

The History of Rock Music: 1976-1989

New Wave, Punk-rock, Hardcore

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DJs, Rappers, Ravers

(These are excerpts from my book ["A History of Rock and Dance Music"](#))

One of the problems with the 1980s was that, by the end of the decade, a "rocker" was as obsolete a social and musical figure as a pop singer had been in 1956. During the 1980s three revolutions took hold of popular music: the emergence of disc-jockeys as a creative force (in particular in techno music), the advent of hip-hop (and therefore of the "rapper"), and the marriage of industrial music, heavy metal and hardcore (generically associated with the "cyber-punk" culture).

Rap-music 1979-87

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The idea of rapping was imported into New York by the Jamaican immigrants, who were already familiar with "toasting" (a reggae artist talking in rhyme over the instrumental sections of a record). Some of them became disc-jockeys ("dj") that traveled around New York carrying their "sound system" to perform at block parties.

In 1975 in the Bronx of New York, one of them, [Clive "Hercules" Campbell](#), or "Kool Herc", started making music with two turntables out of breakbeats (the instrumental breaks of a song that focused on the rhythm section, the favorite part of the song for most dancers), while another young black man of the Bronx, Theodore "Grand Wizard" Livingstone was accidentally discovering the "skratching" sound of a turntable. The technical foundations of rap and hip-hop music were laid by those two more or less random events.

Rap was born as an incestuous inter-cultural phenomenon of New York's poor suburbs (Harlem, Soho, Greenwich Village, Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn). Rap music was an evolution of Jamaica's dub music. The rapper would record his voice over a pre-recorded base of percussions,

bass and horns. The precursors of rap were disc-jockeys, or "spinners", who used the technique to comment on the song or to incite to the crowd to dance. The idea of altering the instrumental score originated from the need to provide non-stop dance tracks, but it evolved as disc-jockeys began to pronounce more pretentious slogans that became the equivalent of song lyrics, and as they learned how to operate the electronic equipment to accompany them with more syncopated beats. Campbell (himself only a dj) employed two MCs ("masters of ceremonies", a nickname for the rappers) to introduce his sets, and they constituted the first "crew" of rappers (Kool Herc & the Herculoids).

Inspired by James Brown, the kids who attended Campbell's parties developed a sexy and stylized manner of dancing. Hip-hop dancing became an artistic idiom on its own. The term "b-boy" had been coined in 1969 by DJ Kool Herc to refer to an acrobatic style of dance, "breakdancing". This phenomenon had become so popular that "crews" had formed, notably the "Nigger Twins" (1974) and "Rock Steady" (1977), and they incorporated elements from other styles, such as "capoeira", an Afro-Brazilian dance. The "b-boys" were only interested in the instrumental break of a song, and Campbell soon learned how to build fictitious tracks out of the breaks of funk songs. While gay discos were becoming more chic and "white", Hercules' parties remained faithful to hardcore funk music. Nearby, Afrika Bambaataa Asim (Kevin Donovan), leader of the Zulu Nation gang, threw his first party at the end of 1976. Meanwhile, Joseph "Grandmaster Flash" Sadler was holding open-air parties, and Sadler was becoming a master of techniques such as "cutting" (cutting a song on the beat), "phasing" (altering the speed of the turntable) and "back-spinning" (spinning a record counterclockwise) that enhanced the overall experience.

The "deejays" became cult figures, the modern equivalent of the Medieval knights, fighting duels that were based on turntable skills. In 1977, the Bronx was divided in three main spheres of influence: Bambaataa in the southeast, Hercules in the west, and Grandmaster Flash in the center. They also corresponded to spheres of influences of different "gangs" (a concept that probably originated in New Orleans, where similar "gangs" competed during the "Mardi Gras").

Another element of hip-hop, although not a musical one, was spray-painted graffiti art, or "tagging" (the "tag" being the stylized signature of the graffiti painter). It started in Philadelphia sometimes in the 1960s, pioneered by such legendary figures as Cornbread and Cool Earl (who may or may not have existed). In 1970 a particular form of graffiti began to appear on the cars of the New York subway, and the following year the New York Times claimed to have interviewed the author, a teenager only identified as Taki 183 (who may or may not have existed). These pioneers may be just fantasy, because many other kids began to produce graffiti and sign them with the legendary names. (Some of these graffiti artists, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring went on to become professional artists).

