

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
00:00:07	Oliver Wang	Host	<i>[Music continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]</i> Hello! I'm Oliver Wang, flying solo today because of technical issues in trying to get all of us taping remotely as part of our new covid protocol. But rest assured, Morgan Rhodes will be joining us again very soon. You're listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> , and this is one of our special audience episodes where we invite one of our fans to join us to talk about a heat rock—you know, an album that's hot, hot, hot. And as it were, today's pick is quite apropos, as it gave us the disco classic “Hot Stuff”. We are of course talking about Donna Summer's 1979 smash, <i>Bad Girls</i> .
00:00:40	Music	Music	“Hot Stuff” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer. <i>Looking for some hot stuff, baby, this evening</i> <i>I need some hot stuff, baby, tonight</i> <i>I want some hot stuff, baby, this evening</i> <i>Gotta have some hot stuff, gotta have some love tonight</i> <i>(Hot stuff)</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:00:59	Oliver	Host	By the mid-1970s, Donna Summer was the voice of disco music. And whatever stereotypes of disco culture that you might have—think the gold lamé, the mirror balls, men with a lot of chest hair rocking zodiac medallions—Summer's music might be tied to all of that but give her a proper listen and you'll realize how much she transcended those caricatures and was a fierce singer and songwriter in her own right. Backed by Giorgio Moroder and other practitioners of the Italo disco sound, Summer carved a path through the 1970s that culminated in this album: a two-disk, vinyl set that played loud and grooved hard, filled with some of Summer's most signature hits, including the title track and “Hot Stuff”. Coming out in the spring of '79, <i>Bad Girls</i> was one of the last great disco classics before the genre and Summer's interest in it would quickly fizzle away. When she sang on her hit, “Dim All the Lights”, perhaps she was inadvertently describing the waning appeal of disco itself. But if this was her swan song to the style that launched her career, she certainly made it a memorable one.
00:02:10	Music	Music	“Dim All the Lights” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer. <i>No need to worry darlin'</i> <i>Cause it's for eternity</i> <i>Love just don't come easy</i> <i>This you know I understand</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:02:27	Oliver	Host	<i>Bad Girls</i> was the album pick of our guest today. Real name, Phillip Merritt. But around here, we know him mostly by his Twitter handle, Lost in Williamsburg from which he's been showing us love from early, early on. Phillip, welcome to <i>Heat Rocks</i> . And tell our audience a little bit about yourself.

00:02:43	Phillip Merritt	Guest	Well, thanks for having me! I am a landscape architect. I live in Williamsburg, Virginia. Part-time artist, as well. I do a little bit of <i>[chuckling]</i> animation, music, all kinds of crazy stuff. And a big music fan.
00:02:57	Oliver	Host	Surprisingly, this is the first time that—on <i>Heat Rocks</i> that we have discussed a bonafide disco album. And we've certainly covered disco-adjacent albums, but not something that I think everyone universally recognizes as, "Oh, yeah, yeah, that's a disco joint." So, before we get into Donna Summer specifically, let's talk a little bit about our respective introductions to disco. And Phillip, how was it for you? How did disco come into your life?
00:03:22	Phillip	Guest	Well, you know, it was kind of a matter of timing. I was entering my high school years right when the disco craze hit. So, of course I was, you know, primed to really be influenced by that. And I don't know, I guess one thing I responded to, sort of being a closeted gay, young person—for me, disco was really kind of a freeing music. You know, I grew up in a small town in Texas—Sherman, Texas. And you know, most of the kids there were sort of into heavy metal, hard rock stuff. And I'll probably get a lot of grief for saying this, but I always kind of thought of hard rock as being music for mean people. And you know, disco is just so much more welcoming. And that's sort of one reason I responded to it.
00:04:04	Oliver	Host	I'm wondering at the time—I think now, when we talk about disco, we do recognize in a lot of ways the kinds of—the queer roots of it. And as someone who—I did grow up around disco, but younger than you, 'cause I was born in '72. So, my experience with it really came primarily as a child who used to watch—I don't know if you remember <i>Dance Fever</i> on ABC.
00:04:25	Phillip	Guest	Oh sure. Deney Terrio.
00:04:27	Oliver	Host	Right. Exactly. And <i>Dance Fever</i> —for those of you unfamiliar—was a dance reality competition show.
00:04:33	Music	Music	"Dance Fever – Theme Song" from the show <i>Dance Fever</i> .
			<i>Dance fever has come over me It started the other day</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:04:45	Oliver	Host	The main reason I watched it was because <i>Battlestar Galactica</i> would come on after. And so, <i>Dance Fever</i> was sort of the price I had to pay in order to get to <i>Battlestar Galactica</i> . But I think it has the foremost memory in my mind of sort of the style and sound of disco came through watching that show.
			Let's bring this back to Donna Summer and <i>Bad Girls</i> , in particular. So, why was this your heat rock choice?
00:05:07	Phillip	Guest	You know, I was going through—thinking through songs, and there was kind of this coincidence where I was, you know, listening to music streaming on my—on Napster, and this one particular song came on from the album, which is "My Baby Understands". Which is one of the songs that I really didn't remember at all. It's kind of a slow ballad. And it was a really terrific song. Sort of maybe go back and take another listen to the album. And when I did, I was just really surprised by how well I knew each of the tracks except for side three, which is where all the ballads were stuck together. It was just the one side that I didn't really listen to. But really, the songs

