

# Nile Rodgers & CHIC Play Tiny Desk

Watch Nile Rodgers & CHIC play NPR's Tiny Desk room. The dance/R&B/hip-hop pioneer took the audience through all five decades of his work starting with his 1978 hit "Le Freak." He shared songs he wrote for others including Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out" Sister Sledge's "We Are Family" and David Bowie's "Let's Dance." Chic's intersection with hip-hop comes from The Sugarhill Gang's famous sampling of "Good Times" on their song "Rapper's Delight." Rodgers performed both songs surprising the crowd by rapping. The "Get Lucky" collaboration with Daft Punk was also on the setlist. Vocalist and keyboard player Russell Graham let everyone know that Rodgers wrote the score for *Coming To America* with a mighty falsetto led snippet of the Soul Glo advertisement song from the movie. Rodgers and his band are currently on [tour](#) in Australia and will be in Las Vegas and the Bahamas before the year is over.

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## Throwback: Chic-Dance, Dance, Dance



Chic debuted as a band in 1977 with their self-titled album which was mostly written and produced by co-founders Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards. "Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah)" was their first single and they had conceptualized it as a tribute to American dance marathons of the 1920s and 1930s. Producer and songwriter Kenny Lehman worked with them on the song as a co-writer and producer. They were inspired by American dance contests of the 1920s and 1930s and they added a jolt of funk with their interpretation of the actor Gil Young's phrase 'Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah' from the movie *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* Tony Thompson's boxy-sounding drum kit, symphonic strings plus Rodgers and Edwards' rhythm and bass guitars were the height of musicianship in disco music. Norma Jean Wright was the lead vocalist and Alfa Anderson, who would become the lead singer on the next album, provided background vocals with Luther Vandross.

Models Valentine Monnier and Alva Chinn who was one of the early Black models were photographed for the album cover. "Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah)" was a big record

for Chic scoring Top Ten and Top 40 chart positions domestically and abroad as well as a Gold certification. They considered themselves the rock band of the disco world with their global dance anthems which would be sampled and covered endlessly in the future. The album was remastered and reissued in 2006 and 2011. In 2018, Chic released *It's About Time* after a 26-year hiatus with a new lineup. In 2023, Rodgers won two Grammy Awards for co-writing "Cuff It" on Beyoncé's *Renaissance* album and a Special Merit Lifetime Achievement Grammy. Nile Rodgers & Chic are currently on the Duran Duran Future Past Tour.

