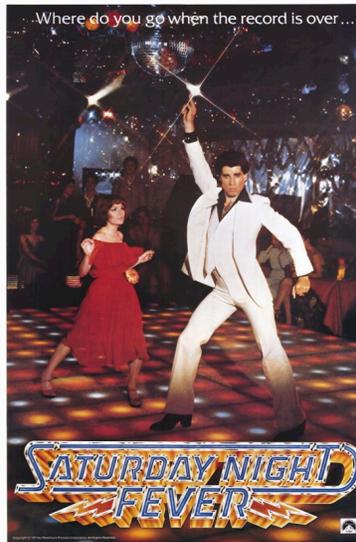


## Saturday Night Fever



Source: Diener-Hauser

While Disco music was already popular in 1977, the film *Saturday Night Fever*, released in December of that year, turned it into a mass cultural phenomenon. The film centers around the life of Tony Manero, a working class 19-year-old from Brooklyn who finds local stardom as a dancer at a neighborhood discotheque. The film made John Travolta, who played Manero, a superstar, and the soundtrack album, featuring music by the Bee Gees and other groups, became the best selling album of 1978. The vast commercial success of the film and album helped secure Disco's place as one of the era's most popular forms of music.

Below are two quotes about the film, from noted film critics Roger Ebert and Pauline Kael:

"[*Saturday Night Fever* is] a dark tale about a dead end kid who seeks glory on the dance floor.... This movie kinda shook free from the general depression and drabness of the political and musical atmosphere of the seventies and remembered that was what music was really about, especially if you're young. It's having a good time, going out there, and dancing. It's Saturday night."  
 -- Roger Ebert, quoted in Ralph Giordano, *Social Dancing in America*, 2007

"Inside the giant disco hall, the young working-class boys and girls, recent high-school graduates who plod through their jobs all week, saving up for this night, give themselves over to the music.... They dance the L.A. Hustle ceremonially, in patterned ranks -- a mass of dancers unified by the beat, stepping together in trancelike discipline.... At its best... *Saturday Night Fever* gets at something deeply romantic: the need to move, to dance, and the need to be who you'd like to be. Nirvana is the dance; when the music stops, you return to being ordinary."  
 -- Pauline Kael, "Nirvana," *The New Yorker*, December 26, 1977