The first rap records were the [Sugar Hill Gang](#)'s *Rapper's Delight* (1979) and Kurtis "Blow" Walker's *Christmas Rapping* (1979) and *The Breaks* (1979). The latter was also the first rap single certified gold.

As the dizzy collages of breakbeats, sound effects and song fragments (a veritable form of the "montage" preached by the Italian "futurists" in the 1910s) became more daring, rappers began to focus on lyrics to match the music. Rappers began reciting sociopolitical "messages", as Kurtis Blow had already done in *The Breaks* (1979), such as Grandmaster Flash's *Message* (1982) and Bambaataa's *Planet Rock* (1982), that established a form of underground communication between the genre's practitioners. [Grandmaster Flash](#)'s "messages" were frescoes of ghetto life, fusing socio-political commentary and senseless partying. His *The Adventures... on the Wheels Of Steel* (1981) was one of the first singles to use samples of other people's songs (Chic, Blondie, Queen). *White Lines* (1983) was an orgy of electronic effects.

The first conscious artist of rap's aural collage was [Afrika Bambaataa](#) Aasim (1), the Leonardo of the "beatbox", the rap auteur of *Planet Rock* (1982), *Looking For The Perfect Beat* (1982), *Renegades Of Funk* (1983), *World Destruction* (1984), whose album **Beware (The Funk Is Everywhere)** (? - ? 1986) summarized five years of experiments (facilitated by producer Arthur Baker) in mixing samples, epileptic beats, disco grooves and Kraftwerk's electronic pop. Bambaataa's heavily electronic style coined "electro-funk" (often shortened to "electro").

Electro became a genre in its own (not directly related to Detroit's "electro", a fusion of house and techno, and only vaguely related with German "electro", a kind of industrial dance). It indulged in an arsenal of drum-machines, sequencers and synthesizers, the instruments of a new form of music (instead of guitars, bass and drums). Donald D And Dj Chuck Chill Out followed Bambaataa's exploit with the [B-Boys'](#) *Rock The House* (1983), and Hashim (Jerry Calliste) delivered *Al Naayfish* (1983). In 1984, Marley Marl (Marlon Williams) accidentally produced the first sample of a drum-machine and began a career as producer of innovative electro-funk tracks, notably the Super Kids' *The Tragedy* (1985). Other drum-machine symphonies were produced by Duke Bootee, such as Z-3 MCs' *Triple Threat* (1986) and Word of Mouth's *Coast To Coast* (1986). Planet Patrol's *Play At Your Own Risk* (1984), the Imperial Brothers' *We Come To Rock* (1984), Nitro Deluxe's *Let's Get Brutal* (1986). But best of all were [Mantronix](#) (the brainchild of Jamaica-born white beatbox and turntable expert Curtis Jaleel) with *Fresh Is the Word* (1985), *Needle To The Groove* (1985), *Bassline* (1986), *King Of The Beats* (1988).

The most important innovation from the instrumental point of view was the birth of a new instrument, the turntable. In 1983 turntablist DST (DXT) played a solo of "scratch" on Herbie Hancock's *Rockit*. Slowly, the turntablist became as important as the guitarist in rock music.

Straddling the border between "musique concrete" and audio-verite', New York turntablists Steve "[Steinski](#)" Stein and Douglas "Double Dee" DiFranco founded DJing as a form of art with their influential "lessons" (as they called their collages): *The Payoff Mix* (1983), *The James Brown Mix* (1985), *The History of Hip-Hop* (1985). These were records made of (snippets of) records, ranging from tv soundtracks to jazz, from the beginning of the recording era to contemporary hits.

The fusion between hip-hop and the rock world was first achieved by [Run-](#)

[DMC](#) (3), whose albums **Run-DMC** (? 1983 - mar 1984), **King Of Rock** (? 1984 - jan 1985) and **Raising Hell** (? 1985/? 1986 - jul 1986) ran the gamut from hard-rock guitar riffs to politicized raps.