just came all flooding back. And I—you know—remember every beat, and it was just kind of surprising that it had that much impact. 'Cause I hadn't really listened to it in quite a while before I sort of rediscovered it.

00:05:58 Music Music

"My Baby Understands" from the album *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer.

*Whenever my baby goes away for a while
Like he does*

*No, I never need to worry ooh
Cause my baby loves me only*

Well, then I'm captured by desire

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:06:14 Phillip Guest

It's really a terrific album with first-rate songs all through. Of course, it's got these three absolutely killer hit singles. "Hot Stuff", "Bad Girls", "Dim All the Lights". But you know, all the tracks are really pretty good. You know, and this the is absolute peak of Donna Summer. You know. Some of her previous albums—you know, she had some strong tracks. She had a few hits here and there. But this is really the album where everything seemed to come together, and it's just sort of a terrific album throughout.

00:06:44 Oliver Host

This was certainly a bit of a revelation to me, because I realized even as big as Donna Summer was, as a disco icon, I had never really listened to much of her catalogue at all outside of things like "Bad Girls" and "Hot Stuff" and certainly "Love to Love You Baby" from '75, which was her first big disco hit. But besides that, most of her catalogue was actually largely a mystery to me. And I think if not for having to prep for today's chat with you, I don't know if I ever would've come across one of her early hits. This is from 1974, and it's a song called "The Hostage", which is a story song about a kidnapping. And it is—it is a bit of a surreal trip to listen to, considering that this was considered to be at least a minor hit at the time.

00:07:33 Music Music

"The Hostage" from the album *Lady of the Night* by Donna Summer.

They'd kidnapped my man and his life was in their hands

*He was a hostage, a hostage
His life was at the mercy...*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:07:49 Oliver Host

That first album, *Lady of the Night*—I think if you only know Donna through her disco stuff, listening to *Lady of the Night*'s gonna be a real trip. And it would be perhaps more understandable if that had been an album she had recorded let's say—you know—four or five years before "Love to Love You Baby". But *Lady of the Night* comes out in '74, which is just one year before "Love to Love You Baby". So, the fact that she makes this big turn from this multi-genre, very interesting songwriting to say the least on *Lady of the Night* to creating one of the first really, really well recognized, big disco hits with "Love to Love You Baby" in '75—I can imagine it would've