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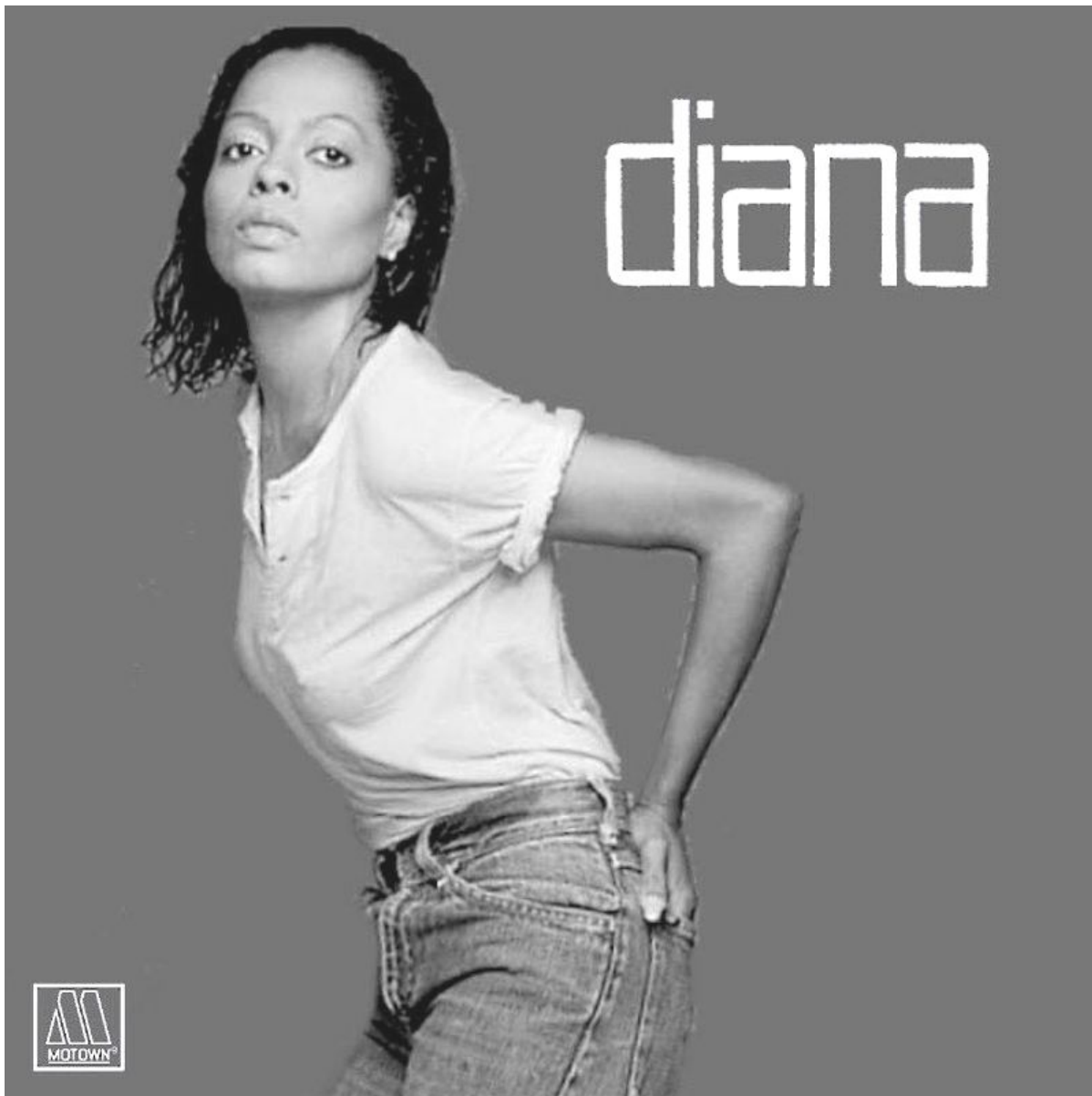
## Throwback: Diana Ross-Upside Down

Diana Ross's 11th studio album was simply titled *Diana* and it would make the biggest impact of her solo career. Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards exclusively produced the album and gave it classic danceable grooves that crushed the disco backlash. Their work as the group Chic was one of the best things about music in the '70s and no one could forget "Le Freak" and "Good Times." Influential DJ Frankie Crocker had warned Ross about the album failing because of the attitudes towards disco at the end of the decade and she had it remixed by Russ Terrana. The original energy of the album was still present despite the changes that included speeding up the songs and removing lengthy instrumental segments.

"Upside Down" was the first single from *Diana* and it went to number one on the Billboard 100, Soul and Disco charts. Radio,

rollerskating rinks, club DJs and house parties made "Upside Down" one of the biggest songs of Ross's career. She had attended the famed Studio 54 club in New York City and saw how Rodgers and Edward's music lit up the dancefloor and she reached out to them for her album. The idea for "Upside Down" came from her literal words to them to turn her career "Upside Down" so she could have fun again. The success of *Diana* made it the highest seller of Ross's career and MC Lyte, Xscape and Tom Jones are a few artists who have sampled "Upside Down." *Diana* was remastered in 2003 and released as a double CD with the original mixes from Rodgers and Edwards as well as the Motown version.

In 2021 Diana Ross's 25th studio album *Thank You* was released through Decca Records.



<https://youtu.be/GIAtE6ywgwA>

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## **Media Questions Of The Week**



Will the record labels become more transparent about artist payments from streaming as [Nile Rodgers](#) has suggested?Â

*Came here to find foolishness in my replies. I am rushing to into an interview and this is the last time I'm saying this. Thanks. [pic.twitter.com/En49BaoGRK](https://pic.twitter.com/En49BaoGRK)*

– Dionne Warwick (@dionnewarwick) [December 7, 2020](#)

Did you know that Dionne Warwick is on Twitter and writes her own posts?Â



Did [Snoop Dogg](#) forget about the women in his music videos, his lyrics and admitting to being a pimp in the past when he criticized Cardi B and Meg The Stallion's "W.A.P." for not being modest?Â