Even better, the collective called [Tackhead](#) (23), who released albums under different names, offered one of the most explosive and agit-prop mixes of the two worlds (and many other worlds). Featuring keyboardist Keith Leblanc, bassist Doug Wimbish, guitarist Skip McDonald and London producer Adrian Sherwood as the live mixing engineer (thus virtually introducing a new instrument of a group's line-up), they first helped former Pop Group's vocalist Mark Stewart make the terrifying **Learning To Cope With Cowardice** (? 1981/? 1983 - may 1983) and its follow-up **Mark Stewart** (? ? - oct 1987), and then proceeded to reinvent funk, soul, rap and rock via a multi-ethnic montage on Gary Clail's **Tackhead Tape Time** (? 1986 - feb 1987) and Keith Leblanc's **Stranger Than Fiction** (? ? - ? 1989). Their terrorist mission culminated on the apocalyptic vision of **Friendly As A Hand Grenade** (? ? - oct 1989).

James Todd Smith, better known as [LL Cool J](#) (1), sang about the splendors and the miseries of the ghetto on **Radio** (? 1984/? 1985 - nov 1985), and then proceeded to coin a hyper-realistic and hyper-egocentric hyper-fusion on the subsequent albums. He epitomized "party-rap", a compromise with the mainstream pop sensibility, a third way between "rude boy" and sex symbol.

1985-86 saw a population explosion within the hip-hop nation: [UTFO's Roxanne Roxanne](#) (1985), which was played by [Full Force](#), turntablist Derek "D.ST" Howells's *The Home Of Hip Hop* (1985), [Doug E. Fresh](#) (Davis)'s *The Show* (1985) and *La-Di-Da-Di* (1985), the Masters Of Ceremony's *Sexy* (1986), Kool Moe Dee (Mohandas Dewese)'s *Go See the Doctor* (1986), produced by the young Teddy Riley, Lisa Lisa And Cult Jam's *Lost In Emotion* (1987), also played by Full Force, etc.

New York hip-hop producer [Marley Marl](#) (Marlon Williams), who made his reputation with Roxanne Shante's *Roxanne's Revenge* (1984), was largely responsible for creating the sound of "rap-party" based around the new sampling techniques, a skillful combination of James Brown grooves and drum loops. His "Juice Crew" boasted the sexy Big Daddy Kane (Antonio Hardy), the MC of *Raw* (1988), the comedian Biz Markie (Marcell Hall), i.e. the human beatbox of "Make the Music With Your Mouth" (1988), and street chronicler Kool G Rap (Nathaniel Wilson) of *Streets of New York* (1991), not to mention Marl's own *The Symphony* (1991), a summa of the whole crew.

Marl represented the new, professional face of hip-hop: whereas the early rappers were perfectly happy to make records with a turntable and a voice (and no instruments), now the dj had evolved into a producer, and the breakbeat had often been replaced by a band. The power was shifting from the illiterate rapper to the technology-savvy groove artist.

Other transitional albums of the "hip-hop" culture were [Whodini's](#) second album **Escape** (? ? - oct 1984), produced by Larry Smith, Full Force's **Full Force** (? 1984 - ? 1985), the [Fat Boys' Crushin'](#) (? ? - may 1987), featuring the madly comic trio of Mark "Markie Dee" Morales, Damon

"Kool Rock-Ski" Wimbley and Darren "Buff" Robinson, and [DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince's He's The DJ I'm The Rapper](#) (? 1987 - mar 1988), by Philadelphia rapper Will Smith and turntablist Jeff Townes (a master of scratching, silky beats and moody atmospheres). They moved the genre simultaneously towards pop melody (and therefore mass acceptance) and towards a celebration of gang violence (and therefore mass repudiation), a contradiction in terms that would remain inherent in the genre.

