# The Evolution and Decline of Remixing in Dance Music



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In the 1990s, a groundbreaking remix could significantly boost, or even revive, an artist's career. Fatboy Slim's remix of Cornershop's "Brimful of Asha" propelled the indie band to the top of the British charts. Similarly, Andrew Weatherall's rework of Primal Scream's track transformed it into "Loaded," and Todd Terry’s remix of Everything But the Girl’s "Missing" launched the band into the electronic music scene.

In the 1990s, remixes were celebrated for their bold artistic transformations. Boston producer Armand van Helden's remix of Tori Amos's "Professional Widow" and Paul Oakenfold's rework of Happy Mondays' "Wrote for Luck" exemplified this era's inventive spirit, leading to mainstream chart success.

Remixes have their roots in the disco era of the 1970s, where 12-inch singles allowed for extended dance versions of popular songs. In the 1980s, producers like Shep Pettibone and Jellybean Benitez created elongated versions for artists such as Madonna, keeping them connected to dance music trends.

However, in contemporary times, the commercial impact of remixes has diminished. Wez Saunders, chief executive of Defected, attributes this to the digital music era, social media, and streaming platforms which have significantly altered music consumption. The necessity for multiple CD single releases in the 90s pushed songs to chart success, a strategy no longer relevant in today's digital landscape.

Additionally, contemporary remixes tend to be shorter, favoring the streaming format, limiting their chart success. This shift has resulted in record labels becoming more conservative, often commissioning predictable and controlled remix results, according to Paul Woolford, a Grammy nominee for best remixed recording in 2023.

Despite the current trends, remixes still play a role in artist discovery and cross-genre promotion. Notably, Woolford’s recent remix of Calvin Harris and Eliza Rose's track blended various genres and received positive reception from a major label like Sony.

While the landscape has changed, there are still moments of artistic ambition within the remix community, providing hope for the future of this transformative art form.