



The Point

NEW YORK BLADE BLADE
OCTOBER 8, 2004
PAGE 17

integration now!

THE VERY BEST DJS PLAY STRAIGHT CLUBS — AND WE'RE NOT HEARING THEM.

By MATT KALKHOFF

W

WHEN SOUND FACTORY SHUT DOWN back in March, gay men lost an essential habitat to study the mating rituals and party habits of the elusive metrosexual, not to mention some of the city's best male eye candy. But the easy gay-straight mingling at DJ Jonathan Peters'

parties only served to point up one major fact of nightclubbing, circa 2004: Some of the world's best DJs are playing straight club dates — and we're missing them.

In the beginning, gender-orientation mixing was no big deal. Even though there were some gay-only clubs like Flamingo, Studio 54 proved that straight men could boogie next to their gay counterparts with no hassles. More recently, Junior Vasquez has been most successful in mingling cultures, although straight dancers generally arrived earlier at his gigs at the old Sound Factory, Twilo and Exit; gay men (and the women who love them) would show up mid-morning.

Danny Tenaglia and Victor Calderone (straight, but a DJ closely associated with gay venues) are probably the most outstanding other examples of contemporary New York DJs who freely move between the two worlds. And Disgraceland, the Thursday night electroclash revival at Crobar, is bringing back some of the eclectic mix of Williamsburg's late, lamented Berliniansburg.

Three recent incredible hetero nights — two in New York, the other in Philly — late last month shows how much we might be missing by segregating ourselves. On Saturday, Sept. 25, several intrepid New Yorkers trekked down the New Jersey Turnpike to check out Tiësto, arguably the world's most famous DJ.

Millions watched him this summer when he spun at the Opening Ceremonies of the Olympics in Athens. A lucky few got the chance to dance to him up close at Pure (f/k/a Club 24). The relatively small nightclub seemed an odd venue for such a megastar, not to mention the fact that it is a gay establishment. As it was, the Netherlands native lived up to his reputation. As expected, an unusually high number of straight couples were in attendance to hear a two-hour-and-20-minute set of fierce music that contained just one recognizable song. When done right by masters such as Paul Oakenfold (probably the second-most famous DJ in the world right now), trance can be well, transcendent.

CLOSER TO HOME, with so many of the industry's movers and shakers in town for

Billboard magazine's annual Dance Music Summit the week of Sept. 19, BPM magazine threw a spectacular soiree at Crobar to celebrate the Grammy's newest category, Best Electronic/ Dance Album. That the party took place on a Tuesday night didn't seem to faze anyone, as the line snaked down 28th Street.

All manner of revelers (albeit mostly straight ones), anxious to hear DJ Rap, David Morales, Sasha, Paul van Dyk, Ken Jordan and Alex Gold, packed the massive club providing enough energy and excitement to make this easily one of the best parties of 2004.

Back in our sheltered existence of gay ghettos and segregated mindsets, the granddaddy of mid-sized-bar-cum-dance-floor, SBNY, has changed things up lately and seems to be going in completely the opposite direction, from integration to same-sex segregation.

While Friday nights remain hotter than ever with a rotating roster of superb talent, like Billy Carroll, Susan Morabito and Eddie

Elias, Saturday nights are now billed as Men's Room, a no-chicks-allowed event. Considered by some a foe to females, the Chelsea hotspot is hoping to create at least one night that is a totally estrogen-free environment where men can frolic freely — without the burden of the dreaded long-hair whiplashes on the dance floor and unduly diverted attention by the hunky, sometime hetero bar staff and dancers who have been known to give preferential treatment to such vampish vixens in the past.

It looks like door diva Lisa Bonelli will now be her gender's sole representative while keeping her own kind a safe distance outside the club. If anyone's up to the challenge, it's formidable Bonelli.

SBNY's owner, Brian Landeche, has completely renovated the lower level. I mean totally gutted the joint. The bathrooms have been relocated and now feature trough-style urinals like those found in Australia and elsewhere. Recessed shower stalls now adorn the south wall and will surely be put to good news keeping sexy go-go boys clean for years to come. In fact, there's a whole locker room feel to the area now (albeit a well-appointed one complete with liquor service and live music), but this was likely the objective in the first place.

WHILE I HAVEN'T HEARD JUNIOR

Vasquez spin since that Red Party fiasco back in February, I am intrigued by two upcoming events. First, he'll play at Larry Tee's Disgraceland party on the main floor at Crobar on Thursday, October 14. The Arena Classics party the following Friday at Discoteque will provide another Junior fix. Look forward to hearing such classics tracks as Donna Summer's "Melody of Love," "Who Do You Love?" by Deborah Cox, "Too Far" by Kylie Minogue, etc.

Is our community missing out on a lot of amazing music when clubs and DJs focus so heavily (and stubbornly) on a single genre or format? There are so many other exotic musical journeys available to us. In Europe, which has always been two steps ahead of the United States on social issues, gay and straight clubgoers, DJs and musical styles intermingle easily. In places like Mykonos, Ibiza, Milan and London, mixed parties are the standard. New York needs to catch up. Integrate, people, integrate!

