

TECHNO SHUFFLE

Rave Culture and The Melbourne Underground

by Paul Fleckney

New York 1978, London 1988, Melbourne 1998. Twenty years on from the disco revolution and a decade after acid house, Melbourne's warehouse party scene was at its peak. Mixing American dance music with English rave culture, Melbourne's raving pioneers created a thriving underground scene that paid homage to both '70s punk and the '80s gay dance party. As the British rave dream soured and Anna Wood's death turned out the lights in Sydney, Melbourne's raves became world famous. Every weekend in 'Techno City', thousands of ravers expressed their freedom through music, ecstasy and dancing the Melbourne shuffle. And yet for the majority of Melburnians during this time, their only contact with this secret subculture was the occasional scare story in the media or an early morning encounter with a brightly dressed raver trying to find her way home. This book hopes to change that.

Informed by the author's interviews with over 40 DJs, promoters, artists and partygoers, including many voices that have never before been heard, Techno Shuffle traces rave's evolution from tiny underground clubs to vast waterfront wonderlands sparkling with creativity. We meet the personalities and places that shaped a subculture and we learn how bitter rivalries, the internet and a city on the move ultimately tore the scene apart.

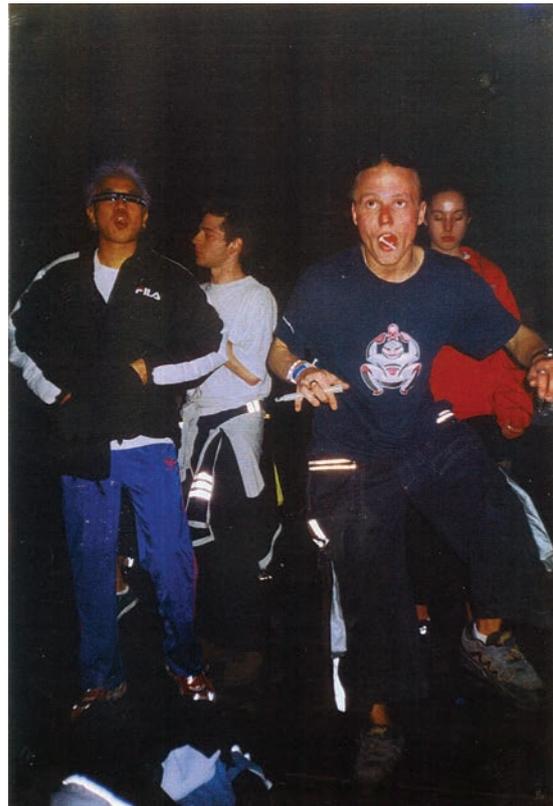
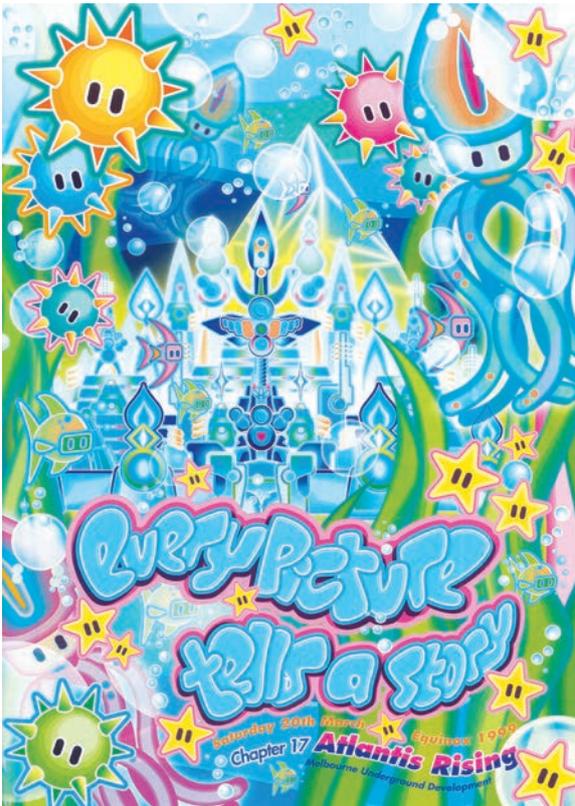
Techno Shuffle unfolds against a backdrop of post-war migration, gay and lesbian rights, the AIDS crisis, Australian drinking culture, the Melbourne gangland killings and the global ascendancy of dance music. During these anxious times in our post-truth age, '90s rave teaches us the value of freedom, community and respect. Let the party begin.



The Author

Paul Fleckney is a writer, educator and researcher. He teaches urban planning at the University of Melbourne.

Paul grew up in England and became fascinated in rave during 1988's 'Second Summer of Love'. Too young to experience the acid house explosion firsthand, he read the hysterical headlines in the press and watched the pantomime of moral panic play out on TV. A keen techno music fan, Paul remembers well the bitter disappointment he felt when he first stepped inside a nightclub. He pronounced rave dead, buried beneath a thousand commercial 'choons' and a sticky beer-stained carpet. But then a conversation with Melbourne DJ Brewster B. in 2013 renewed his interest in rave. As Paul listened to Brewster's fascinating and outrageous stories, he realised that through writing about rave he could share in a subculture that had not only eluded him for 25 years but also had transformed the lives of thousands of young Melburnians.



top: Banner. Credit: Voodoo. Courtesy of Phil Woodman.

left: Flyer for Every Picture Tells A Story 17, 20 Mar 1999. Credit: The Shelter Foundation. Courtesy of Courtesy of Natural 1.

right: Mick Smith (2nd from right) at Hardware 15, Shed 14, The Docks, Jul 1999. Credit: Mick Smith.