[Eric B. & Rakim](#) (1)'s **Paid In Full** (? 1986/? 1987 - jul 1987), crafted by groove virtuoso Eric Barrier and roaring rhyme stylist William Griffin, was possibly the most influential album of the era, both rhythmically (Eric's James Brown samples and vocally (Rakim's fluent, almost melismatic rapping).

The "message" became much more relevant with rappers Carlton "Chuck D" Ridenhour (the revolutionary voice) and William "Flavor Flav" Drayton (its absurdist counterpart) of [Public Enemy](#) (12), whose agit-prop hip-hop music was an explicit call to arms in the face of urban violence. Sandwiched between the galvanizing but naive **Yo! Bum Rush The Show** (? 1986 - jan 1987) and the ebullient, cataclysmic and self-indulgent **Fear Of A Black Planet** (jun/oct 1989 - apr 1990), their masterpiece (and hip-hop's masterpiece) **It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back** (? ? - apr 1988) was a collection of powerful sermons, reminiscent of the MC5. The production team, "Bomb Squad", led by Hank Shocklee and dj Norman "Terminator X" Rogers pushed the sonic montage of hip-hop towards new delirious and violent excesses. Public Enemy opted for a less dynamic/intense but more static/hard style on **Apocalypse 91: The Enemy Strikes Black** (? 1991 - oct 1991), a step that led to the sonic maelstrom of **Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age** (? 1993/? 1994 - aug 1994), which was, again, one of the most original albums of its era.

Under the influence of Public Enemy, social commentary became more prominent and to the point on **Criminal Minded** (? 1986 - jan 1987) and especially **By All Means Necessary** (end 1987/? 1988 - may 1988) by [Boogie Down Productions](#) (1), the brainchild of rapper KRS-One (Kris Parker), [Gang Starr's Step In The Arena](#) (oct 1990 - jan 1991), [EPMD's Strictly Business](#) (? 1987 - jun 1988), the [Ultramagnetic MCs' Critical Beatdown](#) (? ? - oct 1988), featuring the young (but already demented) "Kool" Keith Thornton, one of the first groups to employ a sampler as an instrument (credit producer Cedric Miller), and [Brand Nubian's One For All](#) (? ? - nov 1990).

Philadelphia's [Schoolly D](#) (Jesse Weaver) virtually invented "gangsta rap" (a genre that would dominate the Los Angeles scene in the 1990s) with *Gangster Boogie* (1984), *PSK* (1985) and the album **Saturday Night** (? 1986 - ? 1986).

Rap crossed the racial divide with white rappers such as the [Beastie Boys](#) (1). **Licensed To Ill** (spring 1986 - nov 1986) integrated punk-rock and hip-hop into an organic whole (and was the first rap album to reach the top of the charts), while the orgy of samples of **Paul's Boutique** (feb 1988/spring 1989 - jul 1989) virtually invented a new ("cut and paste") way of making music (thanks to the producing team of the Dust Brothers).

Among white exploiters of the genre, 3rd Bass were perhaps the least worse, thanks to **The Cactus Album** (? ? - oct 1989).

Rap also crossed genders with the advent of a viable generation of female rappers, a phenomenon pioneered in Philadelphia by Lady B's *To the Beat Y'All* (1980) but best represented in New York by [MC Lyte](#) (Lana Moorer)'s **Lyte As A Rock** (? 1987/? 1988 - sep 1988) and by the two ladies of the "Native Tongues" posse: [Queen Latifah](#) (Dana Owens), with the pop-soul-rap-house fusion of **All Hail The Queen** (? 1988/? 1989 - nov 1989), and London-born Monie Love (Simone Johnson), with **Down To Earth** (? 1988/? 1990 - oct 1990). Latifah, in particular, was influential in establishing feminist hip-hop. The most successful female rappers were the New York trio [Salt'N Pepa](#), with singles such as *The Show Stoppa* (1985), *Push It* (1988) and *Let's Talk About Sex* (1991).

