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NITE LIFE

Winter wonderlands

Montreal and Miami beckon clubgoers. But New York continues its up-and-down ride — with Junior providing the train wreck.

By [Matt Kalkhoff](#)
Friday, February 27, 2004

In all-too-familiar “one step forward, two steps back” fashion, it might once again be time for the Department of Homeland Fierceness to declare yet another nightlife state of emergency here in New York City.

Victor Calderone’s bi-monthly Evolve party at Crobar barely got off the ground before the club’s management was “forced to pull the plug on all non-holiday weekend after-hours, bowing to pressure from local authorities” (at least according to his Web site, [VictorCalderone.com](#)) earlier this month.

Danny Tenaglia has confirmed the sale of the building located at 6 Hubert Street which houses Arc (f/k/a Vinyl), the home of his “Be Yourself” party for the past five years. The official closing party will take place the weekend of April 23rd, with possibly two events helmed by Danny himself on Friday and Sunday. Check out [ArcSpace.net](#) for updates.

Nightmare on 46th Street

Perhaps the most telling indication of just how badly the scene has deteriorated was the monumental disaster called Red Party staged by Junior Vasquez at Sound Factory during President’s Day weekend.

We arrived around 8 a.m. Monday morning to find the club’s fourth level completely closed off and tumbleweed blowing through the second and third levels. The dance floor was fairly crowded, but the music was so piercingly loud we could barely make it past the speakers to get to coat check.

I’m not usually that sensitive about volume, but it was so dangerously loud that it actually hurt. (Please take a moment to check out H.E.A.R., “Hearing Education & Awareness for Rockers,” at [HearNet.com](#) to learn how we can — and should — protect ourselves in such harsh environments.)

The club eventually filled up nicely. But unfortunately, only a dismal smattering of “classics” and “anthems” was heard throughout the morning (so much for the advertised theme).

Adding to the frustration was the horrendous mixing — perhaps the worst I have ever heard from a professional DJ. Between the numerous dropouts, premature song cutoffs and bungled beat-matching, the music was, to say the least, a sloppy mess. This from a “legendary” DJ? How inexcusably



Finally, the Saint-at-Large folks are returning to the more civilized dual-DJ format for this year’s Black Party on Saturday, March 20, at Roseland. Los Angeles’ DJ Paolo will play the first set followed by local legend **Susan Morabito** (below), who returns for her second BP engagement. Go to [www.SaintAtLarge.com](#). (Morabito photo by Liz Liguori)

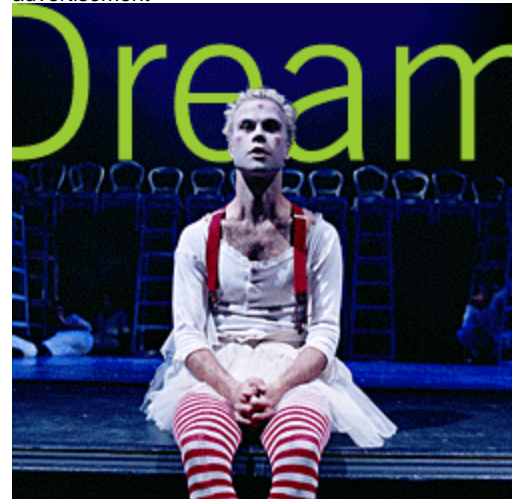

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embarrassing.

Then there was the unnecessarily drawn-out lead-up to Deborah Cox's performance. Junior played one of her songs just before noon, so everyone stopped dancing and crowded near the stage to watch. Well, she didn't appear, so we waited ... and waited ... and waited, while he proceeded to play the worst noise of the morning, including a couple of Janet Jackson a capellas (complete with static feedback) that were just painful. I'll take a wardrobe malfunction any day over such a desperate grasp at relevance.

It got so bad at one point that I seriously considered leaving the club, figuring no performance was worth that amount of suffering. But I'm glad I held out, because the only redeeming thing about the entire exercise in futility was Deborah Cox herself.

