

Fake Music Re-Anticipations

Steve Dahl – Disco Demolition Night
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On Christmas Eve 1978, Chicago FM station WDAI (94.7 FM) shifted its programming focus from album-oriented rock to disco. Concomitant with this stylistic adjustment, "Steve Dahl's Rude Awakening" was cancelled and Steve Dahl fired. Over the next seven months, Dahl developed a radio campaign "dedicated to the eradication of the dreaded musical disease known as DISCO" culminating in a promotion for Chicago FM station WLUP (97.9 FM) in July 1979 at Comiskey Park, home stadium of the Chicago White Sox. Dahl invited listeners to bring disco records they wanted to see destroyed to the event, promising a 98-cent admission to the stadium (98 FM being the call number of WDAI) to attendees who brought records. Over seventy thousand people converged for the event. Attendees grew restless before the planned demolition: thousands of anti-fans gathered outside, unable to enter the filled stadium and from within, fans flung LPs as Frisbees. As Dahl exploded the crate of records in center field at halftime (specifics on the detonation are hazy – but accounts have fragments of records propelled high into the air) attendees rushed the field, lighting bonfires, destroying the batting cage, and rendering the field unfit for play.

Contra Dahl's avowed revulsion, from a purely material standpoint, the disco demolition effectively compressed the compilation and circulation of an archive into the duration of a single halftime spectacle. To be sure, white-supremacist and homophobic paranoia underwrote the mobbed violence of the event; thus if we figure this event as a *release*, the force of such violence must be counted among the release's constituents. That said, if Dahl bemoaned disco for its fluidity, unboundedness, and ambience – all of which threaten rock and roll's hardness – his act only served to extend the material influence of disco's ambient cloud by literally releasing these grooves into the air.

As we know from physics, a particle is a wave. In other words each particle has its *vibe*. Of course we can't reissue the records destroyed at Comiskey Field and we won't reissue Dahl's call for their destruction. Pragmatics and ethics aside, if we are to *vibe* with the particles released into the atmosphere at Disco Demolition Night, we must let them continue on their current currents. In the interests of residing in and reading this subtler groove, we are unable to assume a stance other than a receptive one. Our work then is to note the influence that persists, not to influence its persistence.

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