO

LIZ GERRING & URSULA SCHERREL

STEPHEN PETRONIO, TARA SUBKOFF & ERIC VILLENCY

JOHN CODLING, JUDITH EISLER, ADAM KIMMEL & VICTORIA BARTLETT

STEPHANIE FRENCH

MARJA SAMSON (owner of the Kitchen Club), ROBERT BETHAGE & STEPHEN TURVEY

KATHRYNE HALL, AE LI PARK & JON LINDSAY

JASON BABDIE

ALICI STONE

Stephen Petronio's dancers, who looked chic in costumes by *Imitation of Christ's* Tara Subkoff, had an equally fashionable audience on their opening night Tuesday at the Joyce Theater.

Designer fans of the company who attended the show included Daryl Kerrigan, Benjamin Cho, Leo Fitzpatrick, and Victoria Bartlett, creator of the lingerie brand Visible Panty Line. At the afterparty, dancers blended into a crowd that included Ms. Subkoff; Arden Wohl; Cindy Sherman; Hope Atherton; the fashion director of *Vice*, Aviva Yael; and Eric Villency, who hosted the party at the NoLiTa restaurant Public.

Standing by the bar waiting for the star of the evening, Mr. Petronio, to arrive, Mr. Villency expressed his love of dance, but his boyish face soon turned serious. "It's terrible what's going on in the city. This stadium is going to cost a billion, and meanwhile, arts funding is being eviscerated. It's so short-sighted," he said.

Later, Mr. Petronio agreed that arts funding is tight but said that the company has been very busy — plus, the party raised \$25,000.

Most guests were eager to focus on the positive — how much they enjoyed the performance, which included early works of Mr. Petronio's as well as a new work set to a Rufus Wainwright song.

Choreographer and dancer Liz Gerring and others praised the early work. "It holds up after 15 years," Jean Stone said.

Others were excited about the new piece. "It's playful, energetic," Joseph Obermayer said.

Ms. Subkoff raved about working with Mr. Petronio: "His work is poetry." On designing costumes, she said, "To me, it's about a point of view, a feeling, an idea. I like to put a narrative into it. The costumes can get people connected to the dance."

A ballet dancer for eight years, until she damaged her knee in a car accident, Ms. Subkoff harbors ambitions to choreograph, perhaps collaborating with Mr. Petronio.

"I dare her! I double dare her," Mr. Petronio said when told of Ms. Subkoff's idea.

Mr. Petronio's partner, Jean-Marc Flack, revealed some intimate details of the choreographer's work habits. "He choreographs in his sleep. He wakes with his feet at the top of the bed, having spent all night turning and flipping," Mr. Flack said.

When Mr. Flack first saw Mr. Petronio perform, several years before they met, he formed the impression that the artist was unpleasant.

"Then I finally met him and discovered the real person — unbelievably kind, generous, honest. He has nothing to do with the aggressiveness you see on stage," Mr. Flack added.

Mr. Petronio's dancers also praised their visionary. "He's endearing and loving toward the dancers. I've been dancing with him for seven years, and I wouldn't be here if I didn't love him," Gino Grenek said.

Surrounded by his admirers, Mr. Petronio was in excellent spirits. "Opening night is a giant relief, we've all been working so hard leading up to this," he said.

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DANIEL REID, MICHELLE MULBAUER,
STEPHAN PASCHALIDES & CHRIS SHEENY

ALAN LOCKWOOD, GINO GRENEK,
JIMENA PAZ & STEVEN PEARL



STURGIS ADAMS &
TARAJIA MORRELL

JEAN STONE, JOSEPH OBERMAYER,
KIRSTEN HAWTHORNE & SHARON
BRIGITTE KAYSER

TASHA CAI