Prof groove 01

Radio

First mixing spontaneous at event

Not a vinyl purist (tapes and cds)

DJing at house parties with vinyl

02

Belt drive turntable with horrible pitch control

5-8 years into djing before he got 1200s

“playing out was my practice”

Fist instinct was matching pitch

5:30 mixing funk vs. hip hop

7-seconds-or-less

9:30 organizing crates: different styles separately, then by tempo

Profgroove03

Counting bpm and putting stickers and vinyl

Clean used records when you buy them

02:00 Weight: it’s ok to carry enough for a set, also hardly played alone

CDs too

Strategize: versatile, but also enough to be coherent

07:55 adjust volume & eq before you fade

Profgroove 04

Left ear = headphone ear (auch dr. best)

05:00 hear the room to feel the room

09:30 serato around 2008 touring europe with vinyl

Profgroove 05

01:20 two copies of record -> serato…

Bringing vinyl out of paranoia

Mixing techniques

5:30 controller

Looking at laptop issue

Soon after I got Serato, I found it weird how much time I spent looking at the laptop and I didn't really like that and it was a change because when you're playing with vinyl or CDs you don't spend that much time looking at the vinyl. You don't need to, because you're doing more stuff by ear. So I got a controller, so that anything I would wanna do with cue points or turning on and off loops, I would be able to do that from the controller and I wouldn't - I would only be at my laptop when I'm selecting a song and loading it and then I could it from the controller. #00:05:46-5#

So I was trying to, I guess, avoid being in the habit of just being that DJ that spends the whole time looking at the laptop. But I think spend a lot of time looking at the laptop. Especially while I'm mixing, like just to... because I have sections of the song marked and so just to- I'm not relying on it, I'm benefiting from it. #00:06:17-6#

I can do everything by ear because for years I did everything by ear, but it's also nice to kind of hear it and see it at the same time. But I ask people- like I said I don't wanna be that DJ that spends too much time looking, so I kind of ask people sometimes, you know "hey, do I actually- do I look-?" cuz I'm not aware of it really, like, how much I'm- I'm just kind of in the moment a lot of the time. But asking them "do I spend enough time looking at the crowd? Like, am I doing that?" and generally people seem to say that yes I do, I'm not one of those DJs that spends the whole time fixated on the laptop, so I guess I'm ok. #00:07:01-0#

But I think that is something, yeah, that Djs should be conscientious of, because, you know, you don't wanna feel like the DJ is kind of like withdrawn from the crowd and just, you know, inside this electronic box the whole time. #00:07:17-8#

Well I've never interacted with the crowd in terms of like... #00:07:32-5#

I think the crowd can tell whether you're paying attention to them. And if you're- if a DJ doesn't seem like they're paying attention to the crowd, then you don't feel like it's a shared experience as much. You know what I mean? Like, that the DJ's kind of like in the same moment as you are, as the person in the crowd dancing or whatever. And I think that's where- that's when- like it's not good. That's when like a DJ, like you feel like they're kind of in the wrong space. So it's not as fun anymore whereas a DJ that- you can see that they're into the music and they're enjoying it at the same moments as you are and, you know, they kind of look up at the crowd often enough. Like, that they're like, "wow, we're all experiencing this together" and you can feed off their energy, they're feeding off of your energy, and there's just this, kind of, communication I guess or interaction between the DJ- it doesn't have to be them like you know like doing wild arm motions and stuff as it seems like it's trendy to do these days, like I think it's more- I think the essential part is just like to feel like the energy's going back and forth between the DJ and the crowd. And if that feels like it's broken and that the DJ's just kind of in the wrong space, kind of like just like at the controls. That's when it's not as fun anymore. #00:09:25-2#

My biggest problem as a DJ is like when I'm concentrating on something I look SO serious. #00:09:49-1#

It's not just not part of my personality. But I'm only ever really thinking about it if there's somebody with a camera around or something or they're doing video, I'm like "oh yeah, I'm supposed to be an entertainer

Profgroove 06

Fun to watch an enthusiastic DJ

Interaction with audience

Not a dancer, how do you figure out danceability?

