

JUHA SOININEN

MOVE YOUR BODY (2 THE 90'S) UNLIMITED EURODANCE



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90's)**

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Juha Soininen

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Cover design: Juha Soininen

This is a revised and international version of the book Move Your Body -
Rajaton eurodance (ISBN 9789515683137, BOD, 2019)

Kustantaja: BoD – Books on Demand, Helsinki, Suomi

Valmistaja: BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Saksa

ISBN: 9789528026303

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INTRO

*"I've got this feeling
Somebody dance with me..."*

...echoed out of of my tape recorder, which I had inherited from my sister. What was this melodic goodness from heaven, I wondered? Previously I had only been exposed to schlager (which my parents were always listening), but this was something else entirely. Fierce and deep male voice rapped in between and a lady with an amazing voice blasted out the catchy refrain. This was accompanied by an enchanting bassline and a piano.

The year was 1993.

For me it started from there. I started to buy audio cassettes and when I got a CD player for Christmas, I started to collect CD's. Many dance collections and albums refined my taste and got me to hunger for this European electronic sound more and more.

The previously mentioned first eurodance song I heard was DJ Bobo's *Somebody Dance With Me*. It was followed by a bunch of other artists who tried to grab my attention: Culture Beat, Haddaway, 2 Unlimited, Pandora, Flexx, Rob'n'Raz etc. Eurodance was here to stay.

Or so it seemed.

Years went by and eventually the genre faded and started to change its shape. Around the millennium, I started to get interested in anonymous DJ's and their instrumental trance songs and started to forget eurodance...

At the moment about 25 years has passed since eurodance's golden age. Eurodance was at its best during 1992-1996. When a new century was approaching, new dance music genres started to appear in the mainstream. For example trance, dream dance and bubblegum (which developed from euro) started to take over the charts so much that you could basically declare eurodance dead.

Although there are a lot of books about music, there seems to be a marginal number of books written about electronic music, especially electronic pop. One of the reasons I'm writing this book, is that there has never been a single book concentrating just in classical eurodance, even worldwide (and in English).

However, there are books that have some eurodance artists. American James Arena has done several interview books about 70's and 80's dance music artists. He has written one book, *Stars Of 90's Dance Pop: Hitmakers Discuss Their Careers*, which has interviews from the likes of Dr. Alban, Haddaway, La Bouche etc. Although it has a wider spectrum of 90's dance artists, it's a good steppingstone for this book. In addition to Arenas book, there has been a couple books written about this genre in in German and in French. They are a little undetailed and call almost all 90's dance music eurodance (I'm going to prove that eurodance and 90's dance music are not one and the same) and they don't approach the subject on a larger scale as I have. Talking about eurodance is mainly concentrated on the Internet, where there are a lot of pages devoted to the genre. These sites mainly have a different views of what eurodance is.

One of my objectives with this book is to define the genre more clearly. The term eurodance is used for vain and too often in connection with many other electronic music genres. When talking about eurodance (for short euro) usually people include all dance music made in Europe. Euro or in sometimes the term classical eurodance is a standout style which has its own characteristics.

Especially in Finland, national discussion about euro has negative or condescending nuances as if to show that it is subordinate to other more appreciated dance music genres like house and techno. One example is to add nickname *eurohumppa* to it.

With my book, I want to give respect to the genre and go into it more deeply than any one has gone before. I'm going beyond the stage performers (which were always not the ones who sang the songs) and the most famous hits. There are interesting stories behind the songs and song writers, which usually don't get the visibility they deserve. Media's interest usually doesn't go beyond the leading figures. I want to give voice also to those artists and producers, which the large audience have never even heard of. One of my main missions is to offer new information and surprising connections especially to eurodance aficionados.

I have no education in music, but I've been a buff for over 25 years, so my approach is largely subjective. My perspective is of a listener. My apologies for the reader if I use wrong musical terms in some point. My focus is on the music itself, how does it sound, but I won't talk a lot about the technical side.