Hip-hop began to dominate the airwaves at the turn of the decade. New York was still leading the rap nation, thanks to its innumerable "posses" and "crews" (hip-hop's terms for "musical group"). The best album to come out of the "Juice Crew" was Kool G Rap & DJ Polo's **Wanted: Dead Or Alive** (? 1989/? 1990 - aug 1990). The "Native Tongues" posse, perhaps the most creative of them all, produced a few notable albums: [De La Soul](#) (1)'s phantasmagoric **3 Feet High And Rising** (? 1988 - aug 1988), produced by "Prince Paul" Huston in an extravagant manner that was reminiscent of both George Clinton, Van Dyke Parks and Frank Zappa; the [Jungle Brothers](#) (1)' second album **Done By The Forces Of Nature** (? 1989 - oct 1989), one of the most positive and spiritual works of hip-hop; and [A Tribe Called Quest](#) (1)'s **People's Instinctive Travels And The Paths Of Rhythm** (? 1989/? 1990 - apr 1990) and especially their second album **The Low End Theory** (? 1990/spring 1991 - sep 1991), featuring Ron Carter; two of the earliest attempts at jazz-hop fusion. The "Native Tongue" movement heralded the advent of a generation of intellectual, philosophical, sociological rappers that investigated the condition of the African-American soul rather than the street epics of gangsters.

De La Soul and the Jungle Brothers were emblematic of the "daisy-age sound" that upped the ante for hip-hop producers. The third pillar of that movement was another New York group, [Stetsasonic](#) (1), consisting of three rappers and three djs (including the young "Prince Paul" Huston), who crafted **In Full Gear** (? ? - sep 1988) and especially **Blood, Sweat & No Tears** (? 1990/? ? - jul 1991). They were also the first group to emphasize live instrumentation in rap music. Stetsasonic's *A.F.R.I.C.A.* (1987) was also one of the first rap records to deal with Afrocentric issues.

London's white rap trio Stereo MC's were also influenced by the "daisy age" movement on their **Supernatural** (? ? - ? 1990).

Western rap (that, formally, had been born with Disco Daddy and Captain Rapp's *Gigolo Rapp* in 1981, and that was mainly based in the Los Angeles metropolitan area) slowly began to compete against Eastern rap, thanks to Tracy "[Ice-T](#)" Marrow (1)'s *6n' Da Mornin* (1986), the first West-Coast single to become popular nation-wide (and a contender for the title of first "gangsta-rap" anthem); thanks to Oakland's Todd "Too Short" Shaw, who became the first rap star of the West Coast with **Born To**

Mack (? 1986 - summer 1987); thanks to Oakland's [MC Hammer](#) (Stanley Kirk Burrell), whose **Let's Get It Started** (? 1987/? 1988 - sep 1988) made hip-hop appealing to an even broader audience and whose funk-tinged **Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em** (? 1989 - feb 1990) became the best-selling rap album of the era; thanks to Anthony "Tone-Loc" Smith's comic *Wild Thing* (1989, written by Marvin "Young MC"), first top-10 pop hit for a black rapper, and **Loc'ed After Dark** (? 1987/? 1988 - nov 1988), the second rap album to reach the top of the charts (after the Beastie Boys); and thanks to his mentor, London-born Young MC (Marvin Young), who matched his success with **Stone Cold Rhymin'** (? 1988/? 1989 - sep 1989).

Ice-T was by far the most gifted of this generation. He refined his violent approach to ghetto life on his confrontational second album, **Power** (fall 1987/summer 1988 – sep 1988), but also emancipated West Coast rap from the sound of East Coast rap on the double album **Original Gangster** (summer 1990/jan 1991 - may 1991). He even bridged the world of gangsta-rap and the world of heavy-metal on **Body Count** (sep/dec 1991 - mar 1992), a rock project.

Ice-T's weak New York counterpart was Ricky "[Slick Rick](#)" Walters, whose claim to the invention of gangsta-rap was **Great Adventures** (? 1987/? 1988 - may 1988), an impressive example of the vulgar themes that came to be associated with the genre (homicide, homophobia, misogyny and racism).

