

Hello, Welcome. I'm Renée Valentina and this is Musing Interruptus. Musing Interruptus is a podcast for sharing thoughts and stories and enjoying idiomatic phrases. You can read along; just click on *continue reading* in the description to open a Google Doc with the transcription of this episode. The idiomatic expressions are in italics. Try to get the meaning from the context and then look them up to see if you were right. If you like it, subscribe, follow, and share, but more importantly, continue the conversation. Drop a comment with your answers to today's questions! I'm curious! The background music is called [Young Buck by Blue Dot](#).

The mix and master were done by Chuy/Jesús Darío, my sound charolastra

The last one. In Spanish, *la última y nos vamos*. We all get there if we live long enough. Actually, time is only relevant for the firsts. What I am getting it is more a matter of perception. After *a heap of* firsts, we come to realize there will be a last.

I've prided myself in learning at an early age to enjoy the moment. Close my eyes when I listen to music and submit to the chain reaction. Look around the table and feel the love. Laugh extra hard instead of emitting a muffled chortle. Mindful about the good things. I felt like this was my superpower as I was growing up. I knew that nothing would last and that I had better enjoy every moment.

Of course, I didn't. I did my best.- Some days, I was great at it; others, I focused on what I didn't have, the frustration from feeling left out or not getting what I wanted. That can be exquisite.

Donna Summer gets it. When she sings about -the last dance, the last chance for love- How did she know? Was it her age?

According to Wikipedia, "Last Dance" became a critical and commercial success, winning an [Academy Award](#) and a [Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song](#) and Donna Summer won a [Grammy for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance](#). The song peaked at number three on the [Billboard Hot 100](#) chart in 1978.

Recorded in 1977 and released in 1978... let's think about that year for a moment. Ms. Summer was 29, in *the prime of her life*. 29 cannot be the last chance for love.

For Disco, on the other hand... the situation was different.

Disco stems from the French *Discoteque*, a library of records. For those of you who might not be familiar with this concept, it is a nightclub where people play records instead of having a live band, there are lights, and it is all very conducive to having a jolly good time while listening and dancing to music.

This genre started in the late 1960s as a counterculture movement (against rock, and as a refuge from wars, economic crises, and social injustice). Disco fever infected people who enjoyed dressing up, dancing, and taking mood enhancers. My logic tells me, if the music isn't releasing endorphins, you might be inclined to take a little something something, to make the music bearable. I kid. Kind of. Cocaine and quaaludes were the *go-tos* of the era.

According to Wikipedia, Disco resulted from a mixture of black, Latino, and Italian American cultures in New York City. Ashley Sierra from PBS (2024) adds how people who hadn't made it in the rock world, who were culturally not part of the mainstream, found an outlet in Disco. She says: "... it gave different communities a safe space to celebrate love and liberation. It was an opportunity to find people who looked like you, thought like you and — perhaps most importantly — danced like you. This was especially liberating for the LGBTQ+ community. Oppression came from the legal system *and* friends, neighbors, colleagues and police; it was illegal for two people of the same sex to dance together, let alone have public relationships. Even when a 1971 law made same-sex dancing legal in New York City, wider society refused to tolerate it. For many, being queer became about looking out for each other — and disco was one way to do that." That has given me a whole new perspective of just why you *can't stop the music*.

She goes on to explain the discos were mostly underground, out of sight and mind, making space for the free expression of sex, identity, and bustin' a move while doing the *hustle*.

Disco was a way of focusing on enjoyment rather than fear. I get that. Perhaps my lack of appreciation is rooted in a false depth perception. I guess art can take many different paths, the one that leads you to face reality and another that leads you to, at least simulate, you are evading reality. On one hand, we have *It ain't me babe* by Bob Dylan in 1964 and on the other we have *I feel love* by Donna Summer in 1977. Wait, I should compare music from the same year. Bowie's *Sound and Vision* is purportedly about trying to *get clean*, at a time he was reevaluating his work and antics in the US and a need to reconnect with himself in Europe (Berlin) with Iggy Pop, by the way. Their work together resulted in *Lust For Life* by Mr. Pop on Idiot and the album *Low* by Mr. Bowie, among other things. So, yeah, it makes sense that the roughness and deepness of that work can be a bit much. However for me, it hasn't. I'm in my 40s, and I'm still *hooked on* rock and punk. There is space to blame the Beatles *breaking up* for Disco... we can blame the Beatles for a lot, including Punk. They did a lot of good. I'm not saying Disco is bad. It's got a *bad rap* probably because it is mostly repetitive, vapid, goey, less than

trippy and what I think might lead to a stiff encounter in a fashionable nightclub that will get you back on the dancefloor before Gloria Gaynor finishes her rendition of *I will Survive*.