00:08:32	Music	Music	<p>given a listener a little bit of whiplash going from one style to the other.</p> <p>“Love to Love You Baby” from the album <i>Love to Love You Baby</i> by Donna Summer.</p> <p><i>I love to love you, baby</i> <i>I love to love you, baby</i> <i>When you're laying so close to me</i> <i>There's no place I'd rather you be than with me, me, uh</i></p>
00:08:45	Phillip	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p> <p>Yeah, you know. I think—you know—on that first album, she was going through a lot of different types of music. And it just happened to be that “Love to Love You Baby” was the one that hit. And so, she was kind of forced in some way to follow up on that, and that became the driving direction. Sort of a similar thing I think with “I Feel Love”, in which that again became a hit, and it had that sort of techno, synthesizer sound. And that became the sort of the determining sound—the techno sound. So, on following albums, it became more synthesizer based.</p>
00:09:26	Oliver	Host	<p>So, it's kind of random. I mean, maybe if she'd hit it with a rock song originally, maybe that's the direction she would've gone in. Right. And certainly, I think her coming into contact with and crossing paths with Giorgio Moroder out in Italy really changed the course of both of their careers, in terms of the ways in which that signature sound that you're talking about—the kind of techno electro style—is really developed through this collaboration between Moroder and Summer. And stylistically, I wanted to briefly touch bases on this too, is disco to me has always shared something in common—and this may not seem intuitive to a lot of people, but it shares something in common with country. Which is that I feel like they're both genres that have been largely defined by their caricatures.</p>
00:10:56	Phillip	Guest	<p>And so, with disco, it's both the look—and this goes back to also just the success of <i>Saturday Night Fever</i>—it's the look and sound of disco that we have in our head that has been so largely parodied through the decades. That has come to define what disco is to people. Which you don't—I feel like you don't really do that with other genres where it's not parodic version that becomes the defining version of it. But with disco as well as country music, I think people really tend to think of it as only being defined by this impression that gets lampooned and made fun of. And as a result, people don't realize the complexity and the diversity is the better way to describe it, is that there are so many different kinds of disco that existed during the 1970s. So, it's not just this one style that you see in the movies, but it's really this panoply of disco influenced styles.</p> <p>Yeah, and I think <i>Bad Girls</i> really starts to branch out from the standard disco sound, incorporating—you know—rock solos and it does even have a little bit of a country twinge on a couple of the songs. And you know, when <i>Bad Girls</i> came out, it was sort of at the tail end of the disco era. So, you know, Donna was really trying to branch out and get a little bit beyond that sound.</p>

00:11:20	Music	Music	<p>“On My Honor” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer.</p> <p><i>On my honor I will try, always do the best I can Though the tears may fall like raindrops From your eyes, honey</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:11:40	Oliver	Host	<p>We will be back with more of our conversation with Phillip Merritt on Donna Summer’s <i>Bad Girls</i> after a brief word from our fellow Max Fun podcasts. Keep it locked.</p>
00:11:47	Music	Transition	<p>“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.</p>
00:11:51	Promo	Clip	<p>Music: Inspiring music throughout.</p> <p><i>[The “testimonials” clip between different VOs. They are not talking to one another.]</i></p> <p>Speaker 1: I started listening to <i>Oh No Ross and Carrie</i> shortly after I broke my arm and the doctor had told me I’d never walk again.</p> <p>Speaker 2: I was allergic to water.</p> <p>Speaker 3: <i>[Ashamed]</i> Addicted to wheatgrass.</p> <p>Speaker 2: I knew it was time to make a change.</p> <p><i>[Music swells hopefully, to a dramatic crescendo]</i></p> <p>Speaker 4: There’s something about <i>Oh No Ross and Carrie</i> that you just can’t get anywhere else.</p> <p>Speaker 1: They’re thought-leaders, discoverers, founders.</p> <p>Speaker 2: Healers.</p> <p>Speaker 3: Luminaries.</p> <p>Speaker 5: Ross and Carrie don’t just report on fringe science, spirituality, and claims of the paranormal. They take part themselves.</p> <p>Speaker 6: They show up, so you don’t have to.</p> <p>Speaker 2: But you might find that you want to.</p> <p><i>[Music swells unbearably]</i></p> <p>Speaker 1: My arm is better. I can walk again.</p> <p>Speaker 3: <i>[Choking up]</i> Six months, no wheatgrass.</p> <p>Speaker 7: Just go to MaximumFun.org.</p> <p>Everyone: Thank you, Ross and Carrie!</p>