06:00 balance own taste with audience’s desires

and I like, not necessarily, again, not like THAT necessarily, but just like... it's fun to watch when a DJ's really into what they're doing and to kind of feel that visual kind of energy, so... I try to do that. It's not my strength. #00:00:30-4#

nervous? #00:00:44-2#

No, I'm never uncomfortable with it because that's just what it is, like I'm a, like a limelight, like spotlight kind of guy, but you know if- if sometimes you're just off in a booth and it's not- you're not like center stage and you can kind of be you know look out over the crowd but not- you don't have people like focused on you but other times you are in the middle of a stage or something like that and you are on display and if you're uncomfortable with it well you just gotta get used to it. #00:01:17-4#

No I think it's more just kind of like for me I just need to, sometimes I need to kind of consciously like remind myself "oh yeah, you know I'm like, it's gonna be more fun for everyone if, if like you're not just feeling it inside but if I actually kind of express my enthusiasm of the music physically. #00:01:43-8#

eye contact? #00:01:45-1#

When that kind of like eye contact interaction happens it's usually because I play something and somebody who is kind of close enough to the booth like, you know really like gets excited by it, and sometimes we'll kind of share a moment, you know, we're smiling at each other like "yeah, this is amazing, isn't it?" and that's really fun. #00:02:37-1#

clubber? #00:02:47-6#

no, no I'm not. And even just as yeah, someone in the crowd I'm not- because I'm not really a dancer person, like I've never been all that comfortable I guess? Like, so, that I think that's why when I am DJing it's something I have to make sure that I kind of turn on, I guess. #00:03:14-4#

Yeah, it's something more conscious for me, I guess, whereas other DJs I think that naturally are kind of comfortable like- I think one of the reasons why I like DJing is because it means that I don't- it saves me from having to dance. (laughs) Which is a weird thing to say and I've had people kind of say to me like how.... you know they kind of express- they don't really understand how someone can be a DJ and not, like, they think that someone would want to become a DJ because they are so like into the music and wanna move to it that that's the next step. But i think it is- that's some DJs, but not- other DJs are like "ok this is nice, I have a place to be, I have things that I can do while this music is going on, and I don't have to like be this awkward dancing person. #00:04:10-4#

I get the feeling from the music that makes me want to dance, it's just that my body doesn't really know how to turn that into movement. But the first part is there. And also the more I time I kind of spend with music, and like especially in the style of funk or the music around that, first of all it's a very dance-driven kind of music and second like I can totally hear a song and imagine people dancing to it. And think of people that I know that are really like fun dancers and if I can kind of in my imagination see them dancing and loving the song, then I know it's gonna be good. #00:05:27-8#

I'm not a typical Dj in the sense that I'm able to kind of- I think I have the luxury of being able to choose when and where I play. And that when I do play there's a good chance that people know what they're getting, like just by seeing that I'm playing, or seeing my name, so there's been plenty of moments in my DJ life where I played for people that don't give a shit who I am and don't, you know, my particular specialty is not really relevant to them, they just- you know, either they're gonna enjoy what I play or not. #00:06:48-1#

So I'm- I don't really have to deal with that the more I guess, the difficulty or kind of like, I wanna use the word compromise, I mean it is a compromise, but it doesn't necessarily need to be a bad compromise. But it is kind of a- You wanna make them happy and you wanna find something that is gonna work for them that's still within your comfort zone and expertise as well. The way I'm able now, like for the last many years to kind of just be selective about when I play and know whether it even makes sense for me, like whether I'm the guy, you know? Like maybe the vibe of the party- like this stuff I play is just gonna sound, like in that vibe? the stuff I play is just gonna sound old or sound something. You know maybe there's another DJ that's gonna in that moment do it better, and I'm 100% comfortable with that. There are also situations where I'm the guy and nobody's gonna do it better! (laughs) #00:08:02-1#

