**PBS PREMIERES POWERFUL, REVISIONIST HISTORY OF POPULAR 1970s MUSIC IN “DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION,”**

**A THREE-PART DOCUSERIES, BEGINNING JUNE 18 AT 9 P.M. ET**

*Series Shines Light on Disco’s Groovy Beginnings, Featuring The Village People’s Victor Willis, Labelle’s Nona Hendryx, The Trammps’ Earl Young, The Father of House Music, Marshall Jefferson, Scissor Sisters’ Ana Matronic and Jake Shears, Sylvester’s Jeanie Tracy, MNEK, Kim Petras, Jocelyn Brown, Jessie Ware, George McCrae, Dexter Wansel, Candi Staton, Anita Ward, David Morales, Honey Dijon, DJ Hollywood, Jamie Principle, Robert Williams, Ron Trent, and More*

**SCREENERS AVAILABLE VIA** [**PBS PRESSROOM**](https://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/d/disco-soundtrack-of-a-revolution/assets)

**ARLINGTON, Va.; MAY 2, 2024** – **PBS** tackles the surprising and overlooked history of disco – the preeminent popular music of the 1970s – in a three-part series, **DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION.** Announced by **PBS President** and **CEO** **Paula Kerger** during her executive session at the network’s **TCA Winter Press Tour** in February, the docuseries captures the story of disco: its rise, its fall, and its legacy. From the basement bars of ‘70s New York City to the peak of the global charts, along with iconic tracks and remarkable footage, **DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION** offers a powerful, revisionist history of the disco age. Told by the original musicians, promoters, and innovators – as well as modern-day musical icons – this **BBC Studios Production** will have a special early release of all three episodes on PBS.org and the PBS app on June 1. The television broadcast premiere will follow on **Tuesday, June 18** at **9 p.m. ET** on PBS.

 *Donna Summer on stage. Courtesy: Getty Images*

Disco embodied the height of 1970s glamour: a dance floor culture born in New York City that went on to take over the world. But its success also obscured its wider significance. Inextricably bound up with the major liberation movements of the 1970s, disco speaks to some of the biggest issues of today: LGBTQ+ identity and female empowerment.

“Charting disco from its inception and global domination to the violent attempts to end the genre, **DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION** reclaims its roots,” said Sylvia Bugg, chief programming executive and general manager, general audience programming at PBS. “Before commercialization, discothèques belonged to the marginalized and the dispossessed, who tapped into the beat-driven music and the disco scene in a battle for community, identity, and inclusivity.”

Jonathan Rothery, head of popular music TV/commissioning editor, factual, at the BBC says: “There’s no doubt that DISCO had an enormous impact—not just on the musical landscape at the time of its emergence and far beyond, but as a social and cultural force for change. This documentary series from BBC Studios, which the BBC has supported together with PBS, will highlight many new or untold stories of the genre. I’m looking forward to sharing **DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION** with audiences on PBS.”

**DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION** also underscores disco’s survival. Co-opted by the commercial mainstream, the genre dominated and flooded the market – the airwaves and record shops – leading to a subsequent hate-fueled backlash. As a result, the music and its ethos went back underground, where it evolved into an electronic dance sound that laid the foundations for contemporary dance culture.

A brief overview of the three-part docuseries is as follows:

**Episode 1: “Rock the Boat”**

**Premieres: Tuesday, June 18 at 9 p.m. ET**

**Screener:** [**Episode 1**](https://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/d/disco-soundtrack-of-a-revolution/ep-1-rock-the-boat/episode-1)

The opening episode of the series looks at the roots of disco – how it emerged from a basic desire for inclusion, visibility, and freedom among persecuted Black, gay, and minority ethnic communities of New York City. It tells the remarkable story of how a global phenomenon began in the loft apartments and basement bars of New York City, where a new generation of DJs and musicians, like David Mancuso, Nicky Siano, Francis Grasso, and Earl Young (The Trammps), pioneered a distinct sound and a new way of spinning records.

**Episode 2: “Ain’t No Stoppin’ Us Now”**

**Premieres: Tuesday, June 25 at 9 p.m. ET**

**Screener:** [**Episode 2**](https://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/d/disco-soundtrack-of-a-revolution/ep-2-aint-no-stoppin-us-now/episode-2)

Set against the backdrop of Black power and sexual liberation, the second episode takes viewers to the high watermark of disco in the mid ’70s. As disco conquers the mainstream, it turns Black women and gay men into superstars and icons. It is a world where the drag queen Sylvester was king, and Black women found a powerful new voice – one that fused Black Power with a call for sexual freedom. It was the birth of the “disco diva” from Gloria Gaynor and Candi Staton to Donna Summer and Thelma Houston. However, mainstream success by The Bee Gees’ soundtrack album “Saturday Night Fever,” The Rolling Stones’ “Miss You,”Rod Stewart’s “Da Ya Think I’m Sexy,” and Studio 54 took disco further and further from its roots of inclusivity and freedom, as straight, white men started to embrace and repackage the sound.

