

## The Last Days of Disco

by Silvia Bombardini

*Biro*<sup>®</sup>



Katie Eary, SS15

**As the first tendrils of 1970s nostalgia begin to loosen the hold they've kept upon our wardrobes for the past few seasons at least, we're faced once more with a phenomenon those who were there the first, or maybe second time around, may well have hoped not to recur quite so soon: it's time yet again to bid disco farewell. Flagrantly camp, and yet we're still inexplicably fond of it, sultry and plush with the candid ideal of clubbing it represents and was oftentimes mocked for, it might have been inevitable from the start that each subsequent revival of disco will be hesitant, sort of cringey, or tempered slightly by lukewarm commitment. It's simply a style that's hard to take seriously, if that was even ever its goal.**

**Or is it?**

The late days of the authentic disco movement arguably already were subtly apart from its golden era – a little antsy, a little taut, tinged with something akin to foreboding. Its lingering glittery giddiness had turned into a meteoric gloss. Bubbled up from the urban gay scene and the fall-out of the Black Power Movement to the saccharine exclusivity of New York City's Studio 54, it was, some may claim, by giving in to the flattery of the mainstream that disco were to sing its first swan song, around the time of 1979. Its complex melodies and diva vocals unfolded into the leaner, stripped-back sounds of 80s dance music, balanced by

fashions that were anything but – and it wasn't until the mid-90s and across the pond, a safe time and distance away from one notorious [Disco Demolition Night](#), that Britpop bands like Pulp or Blur sang to disco with foreign accent their own lilting, tongue-in-cheek tributes. In working class England where Britpop thrived, a disco look was at the time your affable, affordable yet still affected car boot sale polyester leisure suit. While certainly not as crucial as it had become in the 70s, when it was disco after all that gave way to strict door screening policies and a whole culture of questionable dress codes, it was still standard practice not so long ago for one's own outfits to be quite openly looked for and after.

Now, however, attitudes have changed. Vanity, in youth culture at least, is hastily downplayed. #wokeuplikethis selfies were a blast: the more idly put together your look appears, the better. As we've learned to drift from the gym to the nightclub with barely a change of clothing in between, the drawn-out ritual of dressing-up to perfection or to shock, once part of the fun, doesn't fit our 21<sup>st</sup> century impatience. And because the state of the planet is finally a shared concern, those almost exclusively synthetic fabrics raise doubts. Lamé is but one beat away from lame. At the same time, studies have noticed that we've become more indulgent towards privilege, with many popular celebrities now coming from wealth, meaning that even that evergreen hand-me-down charm is beginning to wear thin. Presently in between the *Amusing* and *Quaint* according to [Laver's Law](#), disco wear should hold about the same appeal as what's at the back of your American uncle's closet, supposing that's not where you've found it in the first place.

Why then against all odds, will we buy it still? All year round, the 2015 catwalks were suffused with unrestrained disco shine: from the girls at Christopher Kane, Rodarte or Dior couture to name a few, to the boys at Margiela, we've seen foil-like wovens, glazed pleats, coppery zigzag lurex and a swarm of rainbow-coloured sequins, with dewy post-club make-up to match – or in Katie Eary SS15 case, a full-on cosmic shimmer. Not only at night, halterneck dresses and playsuits, bandeau tops and clingy spandex disco pants paired with iridescent wedges in various degrees of audacity have flocked to the streets, as if just waiting for the strobe lights to be switched on. Maligned as the genre has been, we still sing along to disco tunes. Like magpies it would seem, we're drawn to sparkles almost by reflex.

When wondering how Daft Punk's properly disco track had swiftly become "*a hit with the millennial generation*", [New York Times'](#) James McKinley Jr. reasoned that "*what many seem to be responding to in Get Lucky is what lies at the heart of many disco hits: an upbeat message and danceable beat*". Could similar values possibly be what we're now looking for in fashion as well? Daft Punk themselves, lest we forget, were the face of Saint Laurent that season. True, when compared to the archetype, a bittersweet flavour sets this comeback apart – the inevitable product of present day melancholy and hindsight. If not tamed exactly, a certain sinister undertone simmers beneath the glitter. But the unashamed devotion and consistently cheerful pre-AIDS mindset of 1970s disco would be impossible to fully believe today, and perhaps for the best, seeing how it all went down back then. Rather than the by now dated *Get Lucky*,

maybe more suited to mid-twenty-tens sensibilities will then be Will Butler's recent release *Something's Coming*. The multi-instrumentalist younger brother of Arcade Fire's Win, Butler told [NOWNESS](#) how the song "*it's about the ominous human gloom with a disco beat, it's the apocalypse but we can dance*". 40 years down the line, with the infinite wisdom of our digital age, we're persuaded at last of the fickle nature of subcultures and trends, that this revival won't hold on any longer than the previous ones. Thankfully though, an updated, wittier kind of disco optimism happens to tempt us still. It prompts us to dance while it lasts. Or to look ahead, as [Josh](#) puts it in 1998 cult favourite *The Last Days of Disco*: "*disco was too great, and too much fun, to be gone forever. It's got to come back someday. I just hope it will be in our own lifetimes*".

---

POSTED: [HTTP://WWW.BURO247.RU/FASHION/TRENDS/POSLEDNIE-DNI-DISKO.HTML](http://www.buro247.ru/fashion/trends/poslednie-dni-disko.html) - 25 MAY 2015 - BY SILVIA BOMBARDINI