So yeah I mean, I think there's a lot of kind of like questions inside that. Like I, the way I look at it, first of all, one thing that makes me really different is I spend a lot of time because of, because the music that I'm most enthusiastic about is not necessarily familiar to people, I spend a lot of time getting to know my music and understand which songs I have that even if you have never heard it before there's something int hat song that is accessible and that makes you wanna move and makes you happy and all of that. So i have a selection that, you know, as long as people are open to it, as long as people, as long it's not the kind of situation where people expect that they're gonna hear stuff that they can sing along to, which sometimes, a lot of times might be the case, but as long as people are just expecting to be hearing good music that's fun and they're gonna dance, I have songs that it doesn't matter whether they know it or not, they're gonna love it. #00:09:11-3#

But yeah like I think you especially if you're playing in a more mainstream place, if you're playing in a wedding kinda situation, that kind of an event, like the appropriate thing like people want music not just that is enjoyable to them but that they recognize and is fun for them to sing along to, it's fun for them like to, like have a relationship with a song or you know- and when you play it, like, there's all of that, like it's a classic song, this is like a big song or it's a song that they like to sing along to....

Prof groove 07

More audience stuff

It has to be music he enjoys

“I don’t spend time listening to music I don’t enjoy. Life is too short for that” 04:45

Flowing, “driving the bus” 09

If I feel that the crowd is more like that, then I'll be more selective about what I play and try to play stuff that they recognize but also if I realize that I'm playing with someone else and they're gonna have more like stuff that's outside - that's more kind of current and mainstream and stuff that the crowd is going to enjoy better because they wanna hear stuff that they- mostly songs that they recognize, I'm entirely comfortable taking a step back and saying "okay, you know, you can play more" like I, the crowd is not going to enjoy two hours of me playing this stuff that, you know, they mostly don't recognize. #00:00:47-4#

so it totally depends on the crowd and having the experience to get a feel for what's gonna make them happy and what's not. And I'm also comfortable if somebody comes up and makes a request and it's something that is not really right for the moment or is not appropriate to the night, like I don'T feel like I'M obliged to make them happy necessarily, if it's not hte best thing for the whole night or everyone else. I'm totally comfortable saying "no, sorry, I don't have that" or "that's not what tonight is" #00:01:31-6#

crowdpleasers? Yeah, I do, like and I have a crate or two of stuff that's kind of like my go-to, you know, like stuff that 9 times out of 10 is gonna be the right- any of those songs is gonna be the right choice. But i mean it's also in more of just kind of like a feeling kind of way, like when i'm playing one song and I'm kinda feeling how the crowd is reacting to it I'm picking my next song, like I can feel by looking at and remembering the song or by listening to it in my headphones I can feel how it's going to change the energy. And depending on what the crowd is open to, like either a certain song is going to bring a good energy or it's gonna be more stragne to them and strange is not gonna bring much energy. #00:02:38-2#

So I'm conscious of that just kind of in a more intuitive way, like I'm not thinking about this is a song that ethey will know, but i have a good sense of like how familiar, it's not just familiarty with the song, it's also familiarity with a style. you know? or a style of production or something. Like the old kind of early 70s funk has a different sound to it and if you're playing for a crowd that isn't necessarily expect- they hear it and that just sounds old to them. Then it could be the best song ever, but it's still gonna sound a bit strange, so... like there's different aspects of a song that even aside from whether they know the song itself, it could sound more kind of familiar or accessible or more strange and like you know not something that they were expecting to hear. So that's just kind of where reading the crowd I guess comes in. Liek just getting a feel for what's gonna work, what's gonna make them happy and what isn't. #00:03:45-0#

