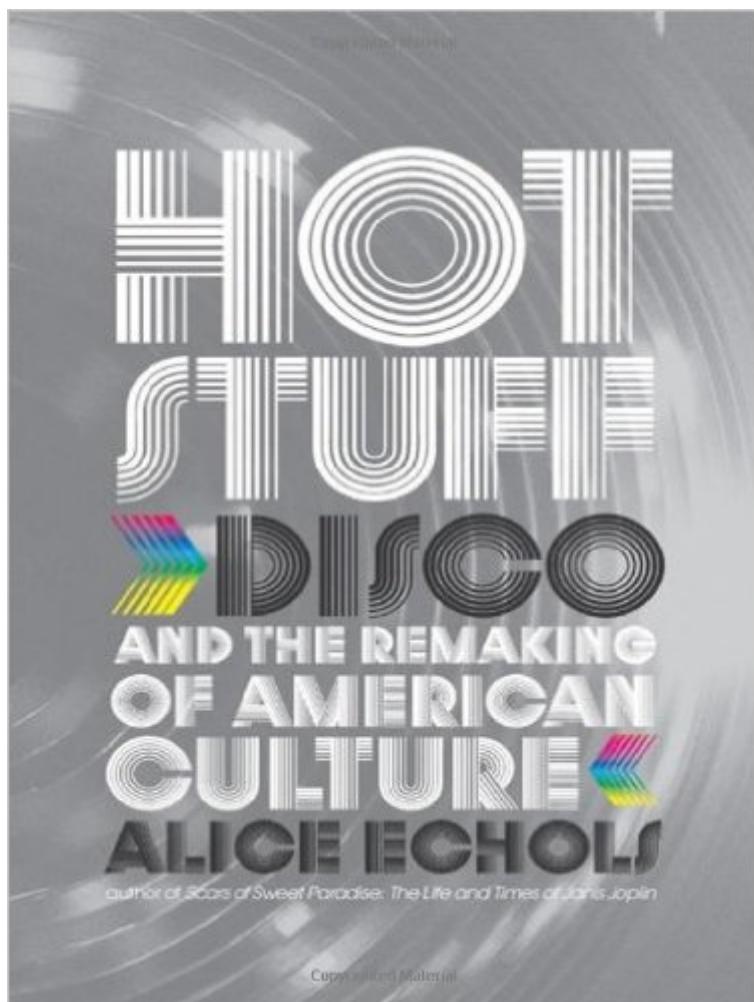


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Hot Stuff: Disco And The Remaking Of American Culture



Synopsis

Disco thumps back to life in this pulsating exploration of the culture and politics of the glitterball world. In the 1970s, as the disco tsunami engulfed America, the once-innocent question, "Do you wanna dance?" • became divisive, even explosive. What was it about this much-maligned music that made it such hot stuff? In this incisive history, Alice Echols captures the felt experience of the Disco Years • on dance floors both fabulous and tacky, at the movies, in the streets, and beneath the sheets. Disco may have presented itself as shallow and disposable • the platforms, polyester, and plastic vibe of it all • but Echols shows that it was inseparable from the emergence of a gay macho, • a rising black middle class, and a growing, if equivocal, openness about female sexuality. The disco scene carved out a haven for gay men who reclaimed their sexuality on dance floors where they had once been surveilled and harassed; it thrust black women onto center stage as some of the genre's most prominent stars; and it paved the way for the opening of Studio 54 and the viral popularity of the shoestring-budget Saturday Night Fever, a movie that challenged traditional notions of masculinity, even for heterosexuals. As it provides a window onto the cultural milieu of the times, Hot Stuff never loses sight of the era's defining soundtrack, which propelled popular music into new sonic territory, influencing everything from rap and rock to techno and trance. Throughout, Echols spotlights the work of precursors James Brown and Isaac Hayes, dazzling divas Donna Summer and the women of Labelle, and some of disco's lesser known but no less illustrious performers such as Sylvester. After turning the final page of this fascinating account of the music you thought you hated but can't stop dancing to, you can rest assured that you'll never say "disco sucks" • again. 20 photos

Book Information

Hardcover: 338 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (March 29, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393066754

ISBN-13: 978-0393066753

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.2 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #699,243 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Dance #1901 in Books > Humor & Entertainment >

Customer Reviews

Echols new book on disco is an engaging, smart read. She brings to life both the political complexities of the time as well as the music and it's many scenes. A brilliant historian and superb storyteller (the book is filled with great anecdotes), Echols' book transcends the usual fare on disco by taking on an in-depth account of how disco both reflected and contributed to the ways that identities of African Americans, gays, and women shifted in these years. A must read for anyone interested in the cultural history of disco and the legacies of 70's social change movements.

Most people tend to recoil at either hearing or reading the word "disco" but this book takes the subject and puts into a very interesting sociological context. It takes the time frame of disco from the mid seventies to its demise in the early eighties and threads disco through its importance in ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class consciousness. Good reading if you either loved disco or hated it.

Great overview of before, during and after the disco era. What it meant socially to different groups, how it changed US culture and values, the lifestyles behind the music, and best of all, the music itself. Copious footnotes, and even includes a DJ setlist! Great all-encompassing history of disco, with special focus on disco and GLBT, disco and women, and disco and Black Americans.

Lively, readable, yet serious and scholarly, once again, Echols gives us a social and cultural history of America in the 1970s that we all need. This book is a pleasure from the first line to last, with the insets in between, adding a particularly nice touch, as they each focus on a specific song and illustrate its place in an important moment in disco's history. Thoroughly researched, yet a page-turner, Hot Stuff reveals things that some of us assumed, but could never really prove, especially in relation to disco's essential role in an emerging, out gay culture in the USA. Enjoy! I did!

Alice Echols's book on disco's part in the 70s cultural revolution is fantastic. Although each section focuses on a different population (such as women, gay men, and rock fans), she never allows you to forget about the other groups as she goes along, weaving together a complex and intricate view of disco and 1970s culture.

Informative and entertaining; a fantastic book for anyone interested not only in disco but also American culture in the 70s. Echols is a fantastic author and scholar, if you enjoy this book, you should check out some of her other works. Highly recommended!

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