00:12:43	Promo	Clip	<p>Carrie Poppy: <i>[Hurriedly]</i> <i>Oh No Ross and Carrie</i> is just a podcast. It doesn't do anything. It's just sounds you listen to in your ears. All these people are made up. Goodbye.</p> <p>Music: Upbeat, fun music.</p> <p>Lisa Hanawalt: Hey, if you like your podcasts to be focused and well-researched, and your podcast hosts to be uncharismatic, unhorny strangers who have no interest in horses, then this is not the podcast for you.</p> <p>Emily Heller: Yeah, and what's your deal?</p> <p><i>[Lisa laughs.]</i></p> <p>I'm Emily.</p> <p>Lisa: I'm Lisa.</p> <p>Emily: Our show's called <i>Baby Geniuses!</i></p> <p>Lisa: And its hosts are horny adult idiots. We discover weird Wikipedia pages every episode.</p> <p>Emily: We discuss institutional misogyny!</p> <p>Lisa: We ask each other the dumbest questions, and our listeners won't stop sending us pictures of their butts.</p> <p>Emily: We haven't asked them to stop! But they also aren't stopping.</p> <p>Lisa: Join us on <i>Baby Geniuses</i>.</p> <p>Emily: Every other week on MaximumFun.org.</p>
00:13:20 00:13:22	Music Oliver	Transition Host	<p><i>[Music ends.]</i></p> <p>"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs. And we're back, here on <i>Heat Rocks</i>, talking about Donna Summer's hit 1979 double album, <i>Bad Girls</i>, with our special guest, Phillip Merritt.</p> <p>We were talking in the first half about the role of Giorgio Moroder, who produced this album, and his—as I mentioned earlier, his collaboration with Donna Summer really, I think, helped to define—the two of them working together really helped define both of their careers in a lot of ways. Moroder was considered to be one of the architects of what people describe as the Italo disco sound. And again, this is a reminder that disco—as we left off in the first half, disco had a lot of different styles to it. Moroder's was much more synthesizer based. He worked with—and I really liked your description in the first half, talking about Moroder as almost like this proto techno producer, because I think more so than perhaps others, he really was interested in exploring that area of electronic, synthesized sound.</p>

00:14:27 Phillip Guest Is this your favorite style of disco? Compared to let's say maybe the more organic—what you could describe as proto house side of disco that you saw coming out of places like New York?
Yeah, I really responded to that sort of synth sound. And it really was kind of pretty forward breaking. And you know, if you look at *Bad Girls*, it's sort of divided up into the four sides. And the fourth side, which had their sort of—the three most synthesizer-based hits was one that really stuck out for me.

00:14:48 Music Music “Lucky” from the album *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer.

*We talked for a while
And he told me it was nice
We laughed and we cried and
I knew that I could love him*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:15:03 Oliver Host Music simply just didn't sound like this. And I think by 2020 standards, we take for granted that electronic and synthesizer music was always part of some kind of pop music landscape that a lot of us grew up in. But it had to start somewhere. And so, if you listen to the differences between what people would've described as disco let's say in the early '70s as compared to what folks like Moroder, other Italo disco, other synthesizer disco people were doing, those are very different sounds. And I think that coming upon this—and I think, you know, a lot of people have pointed out that disco begins to really hit its zenith around the same time that movies like *Star Wars* are hitting. And so, the kind of intersection between science fiction and its popularity in pop culture with its very futuristic synthesizer sound that's happening in the same era, these things all meld together in a particular '70s sense of what the future would sound like.

00:16:00 Phillip Guest Yeah. I mean, I think Donna doesn't really get enough credit for being on the forefront of that electronic sound. And like you were saying, we kind of take it for granted now that I think *Bad Girls* really did set the template for all the commercial, blockbuster pop music that came along. And Beyonce, Lady Gaga, Rihanna—I mean, it all sort of goes back to *Bad Girls*, 'cause really I don't think there was another album like this before that. It really was kind of groundbreaking.