The [2 Live Crew](#)'s **Is What We Are** (? 1985/? 1986 - jul 1986) introduced the booming "Miami Bass" sound, based on a forceful, thumping beat; but became famous mainly for the sexually-explicit lyrics of **Move Somethin'** (? 1986/? 1987 - aug 1987), the first album to be sold in both a "clean" and a "dirty" version, and **As Nasty As They Wanna Be** (? 1988 - feb 1989), the first rap album to be banned as obscene.

The brief fad of "new jack swing" was started and ruled by Teddy Riley's Guy, whose **Guy** (? 1986/? 1988 - jun 1988) wed hip-hop and rhythm'n'blues in a highly entertaining manner.

Meanwhile, an important technical advance was changing the very nature of rhythm. In 1986 a Bay Area company specializing in synthesizers and drum machines, E-mu Systems, introduced the SP12 drum sampler, a machine that tilted the balance of rhythm production from programmed beats towards sampled beats. In the same year two New York djs, Lenny Roberts ("Breakbeat Lenny") and Louis Flores ("Breakbeat Lou") began compiling their "Ultimate Breaks and Beats" that became immensely popular with DJs all over the world. That compilation included, for example, what would become for a while the most popular drum loop in electronic dance music, the "Amen break", a loop of the drum break by Gregory Cylvester Coleman off the Winstons' 1969 instrumental version of the Impressions' 1964 hit "Amen" (written by Jester Hairston).

Hip-hop established a significantly different paradigm of music-making. Shifting the emphasis from the melody to the rhythm was not simply an extension of what funk music had already done: it was a Copernican revolution that changed the very meaning of the word "song". The elegant melody of pop music was a negation of reality, whereas the intricate rhythms of hip-hop music was an affirmation of reality. Where melodic songs were, fundamentally, meant to offer a respite from the real world, a

Techno 1984-88

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Techno came out of Detroit quietly, hardly noticed, but the work of black visionaries such as [Juan Atkins](#) (1), [Carl Craig](#) (2), [Derrick May](#), and [Kevin Saunderson](#) would soon change the face of discos around the world.

The inventor of techno was probably Juan Atkins, who in 1981 began making "techno" records in Detroit: pounding and fast rhythm from a Roland sequencer MSK-100, coupled with stripped-down funk arrangements. Atkins was a member of the collective Deep Space Soundworks, formed with high-school buddies Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson and centered around Detroit's downtown disco "Music Institute". Atkins coined the term "techno" to define the high-tech funk of Cybotron, his joint project with synthesizer expert Rick Davis, that produced singles such as *Alleys Of Your Mind* (1981) and *Cosmic Cars* (1982). The identification of "techno" with a fast electronic beat began with *Techno City* (1984). Atkin's first single as Model 500, *No UFO's* (1985), fulfilled that idea. Atkins was a visionary, but followed in the footsteps of visionaries who had come before him. His aim was a futuristic music that would wed the abstract funk of Parliament with the robotic synth-pop of Kraftwerk.

In 1988 Atkins, May and Saunderson traveled to Britain and Atkins was invited to play in front of a huge crowd at one of the open-air events called "raves". Atkins soon became a staple of London's underground and helped spread Detroit techno to the rest of Europe through links with labels in Belgium and Berlin. He quickly lost control of the music that he had invented, and even his best album, a sci-fi concept titled **Deep Space** (? ? - jun 1995), sounded dated compared with what his disciples were doing around the world.

Saunderson was the brain behind Inner City's *Big Fun* (1988), that pioneered the techno boom of 1988. His music owed more to Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream than to rhythm'n'blues or funk. **Paradise** (? ? - ? 1989) was the first full-length album released by a Detroit techno disc-jockey.

The most experimental of the trio of founding fathers, May introduced both a psychological element and a futuristic vision in dance music. Rhythim Is Rhythim's *Nude Photo* (1987) and *Strings Of Life* (1987) were two of the early masterpieces of techno. Broadcast on Alan Oldham's "Fast Forward" radio show, they started the techno revolution. May's baroque, skeletal, melancholy style gained him the nickname of "the Miles Davis of techno".

