



Macho Man: The Disco Era and Gay America's Coming Out

Randy Jones, Mark Bego

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The Vietnam War was over and America seemed in the midst of a nationwide party. The self-proclaimed Me generation was flocking to discotheques, recreational drug use was high, and sexual taboos were being shattered nationwide. Then The Village People appeared on the music scene. Never before had gay sexuality been as up-front and in the face of America. The Village People struck a cultural nerve and fueled a craze that had them playing to sold-out crowds at Madison Square Garden. Even today, few adults could not at least hum the tunes to *Y.M.C.A.* and *Macho Man*. Because of the unique role they played in the United States of the late 1970s, The Village People are able to provide a powerful lens through which to view the emergence and development of gay culture in America. In *Macho Man*, readers can travel back with one of the first gay icons in popular music, and a top pop culture biographer, as they describe this complicated process of change.

In these pages, Randy Jones, the original cowboy in the band, takes us inside the time period, the discos, and the new musical style that was in many ways unprecedented in giving a voice to a previously closeted gay culture. Assisted by Mark Bego, one of the most popular and prolific pop culture authors working today, Jones shows how the fast-lane rise, fall, and rebirth of this novel band paralleled activities across the last 40 years within the gay culture and gay rights movement. The work concludes with a gayography — a listing of openly gay musicians and performers in the United States before and since The Village People - along with a discography and filmography. This work will interest pop culture and music enthusiasts, in addition to scholars in gay studies.

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