# In Philadelphia

Michael Templeton lives for the weekend.

"I try not to let my job get to me, but sometimes it does," said Templeton, 22, a Philadelphia dental technician. "On the weekend I want to relax and party. But I don't like house parties."

When this discriminating young swinger wants to party with a flair, you can usually find him out on the dance floor of one of his favorite discos, the Graduate, one of a number of late night discotheques flourishing in Philadelphia and around the country.

and pulsating lights, Americans are crowding into discos in record numbers to dance the night away. Their dress may range from three piece business suits to jogging outfits. They may be young, up and climbing careerists, established professionals or office secretaries out to liven up a drab working life.

Some come to dance and be seen. Others come to pose and stare.

But they all seem to go to forget their cares and have a real, real goed time.

In Philadelphia, several discos, such as the Graduate and the Fox Trap, cater to a well-heeled black clientele.

"It's a place where people drink, dance and socialize," said Gus Lacy, owner of the four - year - old Graduate.

But to many patrons, discos have also become sort of a home away from home. Sharp club owners, such as Lacy, taking note of this trend, have turned their discos into lush and comfortable

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Philadelphians generally agree that the two Discos which are the most popular in this city are The Fox Trap and The Graduate.

By Sandra Dawson and Sam W. Pressley



This is a typical scene at The Graduate, one of Philadelphia's top disco clubs. You won't find blue jeans here

settings that feature two and three different dance floors, more than one bar, game rooms, wall-to-wall carpeting, pictures and paintings.

"Discos are entering their next phase," said Lacy. "Many discos now offer a comfortable atmosphere for people to meet and greet each other in conversation or over a game of backgammon rather than always out on the dance floor."

For that added personal touch, most discos also hire local FM radio disc jockeys part-time to spin popular records.

Wanda O. Welch, "Miss W.O.W.," a fashion designer, is one of the many young elegantly dressed females to grace the Fox Trap and the Graduate discos.

"I come to socialize and have a good time and meet new and exciting people." says Ms. Welch.

After comparing notes with other disco goers, Ms. Welch said she believes that some of the singles, especially shy and unaggressive females, often attend the discos either alone or in groups to socialize with persons of the opposite sex.

Some people feel more

comfortable talking with new people in a party setting," said Ms. Welch. "I come to dance."

Most discos charge a minimum admissions fee of \$3 weekdays and \$5 on Friday and weekend nights. The popular night spots also offer set membership fees.

Whispers, for example, also a Philadelphia disco, offers its regular patrons a \$50 membership, which includes annual free admission to the club. The Fox Trap plans a \$100 annual membership fee.

"I like to dance and enjoy myself," said Budd.

Will discos eventually burn themselves out?

No. Owners contend that as long as people, such as Wanda Welch and Dale Budd, like to dance and socialize, their businesses will continue to thrive. Wardell (Sonny Q.) Quitman, for example, the Fox Trap's owner, says he has spent over \$300,000 to renovate his club,

"A lot of blacks have money but no place to spend it," said Quitman, 38, a California native. "So they go to New York."

In Detroit, there is one place to consistently relieve that discomania in a quality fashion. That is "My Fair Lady." Located in Motown's eastside, right across

from Canada, it is usually packed every night.

Although Detroit is known to be a little slower for its night life than some of the East Coast cities such as Philly, New York, & Washington, D.C. This means that most of the potential patrons of a club such as My Fair Lady will not be out on the town everynight.

So for such a club to succeed in this town, it would have to offer something a little out of the ordinary. It would have to be so good that whoever came to it to party had to be so satisfied that they would recommend it to everyone who wanted to have a good time.

Three Young Owners.

With this in mind the three young black owners of the club have accomplished a great deal since they opened May 5, 1978. They are Mike Robinson, 36; Julius Bender, 30; and Bill Lattimore, 25.

"What we've done is market our club to the needs of the community we serve. We have done that by giving them quality entertainment, a secure unthreatened atmosphere, and good service," Robinson explained.

Indeed, the owners of My Fair Lady had a task set out for them when they opened the club eight months ago. One of the obstacles was to make the transition from a gay bar — which My Fair Lady was before — to a first class disco club. Before the club was gay, it catered to whites.

I went to the club on two different nights and noticed that the
music was as different as night
and day. On Wednesday night,
there was a few fast tunes, but
most of them were slow. But on
Friday night, it was just the opposite, mostly fast tunes and some
slow ones mixed in.

At first I thought it was because Thursday night was sports celebrity night. Maybe the ladies in attendance had requested to the D.J. that they be allowed to get a little closer. Or, maybe the men had made a similar request.

### DISCOMANIA:

## Detroit View

In Detroit, My Fair Lady represents the tops in disco, and offers a comparison between Eastern seaboard, and midwestern styles.

