

Sylvester's 1979 Concert At The San Francisco War Memorial Opera House Will Be Released In The Fall



Sylvester's concert at the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House from 1979 will be released for the first time later this year. *Live At The Opera House* will be the first time the full concert has been available to the public. Excerpts of the show were previously heard on his 1979 album *Living Proof*. The new release has remastered audio and all 13 songs from the show including "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)," "Dance (Disco Heat)," and a recording of the mid-concert ceremony when Sylvester was awarded the Key to San Francisco. *Live At The Opera House* comes out September 6th via Craft Recordings on 3 LPs, 2 CDs, as well as HD and standard digital. Both the 3-LP

edition (which is pressed on purple vinyl and housed in a gatefold jacket) as well as the 2-CD set include recently discovered photographs from the evening, plus new liner notes by Joshua Gamson, author of *The Fabulous Sylvester: The Legend, The Music, The Seventies in San Francisco* (Henry Holt/Picador, 2005). Sylvester told *The Advocate* in 1977 about his desire to perform at the venue.

“I have no real projections except I want to play the San Francisco Opera House. I am—and I’m saying this—I am going to play the opera house! It’s going to be a fabulous show with a full orchestra, lots of costumes, lots of lighting and lots of everything. Lots! And whenever you think you have too much, you should put on more, just to be safe.” –Sylvester, in an October 1977 interview with *The Advocate*.

Sylvester’s concert was a personal achievement but it was also seen as an important moment for San Francisco’s LGBTQIA+ community because the state’s first openly gay elected official, Harvey Milk, had been fatally shot months earlier. Gamson wrote,

“Milk had been a symbol of gay power and, now, anti-gay brutality. Sylvester had become an icon of joyful gayness and self-possessed unconventionality. To a lot of people, Milk’s death felt like their own, and Sylvester’s success felt like their victory and their vengeance.”

A year before the show Sylvester became famous for his hit records “Dance (Disco Heat)” and “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real). His powerhouse backup singers Martha Wash and Izora Rhodes who later became The Weather Girls performed with him at the opera house. He was a disco queen who dared to be out about his sexuality at a time when the music industry and society shunned it. The first single from the album is an extended version of “Body Cut.” *Live At The Opera House* can be [pre-ordered](#) now.