00:16:32 Oliver Host I've been talking a lot about Moroder, because I think Giorgio Moroder is the best known of these Italo disco producers. But of course, this album was co-produced—and I'm gonna perhaps butcher his name here—by Pete Bellotte. I think he co-produced the entire album. So, I did not wanna cut Pete out of this Pete Bellotte deserves at least half the credit alongside Giorgio Moroder for shaping the sound of this LP.

00:16:57 Phillip Guest You know, I think Harold Faltermeyer was really important to this as well. He's the guy that did the *Beverly Hills Cop* song, “Axel F”.

00:17:07 Music Music “Le Flic de Beverly Hills: Axel F.” from the album *Beverly Hills Cop* by Harold Faltermeyer.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:17:17 Phillip Guest And I was reading some things about the album, and it sounded like for some of the tracks, Giorgio Moroder wasn't around, and Harold Faltermeyer actually was in the control booth.

00:17:30 Oliver Host And so, let's bring this back to *Bad Girls*, here. Given that this is a four-sided LP, as we've been talking about, there's a lot to choose from. So, what song really stands out to you?

00:17:40 Phillip Guest Well, I would have to go with the obvious song, which would be "Hot Stuff", I think. *[Chuckles.]* I just remember at the time, that song was so exciting, because it sort of brought in some of these hard rock sounds into disco and was sort of making something new.

00:17:57 Music Music "Hot Stuff" from the album *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer.

Hot, hot, hot, hot stuff

Hot, hot, hot

Hot, hot, hot, hot stuff

Hot, hot, hot

How's about some hot stuff

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:18:17 Oliver Host "Hot Stuff", definitely a jam. Definitely a fire track. I know, pun intended in this case. So, I've waited to make this confession a little bit about this album in particular—and really, this style of disco—which is that there's a lot of disco that I love. And one of the things I forgot to say earlier is that my initial awareness of disco came as a kid who—you know, I was a '70s baby. But it wasn't really a style that I think I really got into until I started DJing. And having other, older DJs give me a sense of what disco could sound like beyond just that *Saturday Night Fever* template. And while this album I don't think—I think this album departs or is different from what you would've heard from The Bee Gees in the same era, but because it was so popular, because it was a very dominant style, it wasn't one that I really gelled with heavily.

And as much as I respect the work that Donna and Moroder and other folks from that school made, I always preferred the disco that was much more—I think obviously had its roots in R&B and funk, a little bit less so in the synth part of it. And so, weaving my way through this album was challenging, because there were a lot of long stretches to it where my gut reaction was, "I mean, this is cool, it's just not really my thing." But I think one of the things that helped switch my mind on that is my pick for the fire track, which is all the way—so, you picked track A-1. And I'm going all the way to, I believe it's either track D-1 or D-2, which is "Our Love".

00:19:48 Music Music "Our Love" from the album *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer.

And I have all I need to carry on

And my mind and body seem to understand

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:20:04 Oliver Host I think it's a really cool song in and of itself, but the thing that really jumped out to me when I was listening to it is when it gets to the hook or the bridge. And the drum programming sounded super familiar, and it just took me a few seconds to realize why. And I'm