Carl Craig, May's chief assistant in Detroit and London, was the brain behind Psyche's *Crackdown* (1989), 69's *Ladies And Gentlemen* (1991), and the [Innerzone Orchestra](#)'s jazzy *Bug In The Bassbin* (1995), two influential singles that changed the face of techno. He, too, reached his artistic zenith later in life, with the solo album **Landcruising** (? ? - ? 1995) and the Innerzone Orchestra's **Programmed** (? ? - jul 1999), two experimental works that distanced him from the dancefloor.

House

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"House" music was a more or less natural evolution of disco-music. In fact, its two birth places were two of the historical clubs of disco-music, Chicago's "Warehouse" and New York's "Paradise Garage". In the mid-1980s their resident disc-jockeys (respectively [Frankie Knuckles](#) and Larry Levan, both black) began playing (or, better, "spinning") electronic dance music built around drum-machines and soul vocals.

In 1984 the Chicago record store "Imports Etc" began selling "house" records (as a contraction of "Warehouse"), first ones being Jessie "Z Factor" Saunders' *Fantasy*, Frankie Knuckles' *Your Love* and Walter Gibbons' *Set It Off*. In 1986 another Chicago disc-jockey, Nathaniel Jones (aka DJ Pierre, a member of [Phuture](#)), invented "acid house", a kind of house music that was built around the Roland TB-303 bassline machine: Phuture's *Acid Tracks* (1987) was the first acid-house single, and DJ Pierre's *Dream Girl* (1988) was perhaps the most influential.

Progress came quickly with Farley "Jackmaster Funk" Keith's *Love Can't Turn Around* (1986), Steve Hurley's *Music Is The Key* (1986), the first house record to incorporate a rap, and *Jack Your Body* (1987), the first major house hit in Europe, Larry "Mr Fingers" Heard's *Can You Feel It?* (1985), that pioneered "deep house", Marshall Jefferson's *Move Your Body* (1986), that contributed to both the "deep" and "acid" forms of house, the Nightwriters' *Let The Music Use You* (1987), Ralphie Rosario's *You Used To Hold Me* (1987), etc. [Fingers Inc.](#)'s **Another Side** (? 1985/? 1987 - feb 1988), the first full-length album of Chicago house, was a collaboration between Larry Heard and vocalist Robert Owens. The headquarters of house music moved to Ron Hardy's "Muzic Box" (which had opened in 1983) and house music rediscovered the song format, the melody and the vocals. Todd Terry resurrected the New York scene with some successful sample-based tracks, such as *Alright Alright* (1987), *Weekend* (1988), *Bango* (1988), but, mostly, house music had temporarily ended its creative process.

If the USA had invented the style, it was certainly Europe that transformed it into mass hysteria. The story revolves around a Spanish tourist town, Ibiza, and a new drug, "ecstasy". Banned in Britain and in the USA, this drug became popular at all-night parties at Ibiza's open-air dance club "Amnesia". The reputation of these parties grew so quickly that Ibiza began to attract young people from all over Europe. After spending the 1987 summer in Ibiza, British disc-jockey Paul Oakenfold organized "Spectrum", the first ecstasy-based party in London. From there it moved to Manchester's "Hacienda", a club that had opened in 1982. Manchester's 1988 "summer of love" was the continuation of the Ibiza scene.

In England it was M/A/R/S/S' *Pump Up The Volume* (1987) that commercialized house music. In Belgium it was Technotronic's *Pump Up The Jam* (1989), the brainchild of USA-born producer Jo Bogaert (Thomas de Quincy). As it moved to Europe, house music picked up speed: Chicago house was mostly around 120 BPMs, beats per minute (the same speed as Detroit techno), but English house often reached 140 BPM. In

1989, 150 people attended a rave called "Love Parade" in Berlin organized by Dr Motte as a political event: that would become not only the largest dance-music event in the world, but the largest event in general (the 2000 Berlin "Love Parade" would attract one million people).

