

There is something at the very core of the human soul that loves to dance. Regardless of race or creed, people have always danced and created music to dance to. So technically “dance music” could include everything from ballet music, to 17th century court dancing, to hip hop, to the tango. However, in the History of Rock, a specific style of music arose in the early 1980s, which we now refer to as Dance Music.

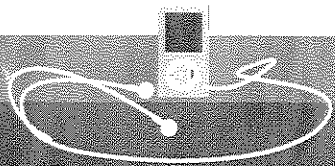
The Dance music of the 1980s was really an evolution of the disco music genre of the 1970s. It developed purely for the nightclub scene, and was designed to be used by a DJ, with each song flowing directly into the next. The major difference to disco music is the almost exclusive use of electronic instruments such as synthesizers and drum machines. The evolution of the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (**MIDI**) was an important factor in the growth of electronic dance music because until its development, electronic instruments were not able to be linked and synchronized. As computers developed the capacity to manage this interface, electronic music took off.

Many early songs from the dance music genre were available on 12” singles - 12” vinyl records that included several mixes (also known as ‘remixes’) of the same song. Although the basic song remains the same, each different version may have different vocalists, sound effects or instrumental sounds.

Electronic Dance music inevitably developed into various **sub genres** including House, Trance, Drums ‘n’ Bass, Hi-NRG, Techno and Electro. Each sub genre tends to be defined by its speed, drum patterns and whether it incorporates live vocals or instruments. Popular dance music of the 80s included many “one hit wonders”, such as Ce Ce Peniston (*Finally*), Technotronic (*Pump Up The Jam*) and C&C Music Factory (*Everybody Dance Now*). Some of the more well-established Dance Music groups include Duran Duran, The Pet Shop Boys, Silver Apples, A-ha, Goldie and The Prodigy.

The Dance Music genre has been largely driven by the development of new electronic technologies. As these technologies continue to grow and change, so too this genre will evolve.

Fast Facts



Time Span: 1980s - present

Influences: Disco

Primary Instruments: Electronic instruments such as synthesizers, drum machines and sequencers. Vocals are optional.

Sub-genres: House, Trance, Techno, Drums n Bass, Jungle, Electro, Acid Jazz

Major Artists: Duran Duran, The Pet Shop Boys, A-ha, The Prodigy

Fun Fact



Only one electronic dance music album has ever made it to number 1 on the Billboard 200 chart. It was “The Fat of the Land” by The Prodigy in 1997. It also made the Guinness World Records in 1999 for becoming the fastest-selling UK album.