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Love Saves The Day: A History Of American Dance Music Culture, 1970-1979



Synopsis

Opening with David Mancuso's seminal "Love Saves the Day" • Valentine's party, Tim Lawrence tells the definitive story of American dance music culture in the 1970s—from its subterranean roots in NoHo and Hell's Kitchen to its gaudy blossoming in midtown Manhattan to its wildfire transmission through America's suburbs and urban hotspots such as Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Newark, and Miami. Tales of nocturnal journeys, radical music making, and polymorphous sexuality flow through the arteries of Love Saves the Day like hot liquid vinyl. They are interspersed with a detailed examination of the era's most powerful DJs, the venues in which they played, and the records they loved to spin—as well as the labels, musicians, vocalists, producers, remixers, party promoters, journalists, and dance crowds that fueled dance music's tireless engine. Love Saves the Day includes material from over three hundred original interviews with the scene's most influential players, including David Mancuso, Nicky Siano, Tom Moulton, Loleatta Holloway, Giorgio Moroder, Francis Grasso, Frankie Knuckles, and Earl Young. It incorporates more than twenty special DJ discographies—listing the favorite records of the most important spinners of the disco decade—and a more general discography cataloging some six hundred releases. Love Saves the Day also contains a unique collection of more than seventy rare photos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an exceptional historical analysis that introduces, in chronological order, the key events and personalities in the 1970s American disco dancing scene, including the major remixers, DJs,

nightclubs, musicians, singers, record producers, and magazine journalists. The playlists provided throughout the book are very good snapshots of each period of 1970s R&B and disco, and many of the photos are well selected. Lawrence first explores the roots of dance-oriented nightclubs, then known as discotheques, where attendees danced to recorded rather than live music. Discotheques had already existed in the U.S. by the mid-1960s but then declined for a number of years until revitalized in the early 1970s. Besides the concept of a "discotheque", Lawrence also mentions (page 26) that the mirror ball was a fixture of a typical disco and also in the Loft parties run by David Mancuso. The atmospheric aspects of a disco -- lighting, dancefloor, etc. -- were also important to dancers, though one big negative was the high volume of sound emanating from the speakers in many discos, such as Paradise Garage (pages 347-348). The most necessary element was a large supply of good danceable music. Disco DJs gained influence when they caused many records to become big sellers and formed record pools. Lawrence notes (page 307) that in some downtown discos the dancers danced freestyle whereas in suburban discos the tendency was towards regimented dance steps like the latin hustle and line-dancing. The story of disco as a separate musical genre begins with the merging of funk and Philly soul elements with a constant four-on-the-floor beat, thanks to Earl Young's innovations in drumming (page 120).

Thank you Tim Lawrence. This book is the antidote to all the haters out there who still believe that "Disco Sucks" after the post-Comiskey Park backlash. This book is such an amazing and wonderfully readable document that I would recommend anyone interested in 20th century American musical history, or the [...]black urban experience of the 1970's, or relatively recent New York history read it. Of course if you're interested in disco music or dance music the book is absolutely essential. This book goes much deeper than the usual Studio 54 cliches that people associate with the genre (although Studio 54 is included, of course) and discusses the origins of the sound and the largely unheard people who made this scene happen. David Mancuso is described as a pivotal person here, and the folks who were there will confirm it. The book begins in his legendary club, The Loft, and lovingly details his obsession with sound and the disco experience. Other innovators from the early 70's are also featured including Francis Grasso, Steve D'Acquisto, Bob Casey, and many more. The scene is chronicled from humble beginnings through the glory years of the mid 70's and ends the decade with the backlash in full swing in mainstream culture but continuing to thrive in clubs like Paradise Garage and Better Days. Along the way you meet producers like Walter Gibbons and Tom Moulton who made some of the classic recordings of the era, and Lawrence takes the time to explain what is so remarkable about their work. You also

get delightfully naughty stories about some of the key players in the scene including DJ's, artists, and of course, the patrons that illustrate some of the excesses of the time .

Lawrence does a good job translating his former academic piece into a more general survey that would be of interest to a lay reader. He takes a mostly chronological journey through the events of the 70s that pertained to the disco subculture. (Disco is, even now in the book's title, being euphemistically called "dance music," which is something of a misnomer, given the ongoing presence in our society of vibrant polka, salsa, square dance, contra, two-step, honky-tonk, ballroom, and other dance cultures.) In writing this book Lawrence has done his homework: he assembled the extant written sources-- even the rare ones-- and located participants from the era to reminisce and provide new anecdotal material. As a one-stop overview of disco life in the seventies, this book serves its purpose well. It is not as academic as Fikentscher's converted dissertation *You Better Work*, and therefore will be of interest to a wider audience. Lawrence writes mostly in plain language. He includes some of the interesting photos and images contained in the harder-to-find volumes like *Night Dancin'* by Miezeitis, and he quotes from virtually all of the older and newer writings, both periodicals and books. If a reader has already delved into the current books about disco, Lawrence's book will seem largely redundant. Its focus is primarily on the clubs and the DJs. The stories told in Mel Cheren's autobiography and in the two disco chapters of *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life* are here: the joyous beginnings of the clubs, the inspired DJs, the rivalries, the egos, the drug use, and the love-hate relationships between the DJs and record execs. Lawrence adds something to this genre by recording dancers' and DJs' recounting of the actual *experience* of dancing, of losing oneself in the music.

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