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DISCO DISCHARGE — CLASSIC DISCO: Touring The Disco Genre With Smarts & Style



Disco compilations are a dime a dozen, particularly the kind that claim to be comprehensive genre samplers. These boilerplate samplers are often depressing affairs that rely on the same batch of overplayed pop-chart hits that hack d.j.'s bust out during disco theme nights at any old generic club. Thus, it's nice when someone takes the time to really think they're way through such a sampler, blending cultish stuff with a dash of the familiar to create something thoughtfully curated. A nice recent sample of this latter approach is **Disco Discharge: Classic Disco**.

This two-disc set is one of a quartet of branded samplers. The other three sets go deep into specific disco subgenres but **Classic Disco** is a sampler platter-style collection that offers a smörgåsbord of stylings, nationalities and differing levels of familiarity. It serves up a few name-brand hits, some of the more well-known tracks for club cognoscenti and a variety of deep catalog choices to ensure that all levels of disco enthusiast get something to sink their teeth into. The overall value is further enhanced by the use of full-length versions and few rare mixes.

In the name-brand arena, listeners are treated to Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band's "Cherchez La Femme/Se Si Bön," a diverting blend of Latin rhythms and swing-style vocals & horn arrangements, and Cheryl Lynn's charming gospel-meets-roller-boogie classic, "Got To Be Real." On the 'classic club tracks' tip, Gary's Gang exemplify the relentless style of disco with their taut, insidiously upbeat "Keep On Dancing" and Idris Muhammad weaves a more hypnotic sort of groove with "Could Heaven Ever Be Like This," which layers airy vocals and minimal yet expansive instrumentation over a booming, echoey beat to create a truly unforgettable example of proto-disco.



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Elsewhere, Eurodisco gets its due with Cerrone's elegant epic "Look For Love," which works a rock-style drum solo into the middle of its orchestral/choral groove, and Don Ray's exuberant "Got To Have Loving," which relentlessly burns through twist after twist in its arrangement to create a hookfest for the dance floor. A nice contrast is provided by the grittier, funkier sounds of tracks like the Constellation Orchestra's "Funk Encounter" and Grey And Hank's "Dancin," both of which are driven by pounding, bass-heavy grooves and a more spartan approach to

their arrangements.

And let's not forget the rarities: a remix of the Glitter Band's pounding instrumental "Makes You Blind" is pure disco hypnosis fueled by an unstoppable bass line while **Double Discovery's** previously unreleased "Thanks For Loving Me" swings with the kind of jazz-inflected elegance that typified producer Boris Midney's sweetly elegant approach to dance sounds. Both are editions that hardcore genre fans will welcome to their collections with open arms. Another surprise is Johnny Mathis's "Gone, Gone, Gone," a sweeping epic packed with hooks and cinematic gloss. Mathis gives it a smooth vocal that allows him to gracefully transition from easy-listening star to lounge lizard before your very ears.

The package is topped with fun liner notes by Alan Jones, who balances a scholarly knowledge of disco facts with a sociologist's understanding of the psychological and cultural forces that drove the scene. The end result is a package that is a good starter for neophytes but skillfully assembled enough to please the fanbase's old guard. This dichotomy makes **Disco Discharge: Classic Disco** an easy pick for disco fans at all levels of experience.



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