**Episode 3: “Stayin’ Alive”**

**Premieres: Tuesday, July 2 at 9 p.m. ET**

**Screener:** [**Episode 3**](https://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/d/disco-soundtrack-of-a-revolution/ep-3-stayin-alive/episode-3)

The final episode documents the wellspring of resentment from white, straight, male-dominated, rock-loving middle Americans, as they targeted disco for its hedonism, femininity, and queerness. A vocal “Disco Sucks” movement began to gain momentum, culminating in the “Disco Demolition Derby” at Comiskey Park Stadium in Chicago, where organizers destroyed thousands of disco records in front of a baying audience of baseball fans. In addition, the hedonism and sexual liberation embodied by disco found itself stopped in its tracks by the AIDS crisis. Pushed out of the mainstream, the pioneers of disco retreated and regrouped. Cult disco DJ Frankie Knuckles left New York for Chicago, where he remixed disco breaks with R&B to produce a new genre of dance music – house. He and other disco pioneers kept disco alive as it evolved into world electronic dance music.

**DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION**features some of disco’s originators, musicians, promoters, and innovators, as well as modern-day musical icons, such as: Vince Aletti, Steve Ashkinazy, Bill Bernstein, Joyce Bogart Trabulus, Jocelyn Brown, Carmen D’Alessio, David Depino, Lisa Farrington, Nona Hendryx, Thelma Houston, Marshall Jefferson, Francois Kevorkian, Tina Magennis, Ana Matronic, George McCrae, David Morales, Tom Moulton, Colleen Murphy, John Parikhal, Kim Petras, Mark Riley, Allen Roskoff, Alex Rosner, Michelle Saunders, Jake Shears, Nicky Siano, Candi Staton, Jeanie Tracy, Barry Walters, Dexter Wansel, Anita Ward, Jessie Ware, Sharon White, Victor Willis, Earl Young, Jamie Principle, Robert Williams, Ron Trent, DJ Hollywood, Honey Dijon, and MNEK.

For more information on **DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION,** including clips and episode previews, visit the [PBS PressRoom](https://pressroom.pbs.org/).

**DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION** is a **BBC Studios Production** for **PBS** and **BBC**. The docuseries is produced and directed by Louise Lockwood and Shianne Brown. Catherine Abbott serves as series producer, Flora Stewart as story producer, and Becky Marshall as producer. The executive producing team is Alexander Leith as executive producer and Anna Sadowy as edit executive producer. Tom Hayward is the series director of photography and Grace Chapman is the series director. The commissioning editor for the BBC is Rachel Davies. Jonathan Rothery serves as head of popular music, TV/commissioning editor, factual, alongside Rachel Davies as commissioner.

**ABOUT BBC STUDIOS**

BBC Studios is a commercial subsidiary of the BBC Group with sales of £2.1 billion (2021/22: £1,630 million). Able to take an idea seamlessly from thought to screen and beyond, the business is built on two operating areas: the global Content Studio, which produces, invests and distributes content globally and Channels & Streaming, with BBC branded channels, services and joint ventures in the UK and internationally. Around 2,500 hours of award-winning British programmes are made by the business every year, with over 80% of total BBC Studios revenues coming from non-BBC customers including Discovery, Apple and Netflix. Its content is internationally recognised across a broad range of genres and specialisms, with brands like Strictly Come Dancing/Dancing with the Stars, Top Gear, the Planet series, Bluey and Doctor Who. BBC.com is BBC Studios’ global digital news platform, offering up-to-the-minute international news, in-depth analysis and features. BBC Studios | [Website](https://www.bbcstudios.com/) | [Press Office](https://twitter.com/BBCStudiosPress) | [Twitter](https://twitter.com/bbcstudios) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bbc-studios/) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bbcstudios/) |

**ABOUT PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 42 million adults on linear primetime television, more than 15 million users on PBS-owned streaming platforms, and 56 million people view PBS content on social media, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front-row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’s broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to [PBS LearningMedia](http://pbslearningmedia.org/) for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. As the number one educational media brand, [PBS KIDS](http://pbskids.org/) helps children 2-8 build critical skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality content on TV — including a PBS KIDS channel — and streaming free on[pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/) and the [PBS KIDS Video app](https://pbskids.org/apps/pbs-kids-video.html), games on the [PBS KIDS Games app](https://pbskids.org/apps/pbs-kids-games.html), and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org/), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/pbs/?hl=en), or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom) or by following  [PBS Communications on X](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR) (formerly Twitter).

**-PBS-**

***Editorial Note:*** *For screeners, images and additional up-to-date information on* ***DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION*** *and other PBS programs, please login or register via the* ***PBS PressRoom*** *at* [*pbs.org/pressroom*](https://pressroom.pbs.org/)*.*

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Chelsie Pope, PBS, cepope@pbs.org

Brandii Toby-Leon, Bullseye Communications, brandii.leon@bullseyecomm.com