

# SexionQ Dance Mx NYC

*Bringing the Big Apple's Mainstream Fodder to the Dance Floor*

By Ian Drew

New York City has often been considered a pinnacle of the dance club universe. It is there that such legendary clubs as the Palladium, Sound Factory, Paradise Garage and Limelight came to pass and it is also there that legendary DJs the world over emigrate once they have made it into clubland's vicious inner circle.

Now known as The Beat of New York, WKTU 103.5 FM went on the air with its current format in February of 1996 and proceeded to keep New Yorkers under its hypnotic spell ever since. Just decades earlier, it had defined the disco sound in the late 1970s. Returning to its rhythmic roots, it again became an omnipresent voice on the satellite stations airing the music that had become a staple in the city that refuses to sleep.

WKTU specializes in the same popular high energy, heavy dance mixes that pulsate nightly from such scorching locales as the Roxy, Tunnel and Twilo. Its DJs have become local celebrities in a town that both worships and doesn't recognize fame. While other radio stations are busy smooching up to rap stars or keeping the teeny boppers happy with repeat samplings of *Bye, Bye, Bye*, WKTU keeps its mix of pop, house and semi-trance walking the line between cutting-edge and mainstream for dance music aficionado in every borough.

Its annual Holiday Jingle Ball extravaganza brings in the hottest stars in the music world, including Cher, Deborah Cox, Bette Midler and Whitney Houston.

Even RuPaul was recruited to do the morning show several years ago. WKTU is considered so in line with trend that major pop stars clamor up to VP of Programming Frankie Blue's window just to have remixes of their songs played on the air.

It is from this well-endowed chasm that DJ Riddler has emerged. Riddler attempts to bring WKTU's dance music pantheon in line with the popular *NOW!* and *Totally Hits* compilations that have dominated the charts upon each release the world over for the last few years.

The premise here is simple: record labels take the hottest singles of the day,

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assemble them onto one album and then sell them as recorded versions of popular radio formats without commercial interruption.

Tommy Boy's Silver Label has sought to market WKTU's format in this way by releasing *Dance Mx NYC*. On the just released collection, DJ Riddler takes the most popular dance songs from the clubs and WKTU's platinum airwaves right into your own stereo. In a way, it is a good place for WKTU's type of programming to be.

All of the latest big dance hits that can

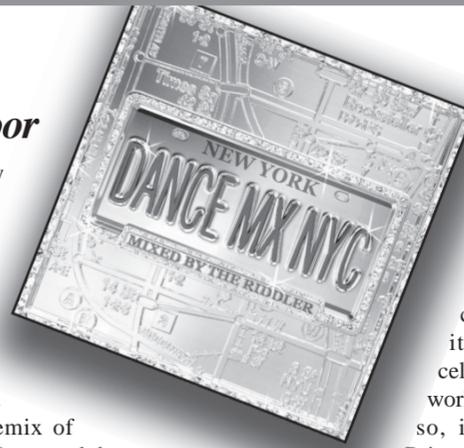
be heard on gay night at any nationwide nightclub are here. Tamia is doing her thing on the overplayed Thunderpuss Remix of *Stranger in my House* and dance star Amber says *Yes!* again and again and again.

The real guilty pleasures here are the rare gems that most club DJs only throw in at the end of a long night when they have to pull out all the stops without repeating mixes that they already used earlier.

Of these, the best by far are Spice Girl Melanie C's *Never Be the Same Again* and Da Buzz's *Let Me Love You*. The former, who's artist is best known as Scary Spice and for her solo outing with the dance floor smash *I Turn to You*, returns with another anthem that longingly calls for love before the night must end. Ho hum, a common theme, but not entirely misrepresented and it actually serves its purpose rather nicely here.

The collection should be a favorite of those who favor mainstream remixes and nonstop energy. There a few missteps though that almost throw it entirely out of balance.

Of these is the closer on the album, *Imagine* by Sir Ivan. Just when one would have thought John Lennon would already be rolling over in hisgrave, Riddler pulls this



out. A soaring edit by Lake N Rizzo, the triple beat tempo waters down the lyrical content by trying to turn it into a subdued celebration in spite of the world's problems. In doing so, it attempts to mock Prince's 1999. One would like to cringe after first hearing this but once encapsulated in the

beat, it is hard to turn back. You are clearly trapped and wishing for the useless remix to end.

Also watch out for Digital Allies' *Without You* that plays like a Neal Diamond ballad running through a factory of minimum-wage immigrant remixers.

I would like to say that this is a superior collection that reflects the best of New York City dance music. I cannot. But I also cannot say that WKTU is usually responsible for such programming. There are simply too many real underground mixes and genres being created daily in the city to focus on just a few so it is really nobody's fault.

However, for a collection of typical and commonly heard mainstream hits mixed seamlessly by Riddler, this collection falls very well into the compilation line and refuses to slow down. WKTU might not represent the underground as fluently anymore but it plays what most people seem to want to hear. That is all it takes to make it and collections such as these true hits.

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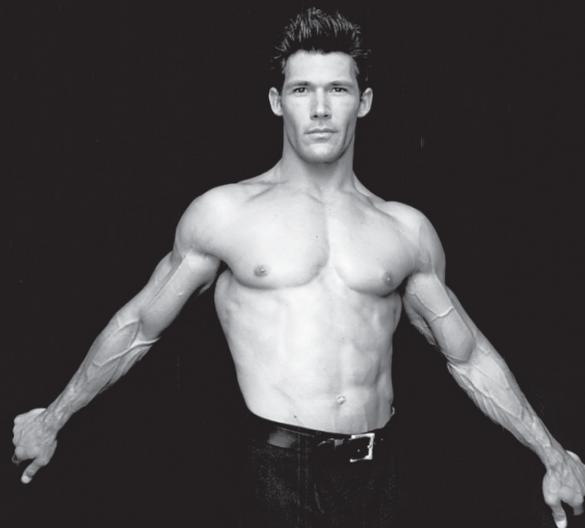
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