00:20:24	Music	Music	like, “Oh my god, that sounds exactly like the drum programming on New Order’s ‘Blue Monday’.” “Our Love” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer. <i>Our love will last forever</i> <i>Our love will last forever</i>
00:20:36	Music	Music	<i>[One track fades into the next.]</i> “Blue Monday” from the album <i>Power, Corruption & Lies</i> by New Order. <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:20:42	Oliver	Host	It’s so similar, I thought perhaps it was just a coincidence, but then it occurred to me that this album was so big, most likely the people in New Order would’ve listened to it or it would’ve come through the radio in the UK. And sure enough, when I just did a little bit of research, they admit that they ripped off “Our Love”—or at least this part of “Our Love”—in order to make the distinctive drum programming on “Blue Monday”. So, I love this idea that this sort of—what we think of as a super emo group of synth poppers growing up in this depressing part of the UK during the early ’80s of austerity England were bouncing to Donna Summer from ’79 and deciding to use some of the ideas musically there to create one of the great synth pop new wave hits of the 1980s.
00:21:30	Phillip	Guest	Yeah, and it’s funny that you would mention that, ‘cause I was gonna pick that chorus of that song as one of my favorite moments. It just—the way that everything drops out, it’s just her voice and that drum program. It was just really striking at that time when I heard it. I don’t think there was anything like that on the radio.
00:21:49	Oliver	Host	It’s certainly distinctive, and especially just that <i>[sings the beat]</i> . I mean, that’s what you know from “Blue Monday”, for those of us who grew up around it. And just to hear the origins of it, which I had never known about was really a mindblower, because it was like, “My god, these are exactly the same. Could it be a coincidence?” And as it turns out, no, it was not a coincidence. So, there it is.

In terms of favorite moments on the album, I thought initially it was—for me it was going to be that—where the drum break or the drum programming comes in on that bridge or chorus for “Our Love”. But then it really dawned on me, because as someone who was listening through this album for the first time end-to-end, the moments that I got most excited for were the transitions between one song to another, because on parts of this album that were all dance tracks—and so, side A1, for example, is just three dance tracks in a row. The album is sequenced, and the songs are set at BPMs that basically mix the songs together in this seamless, nonstop disco mix style, which is how DJs would’ve described it back in the ’70s and ’80s. And I have certainly listened to albums that were sequenced so that there is this seamless transition from one song to another.

But this might have been the first—one of the first albums I’ve heard where that was made so deliberate. And again, it’s not just that this is a disco album. It is mixed like a disco DJ set. And I loved just the anticipation, in terms of when I could see one song was ending and

00:23:28	Music	Music	<p>where another was beginning. It was like, okay, how are they gonna make this transition? “Hot Stuff” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer.</p> <p><i>Hot stuff, baby, gonna need your love tonight</i></p>
00:23:40	Music	Music	<p><i>[One track transitions into the next.]</i> “Bad Girls” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer.</p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:23:49	Phillip	Guest	<p>Well, it sort of reminds me of another album that was really important to me as a teenager, which was the <i>Night at Studio 54</i>—I guess you would call it a soundtrack. But that was another double album where the—I can’t remember if that would’ve come out before <i>Bad Girls</i> or after it, but that was also—it had that sort of blending in between songs.</p>
00:24:12	Music	Music	<p>“Le Freak” from the album <i>C’est Chic</i> by Chic.</p> <p><i>Ah, freak out!</i> <i>Le freak, c’est chic</i> <i>Freak out!</i> <i>Ah, freak out!</i> <i>Le freak, c’est chic</i> <i>Freak out!</i> <i>Ah, freak out!</i> <i>Le freak, c’est chic</i> <i>Freak out!</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:24:35	Oliver	Host	<p>Totally makes sense. Right? If you are a disco producer, especially at this point at which disco has become a hit, why wouldn’t you do it like that? But because I’ve never sat with disco albums—I know mostly disco singles; I just never had heard this before. And now, people out there who are disco aficionados are probably like, “Dude, everyone did that on their LPs.” I didn’t know! You know? This is my introduction to it. So, those were my favorite moments on the album was just listening for those transitions between. Which I think maybe one reason—and this goes—this loops back to something you were mentioning about I think side C, which is all the ballads. Well, because they’re ballads, they have classic fade outs, so there’s none of this mixing segues. And those—that side was the most disappointing, because it didn’t give me what I wanted, which was, “Oh, how are you gonna get from this song to the next song?” In terms of what is the outro and intro sequencing gonna be like?</p>
00:25:25	Music	Music	<p>“One Night in a Lifetime” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer.</p> <p><i>One night in a lifetime</i> <i>And baby it should be tonight</i> <i>Baby it should be tonight</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>

