

Remix- *The Electronic Music Explosion*

By Bruce Gerrish

Product Overview:

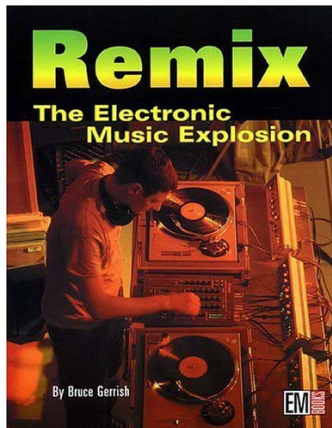
From Dance music to Electronica, house music and more, this book covers the tricks of the trade.

Product Details: An exciting global look at this rapidly growing segment of the music industry. With practical explanations of what actually happens in a remix, along with featured tools of the trade, the book explores the origins of the style, its trends and its culture along with a detailed look at where it's headed. This title features interviews with some of the top producers, artists and record company personnel on the scene today. Learn practical applications such as how to get started, equipment needed, releasing your own material and how to promote yourself as a remix artist. This mass underground market has an intricate relationship with the Internet and this first-of-its-kind book takes an in-depth look at everything from underground radio to Electronica web sites to the proliferation of MP3 files and electronic promotion. Also features contact info, recommended reading and other invaluable reference material.

ISBN# 0-87288-740-5 Author Bruce Gerrish Copyright 2001, softcover



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Excerpts from *Remix*, by Bruce Gerrish
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Evolution

In The Beginning

Remixing is about dancing; creating music that leaves people with no other choice but to move. There's just something about the beat that seems to grab you and won't let go.

Dancing has always been music's counterpart; it's how we interact with the music to create our own energy. The tribal dances of ancient cultures were their link to spirituality. Flappers going through *The Charleston* steps were the rage in the 20s and *the Jive* was a key reason for the big band craze in the 30s and 40s. The 50s ushered in *the Twist*, *the Mashed Potato* and sock hops. The early 60s found its own identity with dances such as *The Swim*, *The Jerk* and *the Watusi*.

The late 60s offered an explosion of creativity coupled with huge political and cultural changes. This had a great effect on how we interacted with music. Although we still danced, there was much more focus on the content and the meaning of the music and less on a particular dance craze.

For a while we primarily listened to music, knew the lyrics, went to the concerts and strongly identified with it as a voice within us. We were serious about the music from the 60s but in many ways we lost our physical connection to the music.

Interestingly, there was a proliferation of R&B that existed in a parallel universe to the 60s counter-culture music. Motown churned out hit

after hit and areas such as Philadelphia and Detroit maintained a strong connection to rhythm-based music. It's not surprising that the seeds of *Disco* were showing up in the same areas that had never lost their affiliation with dance music. By the early 70s, it seemed that that we suddenly had a collective desire to rediscover dancing, to have fun and to take our music less seriously. Quite possibly the movie, *Saturday Night Fever* may have marked the official rebirth of popular dancing. During this time *Rap* and *Hip-Hop* began to develop although they didn't reach the mainstream until much later.

Then somewhere in the early 80s Disco died, or so it seemed. In reality, the music went underground. Popular music went on to the next phase with the emergence of *Punk Rock* and *New Wave* followed by a trend toward a heavier rock sound which brought in new pop songs with gutsy power chords. *Heavy Metal* and *Power Pop* flourished and paved the way for *Grunge* in the early 90s.

Mid-90s *Alternative* music marked the retreat to a more acoustic sound and saw an increased interest in female singers. Hip-Hop rhythms found their way into the pop charts. Soon followed were the addition of MCs like "Run DMC" who combined many elements of modern R&B together with heavy guitars and added it to their infectious rhyming style. Soon the MCs evolved into harder-edged Rappers who spoke the language of the street and brought the Hip-Hop culture to the forefront. Meanwhile, Disco flourished primarily in underground gay discos where it started to develop a harder rhythmic edge. The music ultimately mutated into what we now know as *House*. By most accounts *House* derived its name from a nightclub, *The Warehouse* in Chicago, where for a period of 5-6 years Grammy-winning DJ and remixer Frankie Knuckles held court nightly. Other similar hotbeds such as *The Paradise Garage* and *The Fun House* in New York provided nightly doses of Larry Levan and John "Jellybean" Benitez who inspired an entirely new generation of DJs.

