

# Saturday night fever: disco bucks

By Michelina Trigiani

Paramount Studio's *Saturday Night Fever*, like most of today's films, is out to make a lot of money. Its producers are gambling on two things to do so — the movie's star, John Travolta (Vinnie Barbarino of TV's *Welcome Back Kotter*), and

the disco fever currently raging in cities everywhere. Those attracted to Travolta, be they teeny-boppers, housewives or male peers, those who either frequent or detest discotheques, and those simply curious about the disco scene will go out and see this movie.

Norman Wexler's screenplay is based on a 1976 short story by Nik Cohn called *The Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night*, in which the author examines the disco scene through a group of Italo-American boys in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn.

These working-class kids, led by Tony Manero (Travolta), live for Saturday night when they can blow the few dollars they make during the week and dance the night away in 2001 Odyssey, a local club.

Those who may scoff at such shallow subject-matter are

reminded that the disco craze, which started as long as six years ago, is still going strong and has infiltrated every age and social group from the barely eighteen to over-the-hill jet setters.

This phenomenon is a valid theme for any movie — a phenomenon worthy of examination, but sacrificed in *Saturday Night Fever* to the presentation of a melodramatic story concerning a poor but basically good kid who likes to swear a lot, look good, and dance his heart out. Through contact with a bitchy social mover, a brother-turned-priest-turned-layman and messed-up friends, he finds himself on the road to a better life in the end — but only after a disco dance contest and the suicide of a friend.

That the movie is badly constructed goes without saying. Its numerous scenes and excessive subplots confuse the film's message — if it has one — and leave us with the impression that, "It doesn't really matter what we're seeing on the screen as long as it is John Travolta"

But in spite of this over-exposure, Travolta must be praised for an excellent performance. As Tony Manero, he is extremely credible. As a dancer, he is unsurpassed. Cameraman Ralf Bode captures Travolta's every move in his posturing by his mirror, and with the well-staged dance numbers. Songs by the Bee Gees and captivating scenery add pleasure to his performance, but these few good points cannot make up for the plot.

Tony Manero's story is basically an optimistic one and as such I question the validity of the disco as presented in *Saturday Night Fever*.

Although the hustling, meat-market aspect of discos is exposed fairly well in the film, it is treated in too light a manner. And the most unsettling aspects of discos — the drugs and money floating around and the exploitation of the clientele — are overlooked. What is presented instead is a simplistic observation of those who escape their banal existence by accepting the ephemeral beauty of strobe-lit, noisy, dream-like discos.

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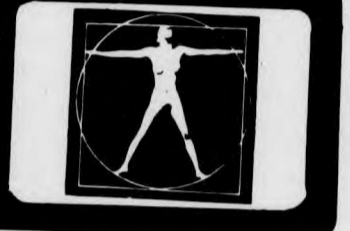


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## Harbinger's Column by Sheryl Sorokin



### A look at what's to come

Female Orgasms. In this area, Masters and Johnson are noted for the important work they did in developing our understanding of female sexuality which, historically, was totally ignored.

Many women have difficulties reaching orgasm. If you have never experienced orgasm, it's natural for you to wonder whether you may ever have one. Sex seems to be the subject of endless discussion, especially in current books and magazines. In some ways this has been good, for it has stressed the importance of "mutually" satisfying sex for women as well as for men. However, this emphasis on sex has pressured many women into feeling that they must be instantly, regularly, orgasmic in order to feel sexually adequate. Concerns with thoughts of "How am I doing?" "Is my partner getting impatient?" or "What does my partner think of me?", during sexual interplay, lead us to become "spectators" rather than participants. Being too busy thinking about abstractions.... we do not concentrate on sensations.

At least 25 percent of all women engaged in sex therapy are women who have never experienced orgasms. There can be many reasons why one may not have already experienced them. Certain moral and religious values may influence our attitude about sex. Positive or negative feelings about oneself as a person and about oneself as a sexual being may conflict with attempts to feel more sexually satisfied. Feelings about past and present relationships with men, both on emotional and sexual levels, are likely to be important. How comfortable one is with one's body and how familiar one is with sexual responsiveness and sexual techniques can also influence whether or not one is orgasmic. Physiological disorders, although rare, may be another factor involved, and should generally be discussed with a doctor at a check-up. Learning about oneself and one's sexuality makes it possible to deal with those attitudes and feelings which prevent experiencing orgasm.

For women who have not yet experienced orgasm, masturbation often provides the kind of stimulation most likely to lead to arousal and orgasm. The clitoris is the part of the female genitals that is most sensitive and responsive to sexual stimulation. It has a central role in elevating our feelings of sexual tension. Without this

build-up of sexual tension we could not have orgasm. To reach orgasm a woman needs continuous, effective stimulation of the clitoris-by penile thrusting, body pressure, or touching of the clitoral area with a hand, tongue, or object.

At high levels of arousal, the clitoris retracts under its hood and can no longer be seen or felt. This occurs some time before orgasm, from 1 to 30 minutes.

Also, the clitoris can emerge and retract several times during a sexual experience. During orgasm the clitoris is always retracted; however, retraction doesn't guarantee orgasm, especially if stimulation doesn't continue and increase. With direct stimulation, retraction will occur at lower levels of sexual excitement than with intercourse alone. With intercourse alone, very high levels of sexual arousal are reached before retraction occurs. This may explain why many women have orgasm quicker through direct manipulation of the clitoris, and makes clearer to us that intercourse is not better or worse than direct stimulation, just different.

Learning about one's self, about one's body, takes time and patience.

The best way to begin is to find time when you can relax in a private place. Start exploring your body through touch, using your hands or any soft sensuous materials. Find out what feels good, and what feels better than good! At first, this may seem silly, but it is something many women have never tried before.

Sex therapists suggest a series of exercises for women to follow which are designed to help women develop a new understanding and appreciation of their sexual potential.

After following them, most women who had thought themselves to be non-orgasmic find themselves enjoying sexual activity much more, and having orgasms.

These exercises can be done by a woman alone, or with a trusted partner.

Women who are interested in more information on becoming orgasmic may contact Harbinger for details about the various workshops, groups, books and individual therapy options available in Toronto.

(Some cost, and some are free.) Everyone is different, and it is helpful to conceive of your body, and everyone else's as if each were a musical instrument that requires patience, love, and practice in order to learn how to play it well.