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DANCE

Monogamy rules

A CAP benefit, featuring performances by the Stephen Petronio Company, celebrates long-term relationships

BY LINDSEY GRANT

Anticipate a marriage of power and passion," says Stephen Petronio of his dance company's scheduled May 4 appearance in Portland for a Cascade AIDS Project benefit.

The theme of the benefit is *Partners in Dance/Partners in Life*, which aims to joyously portray monogamous partnerships as positive role models.

"I understand that there will be sort of a celebration after the performance at a local club. The real celebration for us will begin in Hawaii," says Petronio, referring to his post-presentation plans to marry his partner, Jean-Marc Flack, who works in the fashion industry.

The company's Rose City performance will mark its return to Portland following a 10-year absence. Petronio says he remembers the audience back then as being warm and vibrant, and he hopes the reception this time will be just as delicious.

The event, which kicks off at 7 p.m., will be held in the Portland Center for the Performing Arts' newly-dubbed Newmark Theatre.

All net proceeds from the evening will benefit CAP's youth outreach services, which promote proactive social change by empowering youth to make positive choices. CAP is the largest provider of nonmedical services to people affected by HIV and AIDS in Oregon.

The first piece in *Partners in Dance/Partners in Life* is Petronio's signature solo, which portrays the intimacy of relationships.

The second selection, *MiddleSex Gorge*, was first produced in the early 1990s when he was more heavily involved with ACT UP; it incorporates post-punk rock by the group Wire. Third on the bill is *Drawn That Way* from 1996.

Deborah Jowitt of the *Village Voice* calls the sequences gorgeous and voluptuous, whereas Petronio himself refers to their fullness emanating more from their "architectural" design.

Petronio, born in Newark, N.J., received his bachelor of arts degree in 1974 from Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass. It was there that he felt his destiny would revolve around dance.

Before that point, the self-described "book-wormish" Petronio felt intimidated by his peers, who seemed to be on a career track while he floundered.

Once he experienced his epiphany—and subsequently acquired knowledge of his relationship with movement as an expressive art form—things changed.

And things have not been the same since. Petronio had measured success as a dancer before developing his own company. He was the first male dancer of the Trisha Brown

Company, with which he danced from 1979 to 1986. The Stephen Petronio Company was founded in 1984 and has since received international acclaim for groundbreaking choreography and development of Petronio's unique movement vocabulary. He was awarded choreography fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts from 1985 to 1988.

When Petronio comes to Portland, it will be during a brief hiatus from the national tour of his first evening-length dance, *Not Garden*.

Petronio, who lives in New York City, has been involved in collaborations with avant-garde artists including Yoko Ono, Diamanda Galas, David Linton, Lenny Pickett and the Beastie Boys.

Additionally, he has worked with visual artists Cindy Sherman, Donald Bachelor and Arnaldo Ferrara, and fashion designers including Manolo, Leigh Bowery and Paul Compitus.

The Stephen Petronio Company has not only been awarded grants by the NEA, but also the New York State Council on the Arts. New works have been commissioned by, among others, the Holland Festival and the Cannes Festival.

This year the company began its inaugural residency with San Francisco Performances, a program in which it will spend one month a year over the next four years developing community activities for new audiences.

The honorary co-hosts for *Partners in Dance/Partners in Life* are Kristy Edmunds, executive

director and curator of the Portland Institute for Contemporary

Art, and her partner, Linda Johnson, co-founder of the dance space Conduit.

A highlight of the evening will be the honoring of long-term partnerships in attendance.

There will be no assigned seating in the Newmark (formerly the Intermediate) Theatre at PCPA for this special performance. Instead, there is a two-tiered ticket pricing system. Holders of the limited number of \$50 tickets will receive preferential seating and be invited to a buffet supper following the performance. Tickets to the performance only, sans preferential seating, cost \$20.

■ Tickets for PARTNERS IN DANCE/PARTNERS IN LIFE are available through CAP at 223-5907, ext. 197.