and in the end i look at it like you remember like Venn diagrams from math class in high school or whatever? Like you know you have the intersecting circles? So you know this is all that I enjoy, and like this is what you know the crowd enjoys and as long as there's like an overlap, that's where I'm gonna spend my time musically. I'm gonna find the music that I- I never like- it's not enjoyable for me to play music that you know is making the crowd excited but that I'm not really into myself. And I think it's not completely selfishness that I just want to, I feel that I should play the music that I enjoy the whole time, but it'sm ore like I'm not gonna play it as well if i don't enjoy it. And I'm not gonna be as familiar with it if I don't enjoy it, because i don't spend time listneing to music that I don't enjoy. Life is too short for that. So if I'm- If I can find like that music that I enjoy and that they're going to enjoy, then that just makes the most sense because then I follow my own feeling the hwole time and not feel like you know like the, you know like when the DJ's more like a jukebox and they#re kind of like "whatever you need to hear, or whatever requests you have, I'm gonna play it" like that's cool, and I admire DJs that can do that, but it's, maybe it makes me like indulgent or whatever but I don't wanna, i don't enjoy that. i enjoy playing music that i like and playing it in such way that you really enjoy it too and you can appreciate everything everything that i love about it #00:05:38-1#

Not in the way of like cramming it down somebody's throat. Because if I think that they're probably not going to enjoy it, like I'm not gonna play it just cuz i think that its good for them. nobody gets turned on to music that way. you know? like you get turned on to music by hearing it and it's a little bit unexpected but you hear, you feel everything that's appealing about it. #00:06:24-8#

and i don't think music is ever like an "eat your vegetables" kind of thing. i think a dj that has that kind of mindset is not really going to connect with people. #00:06:46-2#

experiments: yes, but it depends- i'm really, the worst thing for me is to play a song and feel the energy dip and feel the people kinda like "huh. what's this? i was so hyped on that song before and now like, now i'm thinking of maybe going to the bar and getting another drink or something." and then you can feel that the moment the song starts playing if the crowd is not really feeling it you're like "oh shit, i need to get back on track" so the moments when i feel most comfortable being experimental would be- i think when we were talking in hamburg i was trying to explain the difference between when i feel like i'm in sync with the crowd and i can feel whether they're, when they're feeling it and when they're not, and so i can, if they're not i can adjust to it. but then there's a level beyond that where i know that i can just - i had trouble explaining it before, too - where you know that you feel that you 're leading, that they're really happy to follow you and you feel like you know "oh, oh, i can go in this direction and thats gonna be good" and you can anticipate this is gonna be a good change, it's gonna bring something fresh, and that's the next, they're ready for that, they're in a perfect place to go into that new feeling like whetehr it's taking it a bit more soulful, or whether it's giving it something harder like some more edge, some more rhythm, and be able to have a good, to feel like "oh i know i'm gonna dip into this and then i'm gonna go into that" you're thinking ahead a bit more and it just feels- it all feels right and the crowd comes with you the whole time and they're loving that progression. #00:08:54-0#

it's a slightly different thing vs. when you're responding to the crowd and you're able to kind of pick up really fast on what all that you know "okay maybe that's not hte right direction so i know to bring it there." liek that's good too, but it's even better when you're like "wow ok i know they're gonna come with me on this and you're able to kind of like feel like further ahead and feel like you're really kinda driving the bus and they're along for the journey. #00:09:25-1#

so when i feel good about that, and i feel like the corwd is just like, tehy're in a space where they#re just, they're loving it and they'll- and that i can go there, i can go there, and they're in a space where i can give them something that's a little bit different and they're gonna- they're ready to give it a chance like because they're just hungry for anyhting that's gonna be good, it doesnt have to be like in a certain pap (?) thats when i'm most comfortable throwing something in. but if its something that im not sure about i also have another song ready after it that i know is gonna be a more kind of, is gonna fit, it's gonna be great, but its also gonna be a more safe bet, is less experimental. so that i'm not stuck like oh shit this isnt working and now im trying to figure out what the next like- what direction i need to go to get the energy back up and to bring them back in sync with me. #00:00:34-9#

