Menergy: San Francisco’s Gay Disco Sound

[Louis Niebur](https://www.facebook.com/louis.niebur?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWl_u-j_iNc9SK6SYqVkxFWdwGJZB9OStqgO1Otk10ZWserTJIdYWWi4H_q32ht9qA_yPbPfe3Qj33aPYYRD9EiuwSssi8GHu2x456njrkOH8Xh9hHyMR2Wk7CnwlooC_yIMgIc8gGt9Wikqc2awfoi&__tn__=-%5dK-y-R) (2022)

This is a marvelous book, and it impressed me very much. Its 277 pages I think do justice to that disco and Hi-NRG phenomenon that meant so much to our queer music culture. I came out in 1978 and while in Norfolk and Houston in the years covered, I was following San Francisco’s music scene, so I remembered many of the songs and artists discussed.

I was amazed at the depth and organized focus Niebur was able to bring to the conversation. He did some Deep research and that did not come across as overly academic, but very focused and organized.

Of course, he covered all the expected areas: Sylvester and Patrick Cowley, the Weather Girls, Paul Parker Loverde, and more. And the producers and DJs, (like Bleckman and Hedges) and record labels Moby Dick, Megatone, Fantasy and many other offshoots; and the Clubs (ie, Trocadero Transfer, I-Beam). As the story of the sound evolved, so did the story of how AIDS crept in and slowly decimated the dream.

Cowley’s early death (1982) stopped his meteoric rise that included his own hits and assisting on those of Sylvester and others. Sylvester’s own journey was challenged by a controlling record label that did not want him “too gay.” Niebur also expertly details the cultural angles of the city, such as the ubiquitous “Castro clones” and how that too changed over time. Thanks for saving this history.
Bravo, Louis!