By James Fleetwood



Mike Robinson, one of the owners of the My Fair Lady disco.

On Friday night, I had similar thoughts, only this time to justify why fast records were being played. Fridays are the 'best nights' because happy hour begins at 5:00 p.m. All of a sudden about 9 p.m. the music started getting fast and almost everyone began dancing.

This time there looked to be more younger persons in attendance than there were on Wednesday night.

My Fair Lady is different from a lot of other discotheques in that it

has two dance floors right next to each other.

One looks like a stage and is elevated over the other. The upper dance floor is accompanied by rectangular seat couches that have three levels to sit on.

A three - dollar admission charge greets everyone who enters the club. This is put together with drinks that are priced between .75 and \$2.50.

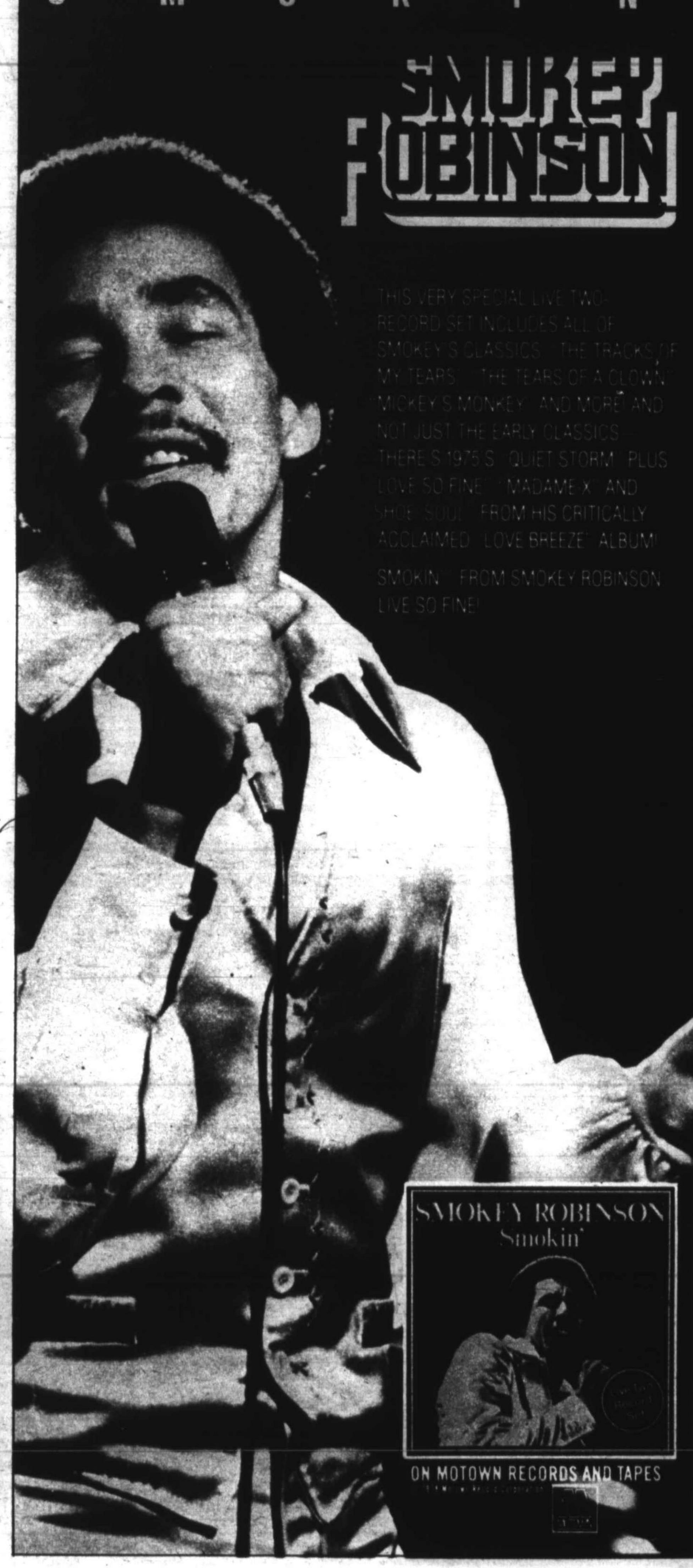
"Most people don't like to pay a door charge, but we have a door charge to keep certain people out," says Robinson. "Certain people will not patronize the clubs jitterbugs patronize."

No Jitterbugs

He said those "certain people" are those in the age bracket of 28 years and older.

Jitterbugs, of course are usually classified as below 18 years of age.

Unlike some other discos that boast to be of high quality, My Fair Lady does not have memberships. Instead they plan to have something known as "preferred customers."



Typical scene on a Friday night at Detroit's top disco