the pace that i play at i'm not usually switching songs like every 30 seconds or something, so usually i'll let it ride like long enough that it doesn't feel like im cutting it off, but theres no point in spending more time in a song thats not really working than you have to. so as long as its not gonna feel like the pacing suddenly got thrown off, then yeah i'm whatever, like, there's no pride in like, I'm not going to, i'M not thinking about it like "oh i can't admit that i made a mistake" i wouldn't- people don't CARE like, but if they're not feeling it, you should play something that they're, like nobody and- I don't enjoy looking out over them while they're not enjoying music you know? so yeah, i'm gonna switch in as fast as feels comfortable i'M gonna switch in something else. #00:01:39-7#

the one exception to that is sometimes like when i have a good feeling about the crowd and i put a song on that's maybe a slightly different direction and the energy dips but i know "okay, stick with it, i know this song builds" and it may take them a moment, like it's not so bad that they're gonna suddenly clear off the dancefloor, i'm confident with that, i know that it's gonna take a moment for them to kinda get into sync with this new thing but when they do, it's gonna be like a new direction and i know theyre gonna feel it and then we're gonna be able to go kind of off in this other direction. I'm willing to kind of stick iwth it and know and trust that, you know, be confident that they're gonan get into sync with it, its just gonna take maybe an extra mintue of them kind of feel comfortable with that. but if you can do that, that's when you- the crowd really begins to trust you, too, cuz you'v egiven them somethign that theyre- you know was a little bit unfamiliar, and then they realized how amazing it is, and then the next time you throw something in theyre more kind of like "okay, i'll go with this, let's see where he's going with this". #00:03:01-0#

but i feel like i'm, inspite of the fact that i'm really kind of a specialist DJ in a way, like with my selection and everything, i feel like i'M really conservative especialyl when people are dancing and it's the dancefloor and it's the middle of the night, like I'm not there to throw curveballs. I'm there just to find that you know where the stuff that i enjoy that theyre going to enjoy. thats whats gonna build the feeling and the energyand if i get out of that zone, thats my fault and i need to bring it back. like i'm not, its not an eat your vegetables thing. #00:03:43-1#

this is why i love- i think some djs, theyre really, mostly interested, they, like the energy of a crowd in the middle of the night is so rewarding, when youre getting it right, that is realyl really fun. and it hink some djs like thats the peak fo rthem. but for me, and i, you know i love that, and that is one of the peaks for me, and you cant really beat the energy of it when everybody like is jsut realyl into it and youre playing like big songs whetehr they know them or not. but the beginnign fo the night and at the end of the night... at the beginning of the night because you know youre bilding the energy and people, its not like prime danicng hour, peopel arent expecting necessarily to be like dancing it up wild. and you have so much more room of different places that you can go and songs that you can play that maybe you cant really paly right in the middle of hte night because you know theyre not supre hype all the way through or they have a kidn of things that make them interesitng but also nto great necessarily to play like for people dancing in the middle of the ngiht. i enjoy that a lot. #00:05:16-2#

cuz theres so much, you can get into all thsi stuff thtat has like different kind of falvor and mroe kinda diversity than you can in the middle of hte night. and at the end of th enight if everyobdys kind of had a lot to drink, you know theyve kind of had hteir big kind of energy time in the middle of the night, but if theyre still with oyu at the end of the night you can also get into like especiallyl more soulful kind o fstuff and like stuff that is a lot more feeling-based and it doesnt necessarily have to have that super super strong push because oyuve done that you know and you peopel are already, theyre in their end of hte night kidnof vibe but theyre not ready to go home, and then that kind of opens a lot of stuff that you can play as well. and it doesnt have to have such a high energy because you are kindo f like youre bringing hte plane kind of back down to earth. so i enjoy the beginning and the end a lot. #00:06:16-4#

and because there's all these, i have allt hese songs that i love but theyre more perfect at the beginning or at the end of hte ngiht and they arent necessarily, like theyre not th best choice in the middle in the night. #00:06:35-0#