She not only looked stunning, but also sounded exquisite as she sang "Things Just Ain't The Same," "Nobody's Supposed to be Here," "Absolutely Not," "Mr. Lonely," and "Something Happened On the Way to Heaven." I was surprised she skipped "Who Do You Love," but what can you do? Of course, the microphone cut in and out occasionally and the levels seemed off, but it was a spectacular show nonetheless.



local legend **Susan Morabito**

hours parties north of the border?)

Yet not even such a superb performance could salvage this tragic wreck of a party. In the immortal words of Miss Cox herself, "It's Over Now!" Frankly, if this is what qualifies as nightlife in New York City these days, then perhaps I should instead just stay home and save some money.

Winter wonderlands: Montreal & Miami

In more promising club news (albeit hundreds of miles north — fierceness knows no boundary!), I boldly broke the cardinal rule of mid-winter travel and headed north on Jan. 31 to attend the grand opening of Angel Moraes' new after-hours club, Gravity, in Montreal (a.k.a. Siberia).

I was in good company, too. Victor Calderone stopped by to join Angel behind the decks (Crobar déjà vu!) in between gigs in Toronto and at Whistler's Altitude Gay Ski Week.

Angel custom built the club's impeccable sound system himself, miraculously managing to outdo another of his world-renowned sound installations at nearby after-hours venue Stereo. (Who knew one could find so many classic New York-styled underground after-

Sure, the mixed crowd could have been stacked a little more in our favor, but the fun and friendly vibe more than made up for it. Visit GravityAfterhours.com for more info.

I'm also pleased to report that, following a thorough hands-on investigation, the strippers at Campus and Stock are still as hot, hunky and naked as ever. While it might be advisable to wait for warmer weather before planning your next Canadian excursion, rest assured those gorgeous French-Canadian boys are quite capable and eager to help keep us frisky visitors warm all over (northern indeed).

In a much wiser quest for warmer weather, I'll soon be heading south to New York's "unofficial" sixth borough, Miami Beach, for Winter Party. The festivities actually begin in Fort Lauderdale this year on March 4 with "Fun Under the Sun," but I'll be launching my celebration on Friday, March 12, with DJ Tracy Young at Space in downtown Miami.

Susan Morabito, Lydia Prim, DeMarko, Manny Lehman, Tony Moran, Victor Calderone, Abel, Alison Calagna, Roland Belmares and others will also be lending their talents to South Florida's most popular Circuit weekend benefiting the Gay & Lesbian Foundation of South Florida. Visit WinterParty.com to find out more.

Hometown highlights

In order to end things on a positive note — and since I don't really believe all hope is lost yet anyway — there are a few highlights in local late-night revelry that deserve attention. First, congratulations

to Bar d'O on its 10-year anniversary.

Everyone crawled out of the woodwork for this one, including Sade Pendavis, Cassetta and the lovely Lady Bunny who was working the turntables at the Feb 10 fête. Even Raven-O and Joey Arias took a break from their starring roles in Cirque de Soleil's "Zumanity" and flew home from Las Vegas to belt out a few tunes for the packed house.

Kylie Minogue also tore it up at on a recent Friday night at Avalon, accompanied by five back-up dancers and a full band (hmmm ... Britney didn't have a band, but I guess she didn't really need one). The Australian chanteuse promised us she'd be back for a full concert soon (hopefully in a more homo-friendly environment).

Another '80s pop import, Samantha Fox, resurfaced the following weekend at the ultra-retro Culture Club to perform a couple of new songs. But it was, of course, her timeless dance floor hits "I Wanna Have Some Fun," "Naughty Girls (Need Love Too)," and "Touch Me" that really got the crowd going. Gosh, the '80s sure were a lot of fun!

Until next time — Be Smart. Be Safe. Be Yourself.

Contact **Matt Kalkhoff** at Matt@mattunleashed.com

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DJ Angel Moraes adds Gravity to his Montreal base.