Go-go music

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Washington's style, "go-go music", was completely different, basically a euphoric continuation of Sly Stone's progressive-funk with African frantic polyrhythmic percussions and gospel-like call-and-response harmonies. Go-go bands had many percussionists and little technology. They were the antithesis of the disc-jockey. Go-go music was the bastard child of rhythm'n'blues crooner Chuck Brown, who took the beat of Grover Washington's *Mr Magic* as the basis for his hit *Bustin' Loose* (1979). During his live performances, Brown began to use rhythmic intermissions like this one to bridge his live songs, and eventually these bridges became the real show. He further refined the art with *Go-Go Swing* (1985), which was based on Lionel Hampton's *Midnight Sun*. Trouble Funk's *Hey Fellas* (1982) and E.U.'s *Da'butt* (1988)

British precursors 1987-88

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The innovations coming from the USA were slowly percolating into the discos of Europe, and finally finding their home in Britain, but, in the meantime, a number of British acts contributed important ideas to the process.

To start with, [The Art Of Noise](#) (1), a collective of disc-jockeys and producers featuring electronic musician Anne Dudley, indulged in studio-made instrumental tracks that wed hip-hop beats and catchy melodies, from *Beatbox* (1983) to *Legs* (1986), and predated "ambient house" and other genres on **Who's Afraid Of** (feb/apr 1984 - may 1984). They showed that the new dance-music could be manufactured in the studio, without any need for a "star".

The two great fads of the 1980s had been psychedelic-pop and synth-pop. Albums such as [Nitzer Ebb's That Total Age](#) (? 1986/? 1987 - may 1987) bridged synth-pop and house music, while groups such as Primal Scream bridged dance music and psychedelic music.

A Scottish band, [Primal Scream](#) (1), began in the vein of Jesus And Mary Chain's feedback-pop but went on to establish a unique style of danceable psychedelia. After two albums devoted to mediocre imitations of Sixties pop, producer Andrew Weatherall (not the band) penned the lush, dense kaleidoscope of **Screamadelica** (? 1990/? 1991 - sep 1991), a dance album that was propelled by both strong disco beats and Rolling Stones-like riffs. Later albums, rich in hype but poor in substance, revealed that the Primal Scream were little more than second-hand revivalists.

XTRMNTNTR (2000), a concept album about the evils of modern society, returned to the trick that made them famous: a sophisticated exercise in

layered arrangements. That was also the limit of the most over-rated band of the 1990s before Radiohead.

Meanwhile, Cabaret Voltaire and the other pioneers of industrial music had adopted dance beats in the early 1980s, and the likes of [Front 242](#) and Skinny Puppy had made a career of crossing over into "Electronic Body Music" (EBM).

Jack Dangers' [Meat Beat Manifesto](#) (2) were one of the most creative bands of the industrial-dance crossover. Their **Storm The Studio** (? ? - feb 1989), offering a thick mix of hyper-cinetic hip-hop rhythms, exuberant samples and electronic dissonance, pioneered "jungle music" for the next decade. When the world caught up, Dangers had already moved one step ahead with **Actual Sounds + Voices** (? 1996/? 1997 - jun 1998), a collection of torrid jazz jamming and of music composed by breaking down the beats of dance music into an abstract magma of sounds and then rebuilding them again into powerful beats.

808 State's co-founder Gerald Simpson became [A Guy Called Gerald](#) and recorded one of the first albums of British techno, **Hot Lemonade** (aug/sep 1988 - mar 1989), although later he endorsed a cosmopolitan blend of hip-hop, synth-pop, dub and pop-soul.

One last major addition to the canon was due to the introduction of the sampling machines. [Bomb The Bass](#) (Tim Simenon) devised the pioneering collage of samples and breakbeats of *Beat Dis* (1988). Following in his footsteps, [Coldcut](#) (1), i.e. the duo of disc-jockeys Matt Black and Jonathan More, introduced a dance style that was fundamentally a form of sound collage, and, in the process, they turned the "remix" into an art form. Their *Say Kids What Time Is It* (1987) was perhaps the first British hit created out of samples. **What's That Noise** (? ? - apr 1989) was their milestone recording. Their offshoot [DJ Food](#) composed on **A Recipe For Disaster** (? ? - oct 1995) a frenzied montage of hip-hop beats, dub bass lines, jazzy riffs, electronic effects and rap scratching.