you realy have to be, i'm so conscious of the energy that im feeling from peopel in the middle of the night. and its not as imporatnt in the beginnig and the end, it really gives you mroe freedom to play stuff thats just as good but is- that you cant play in the middle. #00:07:11-3#

i think its not just that theyre in a space where theyre, tehyll dance to anyhting, like, i think its also liek thsoe are the people that stuck around the whole time, theyre, that just goes to show how n sync they are with waht youre enjoying and oyur vibe, so you kind of feel a lto more confident playing other stuff and then knowing that theyre going to enjyo it as well. #00:07:33-6#

wehreas the girl that came up and requested i dont know some mainstream thing in the middle of the night, liek she's not gonna stick around to the end like. shes gonan stick around only as long as her friends are enjyoign it and having fun, shes enjoying the energy of it, shes kinda like i dont understand why this dj is playing like these specific songs, but you know those kinda people, like tehyre, they may be around in themiddle of hte night and they enjoy it, but the peopel that sitck around to the end , theyre the ones that really are in sync with what youre doing. #00:08:24-3#

and you have more space to dance, too #00:09:02-0#

Prof groove 08

06 beginning and end: more freedom (auch dr. best)

09:30 sources

Promo stuff for wefunk

Prof groove 09

Online digital stores, well-curated

Discogs recommendations

Vinyl: musicians that play on album

05:00 spending afternoons in record store

Compilations

“You can spend a lot more time just sitting on your ass at home listening to music. Like back in the day, you really had to go out somewhere and find it, whether it was in a record store or whether, um, I don’t know, at garage sales or stuff like that.” 05:45

I have a lot of stuff that, um, that I – like, I’m, cuz I’m also kind of like a technical geeky guy, so if I can figure out – like for soundcloud for example, like they have an API, so I just wrote a thing that downloads all of the music that appears in my feed, um, and also music that gets posted to certain groups. And there’s so much that I can’t keep up with it. So I have just like thousands of tracks on my hard drive that I’m waiting to get through and I’ll either file it or delete it, file it or delete it.

when I'm in a record store I find - I think it's a certain part of my personality - I'm like ok If I'm gonna go through this section i'm gonna go through from beginning to end so that I feel like when I walk out, I haven't left anything behind. you know? which is actually kind of stressful in a way. like i think it's like a mild OCD, but you know, it's one of those things that you know, just part of i guess how certain people are driven. but um you know with digital stuff, especially like all the different ways that things are available for download and all the stuff that like you know that gets sent to me, I just kind of became comfortable with the idea that you know i'm not gonna keep on top of everything. So I just spend the time that I have to- even if I, if I don't, because I can't get to everything, I may miss out on certain things, but I'm gonna find amazing stuff. And I'm not, like for me, I don't really care whether it's new or old. I like the idea of being kind of current on, like not missing out on stuff that's new releases, but people don't go to me, or to wefunk necessarily just for new releases and stuff. I feel like there's so much stuff is still kind of underappreciated and undiscovered by most people that my, If i have like a, I don't know, a place in this world, it's to kind of like sift through that stuff and find, when I find the really good stuff, to, that's part of my repertoire, too, and that's part of why people listen to me, so, I'm happy spending a lot of time listening to old stuff even if it means that I'm not a hundred percent on top of new stuff that's coming out in terms of funk or whatever. #00:08:41-0#

I feel like it's, it deserves to be celebrated as well, like it's, like people shouldn't miss out on it. There's so much good music that you know we don't, that, that never really got its chance to shine and not necessarily because it wasn't that great. you know a lot of stuff was really great but it just never- you know there's so much luck involved in the music business. I love discovering those things and bringing them to life and i think people appreciate stuff that maybe was only - like certain like connoisseurs knew about this album, but there's no reason why non-music nerds wouldn't appreciate and enjoy it. So I like being the person to bring that out to other people.