Like-minded DJs in the UK and Germany discovered these early pioneering House DJs and emulated the sound while adding their own influences. Kraftwerk, the innovative German tecno-pop group, experimented with electronic sounds in the early 70s and had a profound influence on many aspects of modern dance culture.

As the Beatles and Stones reinvented their own versions of American R&B, UK DJs such as Paul Okenfold reinvented the driving House sound adding their own musical influences. Soon, underground clubs

and parties developed in England and Germany where masses of followers found their way to these events by word of mouth.

These parties, also known as *Raves*, were often illegal- having no license or official authorization. Raves were secret and held in out of the way warehouses and outdoor locations. The underground nature of these events added to the excitement and the growing movement. Soon legitimate nightclubs began to spring up everywhere and a new culture was born.

The new dance movement flourished in the UK and Europe and has grown into the largest underground music scene the world has ever known. Like the *British Invasion* from a generation before, UK promoters and DJs began to export their movement back into North America where the same phenomenon was beginning to occur.

Despite the absence of dance-oriented radio in the US and Canada, by the late 90s, *dance culture* had developed into a massive underground movement in North America primarily promoted by word of mouth, flyers and the Internet. More recently, this underground dance movement has been finding acceptance in popular music as producers adopt the driving beats and other production techniques into mainstream music.

The Rise of the DJ

Musicians who played in club bands during the early 70s learned to accept the house DJ as the one who kept the beat going when they finished a set. Often dance floors were more crowded on the breaks than when the band played. A band playing a club regularly would get to know the DJ and learn to understand the golden night club rule; *never stop the beat from pulsating for less than twenty seconds for fear of losing the crowd*. After all, the dance floor is like an ancient ritual ground where you can meet members of the opposite sex (or of the same sex if that's your thing). By the time "*Disco Fever*" hit in the 70s, live gigs were becoming scarce. For us to understand the world of Remix, DJs and what we have come to know as modern dance music, it's important to learn something about its origins and its culture.

The Radio DJ

The oldest form of DJ is the radio disc jockey. Before radio formats became tightly formatted a good radio jock might have a knack for picking up a hot new tune or in some cases discovering fresh talent. With a friendly voice and a quick wit, a jock from a large market

station was very influential in making or breaking a record. The 50s were rife with scandal as record companies tried to gain the favor of DJs and payola became commonplace.

The Mobile DJ

The early 70s found some DJs making a lucrative living from performing at weddings, bar mitzvahs, school dances, and office parties. A mobile DJ needs an extremely wide variety of music to satisfy the musical tastes of different groups of dancers. With crowds varying in age from eighteen to eighty, the mobile jock needs to be prepared to supply music from the 30s and 40s right through to any given eras' most popular music. A good mobile jock develops a strong instinct that keeps the dance floors filled by playing everything from the songs, *In The Mood* to *Old Time Rock and Roll*, to the *Chemical Brothers* with a little of the *Chicken Dance* thrown in for good measure. A successful mobile DJ has an uncanny sense of music and the better ones can earn a very good living.

The Club DJ

The pressure of maintaining a residency as a club DJ can be daunting. A club's income is more or less dependent on a particular DJ's ability to attract a packed house. A resident DJ usually has a certain style that can tune into the crowd and start with just the right mood and build it into frenzy. Although many legendary DJs work in world famous nightclubs, they represent a very small percentage of the working turntablists.

Often DJs choose one night a week to promote themselves with the hope that they may attract enough customers to pay for them. For this reason, many name their particular night in hopes of conjuring an image and creating appeal. DJs specialize in certain styles of music and if they are successful, the club is full and everyone's happy. However, due to changing tastes and fickle crowds the stability factor is not particularly high. What is trendy one week may be next week's old hat.

The Rave DJ

The latest addition to the family is the Rave DJ. The mandate for this style of music is to take the listener on a non-stop journey complete with high and low, fast and slow moments. Although other substances may play a role in shows, most raves are usually non-alcohol events that tend to cater to a somewhat younger crowd. Picture the *Moontribe* events held in the desert outside of Los Angeles on the full moon. Imagine a great DJ playing your favorite type of music

through a large sound system while the sun rises...it's a spectacular, almost spiritual, moment in time.

Many DJs are augmenting their acts with a variety of digital electronic instruments. Often known as *live PA*, this style of DJing relies on musical dance sense combined with the technical ability to control MIDI gear, synthesizers and signal processors. Many bands are beginning to incorporate DJs into the traditional drums, guitar, and bass format.