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YOU'RE MISSING: Frankie Knuckles

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Frankie Knuckles, the Godfather of house music, came on to the music scene as a DJ at the Continental Baths, a gay bathhouse in the basement of the Ansonia Hotel in New York City in the 1970s. The '70s club scene was very similar to the gay bathhouse scene at the time: pretty steamy -- perhaps a little too steamy to describe in great detail -- but it was basically characterized by a lot of sex, a lot of gay men hanging out of windows and an all-around "anything goes" mentality.

The kicker is that the scrappy, underground (literally) scene of New York's bathhouses was the birthplace of Frankie Knuckle's music career, where he started spinning old disco, R&B and soul tracks. After some time on the scene, he played various clubs in New York City, such as Better Days. His big break came in 1977 when he was asked to regularly play the newly opened Warehouse club in Chicago. It was at the Warehouse where Knuckles unleashed his drum machine-based tracks and remixes that would come to be the standard of house music. In fact, the term "house music" is derived from the music being spun at the Warehouse, (just take out the "ware").

The Warehouse was the place to be in Chicago's late-'70s nightlife scene. An old three-story warehouse in Chicago's west-loop industrial area meant for only 500 patrons, the Warehouse often had over 2000 people

crammed into its dark dance floor trying to get a piece of Knuckles' magic, (and trying to get a piece of each other).










“In the early days, between '77 and '81, the parties were very intense. They were always intense, but the feeling that was going on then, I think was very pure. The energy, the feeling, the feedback that you got from the room, from the people in the room, was very, very spiritual,” recalls Knuckles.

In 1982, management at the Warehouse doubled the admission, driving away the original crowd, as well as Knuckles. The Godfather went on to open his own club, the Power Plant. He played there until it closed in 1986. After the Power Plant, Knuckles DJ'd at Delirium in the UK for four months before coming back to New York.

After moving back to NYC, Knuckles immersed himself in producing, remixing, and recording. He put out his first album in 1991, *Beyond the Mix*. The album featured his biggest hit, “[The Whistle Song](#).”

Knuckles worked with big names throughout the '90s, remixing tracks for the likes of Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Luther Vandross, Toni Braxton, and Eternal. In 1997, he won a Grammy Award for Remixer of the Year, Non-Classical. In 2005, he was inducted into the Dance Music Hall of Fame for his outstanding career as a DJ.

Knuckles, (along with his colleagues Larry Levan and Jamie Principles), founded what today has become some of the hottest music on the scene. His house rhythms of the '70s opened the world to the possibilities of making house music, as well as eventually (and indirectly) electronic and DnB. Whether or not they're aware of his work, all of today's DJs owe respect and gratitude to the Godfather of House music, Frankie Knuckles.

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Frankie Knuckles - "The Whistle Song"

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