It is interesting how much has come out of New York. There are cities that inspire creativity, also deserts, and forests. I need a forest. But that is neither here nor there.

I'm trying to get to the death of Disco. Some might consider it was murdered in what was called the *Disco Demolition Night*. BBC (2023) tells the tale of how the Chicago White Sox *promo stunt* may have pummeled Disco into inexistence in the US. Europe, India, and the Middle East continued the trend way into the 1980s and there is some youth who are *mainlining* L-Dopa to it. It didn't work well in the movie *Awakenings*, I don't know how well it will work now. But hey, I'm anything but mainstream in the worst possible way, and delightfully self-deprecating. Anyway, Disco Demolition in the words of Dorian Lynskey at the BBC (2023) regales us with the days that stadium goers were offered discounted 98 cent tickets if they took a disco record. And many did. The stadium was filled to capacity (45,000 people) and more were trying to get in... apparently, the need to fill seats was dire as they were only selling one-third of that. They had invited disco lovers before, and didn't have this *turnout*. Sooooooooooooo, it's not like the events that happened afterward were actually responsible for the death of Disco that summer of 79, July 12th to be exact. Oh, the demolition part... Interesting fact it was a DJ who birthed Disco and a DJ who *pushed the red button*, detonating an explosion of those donated Disco records. It went out with a boom. Literally. If we have honest, Disco died by its own hand, and Donna Summer knew it and sang it to sleep.

What is it about Disco that makes it more of a side dish than a main course? Do any of you out there have Disco Fever? Do you take drugs to listen to it?

I have strong musical feelings. There is music for all sorts of moods and activities. Making soundtracks is fun, and there is room for almost all genres. I think the limit is your creativity and taste.

Take the fantastic scene in *Beetlejuice 2*, MacArthur's Park took that scene to a whole other level. I think I connected with the ghost with the most, because of that song. *PERIOD*. It is a song about the end of a love affair. However, I hear more a love that never materialized and now is impossible, probably because they never really talked about it and expected things to happen organically, and then they got old, and someone died. Boo hoo. But that is just my interpretation. It might just be about a cake left out in the rain in the park. I don't know if I would care much for a soggy cake with green icing. Richard Harris sang that version in 1968. But Donna Summer immortalized it with her

version in 1978. That soft longing in her voice, a vibrato that evokes just enough regret but then leads to a build up that explodes all over the place, and it is fantastic. I can almost imagine her flying around on a glamorous Disco Broom, in her Disco Dress, passing out Disco Biscuits. Also, poor Beetlejuice.

I said Disco is a side dish in my smorgasbord of music. Side dishes are important. What is a filet mignon without asparagus or a hamburger without french fries? Not bad, but not totally satisfying.

You should know I started out to speak of the darkness of realizing that an experience may be the last time. I was going to go into the whole, the last conversation, hug, kiss, dance, the last time you fall in love, your last first day at a new job, your last new friend. How many of those experiences do you get in one lifetime? Eventually, one will be the last. Well, instead of being rock'n roll or punk about it, I evaded and literally turned to Disco. I sometimes talk about the higher ground, but I definitely need a ladder to get there.

Thank you for listening.

What are your favorite Disco songs? Would you have gone to the baseball field with Disco Fever or to watch stacks of Disco records blow up? What is your favorite evasion strategy? *I'm listening*

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Wikipedia. Disco /Donna Summer/MacArthur Park

There is much more to Disco than sex, drugs, and syncopation. Who would've known? Listen. Read along. Share your thoughts [with me].

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