00:25:47	Phillip	Guest	You know, that would actually be one of my only complaints about the album, would be the sequencing, and what you're saying about those slow songs being lumped together. Because there's some really terrific ballads on that third side, and I just completely ignored them as a kid. And it wasn't until I was older that I started listening to them. Yeah, I agree that it's great the way those songs segue into each other, but in some ways its got this kind of continuous thump. It's a little monotonous. So, I think that if they'd broken it up then maybe it would've improved the album just a hair.
00:26:20	Oliver	Host	I think that's a great point. I think partly I wonder how much of this was going to be dictated just by the particular physics of the format, if that makes any sense. Which is to say that if you're releasing something on vinyl LP, you don't—you can't really pack a side in with—especially an album of this length, you can't necessarily pack in a side that's gonna play loud. Which you want this album to play loud, because it's a disco album. You want DJs to be playing it as well as the home listener. So, they're not gonna try to put in seven/eight songs on a single side. I mean that, technologically, certainly existed, but it would've made for thinner grooves. It wouldn't have popped in the same way. And because I think they made a very deliberate decision to release this as a double album, it meant that they didn't have to over pack each of the sides. Anyways, we've been going on this long digression. We were talking about favorite moments. And so, again, my favorite moments are really all of the transitions between the dance songs on various parts of this album. Do you have a favorite moment or moments off this LP?
00:27:18	Phillip	Guest	You know, I would maybe say that the intro to "Bad Girls". It starts off a little subdued, and it just sort of swells and builds and builds. And then, you get this moment right before the verse kicks in, where—you know—the toot-toot, beep-beep comes in, and then that's overlapped with the live horns. And I think that's a pretty exciting moment on that album.
00:27:40	Music	Music	"Bad Girls" from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer. <i>Toot-toot, hey, beep-beep</i> <i>Bad girls, talking 'bout the sad girls</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:27:53	Oliver	Host	If you ran into someone who was completely unfamiliar with Donna Summer and you had to choose a song off of this album as a introduction to Donna and what she was about, what song would you use as that introduction?
00:28:06	Phillip	Guest	You know, I think maybe "Dim All the Lights". Because, you know, it's got that disco groove, but it's also a little bit—maybe a little bit more personal. And she was the sole songwriter on that one. So, I think that probably meant a lot to her. And she put a little bit more of herself into that song. And it's just a classic, great song.
00:28:27	Music	Music	"Dim All the Lights" from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer. <i>When you find the perfect love</i> <i>Let it fill you up</i>

*Dim all the lights, sweet honey
'Cause tonight it's you and me*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:28:47 Oliver Host What the ballads bring out I think are two things. It's number one—and this is to your point, Phillip, that Donna Summer was—she wasn't just a singer. She was a songwriter. She began her career writing songs. And I think throughout her whole big disco phase is that it wasn't just the voice behind the microphone. It's that she was very much an active creative partner in shaping these things. And the ballads are a way of letting some of that songwriting shine without being distracted in a sense, of all of the other dance and disco elements going on.

And we actually haven't spent any real time talking about her voice. And it's distinctive. It's able to stand out against the backdrop of the music. And the ballads are where you really get a sense of, you know, what the sliding doors, parallel universe might have been if disco had never become her main thing, but instead she had been—you know, recording torch songs throughout the '70s. I could've easily imagined her being, you know, much bigger in the world of R&B's quiet storm movement, for example.

00:29:47 Phillip Guest Yeah. I think one of the things that really works for me on this album is I think this is the album where she really found her true voice. You know? On some of the earlier albums, she would have more of a character voice, and you know, she would describe herself as a theatre actress and these songs were kind of performances. And she'd have her different voices. Her sort of ethereal sex angel voice or she had this—sometimes a kind of 1930s kind of “Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah” sort of thing.

[Oliver chuckles.]

But on this one, she's just more relaxed and more natural and she's losing some of those affectations. And I think it really works really well for her on this.

00:30:29 Music Music “Sunset People” from the album *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer.

*Sunset people, doing it right - night after night
Holding on to the last breath of life*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:30:44 Oliver Host If you had to describe *Bad Girls* by Donna Summer in three words, what would you choose?