If you happen to be Finnish, this book is a revised version of my eurodance book released in Finland in 2019. The main differences are that most of the Finnish artists have been removed and several new interviews added. I have also corrected some errors of the first edition. Also, my excuses for grammar mistakes in this book, my native language is Finnish.

This book is my tribute to the greatest electronic music genre. It's hedonistic and feverish rhythm and strong production have helped me to carry on in the midst of all my personal problems.

So welcome to the world of eurodance and:

MOVE YOUR BODY!

ABOUT THE SOURCES

I have used many sources in making this book. The ones I've used the most are Eurokdj, Wikipedia and Discogs. In addition, I have used my music collection and interviewed artists and producers, if that option has been available to me. In many cases I have had to rely on information published in the web.

I have intentionally left out all the artist discographies because they would have taken too much space in the book. You can check the credits and other information from www.discogs.com.

The pictures are from my own personal CD collection, if not mentioned otherwise. The photographer is Henri Kumlander.

WHAT IS EURODANCE?

First we must define what eurodance really is. There are probably as many definitions as there are euro fans. For me it has always been a genre which lived in the 90's and it's golden age was 1992-1996. Usually it's a European song, which is quite energetic and fast, *120-150 bpm* (hits/beats per minute) and it comprises of a woman singing the catchy refrain and the man (usually colored) rapping in between. Sometimes rap parts are performed in raggamuffin (heavy Jamaican accent) style. It could sometimes be also a song performed by one man or woman with no raps. Lyrics are usually quite simple, only a one sentence repeating over and over again.

Yle reporter Heidi Sommar states in an article that eurodance used synth riffs and simple melodies. Music magazine Rumba's reporter Anton Vanha-Majamaa defines it like this: synth riff, male rapper, women singing sharply but he considers the beat being slower, 110-130 bpm.

Usually eurodance songs are melancholic but on the other hand lots of cheerful songs were also made. Bubblegum dance and eurodance are often considered one and the same, although that is not the case. Bubblegum is really naive and has lighter sound and vocals. On the other hand, artists like Scatman John and Me & My are something in between those two genres.

Eurodance is NOT any European dance music. Usually euro house and eurodance are considered to be the same thing. In my opinion eurohouse is like a second cousin to eurodance: although it incorporates some of the characteristics of it, it has lighter feel to it, relying more on house and soulful vocals. Artists like Livin' Joy, Whigfield and Robin S represent eurohouse. Also dance-pop is basically eurohouse, for example boybands like East 17.

Eurodance is still being made today but not in the same extent that most people think. Contemporary artists who make euro are bands like Digital Base Project and Acting Lovers who make authentic 1990's sound with today's technology. Eurodance is music of the 90's and or its made with 90's sounds. For example, when Culture Beat released *Mr. Vain* in 2003 with a reloaded sound, it wasn't anymore eurodance. It was a reproduction made in hard trance style (and quite fantastic I might say).

Karine Sanche, who is behind the biggest eurodance encyclopedia in Web, sees it otherwise. In her opinion eurodance is (addition to classical euro) bubblegum, happy hardcore, trance, dream dance and hands up. My definition is a whole lot narrower. Although the genres Karine mentioned have traces of euro, I wouldn't use that word in connection with these genres.

People behind the upcoming eurodance movie *Neverending Dream* have even larger view of the genre. In the project's homepage has been described that it's 90's dance music, music of your childhood; music that moves you and begets deep emotions.. This definition is based strongly on the feeling, not caring too much about genre boundaries.



Now more than ever is time to move your body to the 90's because the first book about classic eurodance is here!

A genre which blossomed from 1992 to 1996 has finally been presented here in this book, it gives voice to many familiar and unfamiliar faces. More than 60 interviews include e.g. Maxx, La Bouche, CB Milton, Captain Jack, Lori Glori, Sandy Chambers, Robyx, Culture Beat, Maxxima, Magic Affair, E-Rotic and many others.

There's no limit!!