00:30:49 Phillip Guest I would say archetypal.

[Oliver hums with interest.]

In that it did set the format for so much music that followed—this sort of synthesis of dance, beats, and electronic music. Which is sort of pretty much a dominant type of music you hear nowadays. You know, I guess I would say vivacious. Just because it's very fun. It's this kind of sexy album. And then, the third word maybe would

			be thump. <i>[Chuckling.]</i> Just because of that persistent thump that sort of goes through almost the entire album.
00:31:25	Oliver	Host	Well said.
00:31:26	Music	Music	“Bad Girls” from the album <i>Bad Girls</i> by Donna Summer.
			<i>(Toot-toot, hey, beep-beep, toot-toot, hey, beep-beep)</i> <i>(Toot-toot, hey, beep-beep, toot-toot, hey, beep-beep)</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:31:41	Oliver	Host	Lastly, for our audience members who liked this week’s album and want to figure out what to listen to next, myself and Phillip should have some recommendations here. And I’ll start things off. I would go back to one of the albums that’s really credited with helping to invent disco, which is Eddie Kendricks’s 1972 album on Motown, <i>People... Hold On</i> . And specifically, it’s the twelve-inch version of “Girl You Need a Change of Mind” off this LP that is considered almost universally as being one of the earliest disco hits before the term even really existed. But the whole album is incredible. To me, it is one of the all-time soul music, end-to-end killer albums. Even though—and I wanna be really clear about this—“Girl You Need a Change of Mind” is a really shockingly, deeply regressive, anti-feminist anthem. But the album—I still ride for the album as a whole.
			And again, even if this may not sound to people like what disco is supposed to sound like, it really was one of the earliest albums that helped to shape where the future of disco would go for the remainder of the ’70s.
00:32:47	Music	Music	“Girl You Need a Change of Mind” from the album <i>People... Hold On</i> by Eddie Kendricks.
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:33:04	Oliver	Host	Phillip, how about you? What do you think our audience members should be checking out next?
00:33:07	Phillip	Guest	So, I would suggest looking into Kelis. Because she’s also a singer that sort of became known for kind of a sexy novelty song. You know, “Milkshake”. Just sort of similar in the way that Donna Summer was known for “Love to Love You Baby”. But her album, <i>Food</i> , in some ways reflects Donna’s attempt to sort of get beyond that one persona. And while it still incorporates dance beats, it’s also got some of those organic horns, the rock sound that you find on <i>Bad Girls</i> .
00:33:41	Music	Music	“Jerk Ribs” from the album <i>Food</i> by Kelis.
			<i>It feels just like it should</i> <i>I wake up, this, this is what it looks like</i> <i>So don't miss this, this is what it looks like</i> <i>So call on me</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:33:59	Oliver	Host	Phillip, thank you so much for joining us on this episode of <i>Heat Rocks</i> . Where can people find you online? Obviously,

[@LostinWilliamsburg](#) on Twitter. But yeah, where can people find you online?

00:34:08	Phillip	Guest	<i>[Theme music fades in.]</i> Yeah, I've got my podcast—my audio drama, <i>Lost in Williamsburg</i> , which you can get on iTunes. And I put out my music of varying quality under the name of A Thousand Years from Now.
00:34:20	Oliver	Host	Thank you so much again for joining us. Thank you—and just thank you for just being such a supportive listener for us—you know—over the duration of our growing history. It's always nice to see our regulars, if you will, you know—enjoying the show. And we really appreciate it.
00:34:36	Phillip	Guest	Well, you guys do a great job on the podcast. I really love listening to it every week. So, thank you.
00:34:41	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
00:34:41	Oliver	Host	<i>[Music continues under the dialogue.]</i> You've been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:34:45	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by Thes One of People Under the Stairs. Shout out to Thes for the hookup.
00:34:51	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:34:58	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:35:03	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
00:35:13	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Cheerful ukulele chord.
00:35:14	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:35:16	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:35:17	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:35:18	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.