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## Exclusive Valentine's Day DJ Mix From Doctor Rosen Rosen (Plus Q&A)

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by Tim Mohr

Doctor Rosen Rosen is one of the most sought after remixers of the moment--in the last few months alone he's rerubbed Lady Gaga, Weezer, and Drake (featuring Kanye and Eminem). Last year he was recruited to put his dark-wave synth-pop spin on Lily Allen's entire *It's Not Me, It's You* LP, creating the *It's Not Me, It's Doctor Rosen Rosen* album. Now the good doctor is bringing his magic touch back to yours: exclusively for Huff Post readers, he has created this Bare Skin Bear Rug DJ mix to set the mood right this Valentine's Day.

Click [here](#) to download an MP3 of the mix for free.

Doctor Rosen Rosen's indicative of just why the music scene is so great right now. He had no connections and no money, but was able to parlay a computer and a dream into great tunes and a career. He grew up in Idaho and went to the University of Montana (which ain't known in music circles as the Wesleyan of the Mountain West), then moved to New York upon graduation to get into music, selling window shades and glass shower enclosures and working at a CD duplication plant to fund his various bands and solo efforts. After slogging it out for several years, a bootleg remix he did of Britney's "Womanizer" went viral, and soon he was a hot commodity for official remixes and decamped for the hipster enclave of Silverlake in LA.

TM: What makes music sexy?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: Prince or Tricky. Those guys have been played in my bedroom more than any other artists. I'm one of the biggest Prince fans of all time, and Tricky's [Maxinquaye](#) is one of my favorite albums of all time. As far as sexy, there's got to be a sweet groove and it has to be a little dark. Not to sound too cheesy, but the singer also has to sound honest. You couldn't have New Kids On The Block doing Prince's "Erotic City." That's the weird thing about Lenny Kravitz. If you look at his lyrics, you're like, This is the cheesiest shit ever. Every time I hear his lyrics I'm like, Are you kidding me? It sounds like songwriting 101 for kindergarteners--you can finish every line in a Lenny Kravitz song. But he pulls it off because the dude just owns it. He doesn't care.

TM: What do you aim for in a bedroom mixtape like this one?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: Well, with this one my angle is songs from my past that fit into one of three categories. One is good hooking-up songs. Two is songs that introduced me to hooking-up somehow. And three, well that's just cheesy, typical hooking-up songs.

TM: Can you give an example of something that would fall into that second category?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: The two best examples are George Michael's ["Father Figure"](#) and Madonna's ["Justify My Love."](#) I can remember clearly when the "Father Figure" video came out. He had already dropped "I Want Your Sex" and that had been a big deal. But I remember seeing that "Father Figure" video and being like, Whoa this is crazy. It was like a sexual awakening at 10 or 11 or however old I was. Same thing with "Justify My Love" I don't know if people remember, but that video was banned by MTV and everything. I tricked my mom

to get a copy. I was at the mall at Sam Goody or something and I was like, "I could get this video that's nine dollars, or I could get this record that's fifteen." And my mom was like, "Just get the video." I totally tricked her into buying that--and I still have it.

TM: How are you different as a producer versus as a DJ?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: Up until recently, I didn't do that much DJing. But I've started doing more of it. To be honest, I'm still fighting with that dilemma--my production style and my remixes won't necessarily be found in a lot of DJs' arsenals. They're not club bangers. I'm not adding a lot of energy. There's lots of DJs who aren't playing just house music, and I fall into that category, but there's still something to be said for finding energy in your mixes when you're live. I'm still struggling with that.

TM: The [remix](#) you did of Lily Allen's album, for instance, was called dark by a lot of people. And sure, it wasn't the usual kind of electro remix you hear everywhere these days, but it seemed more melancholic than dark.

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: Melancholy is a good word. Maybe sad. I'm not a sad person, but I definitely like sad, pretty music. Lily Allen's whole shtick is light, happy music contrasted with her lyrics. It was fun to bring a sad, pretty element to it to see what would happen.

TM: How did you develop your style?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: I moved to New York a few days after I finished college. I wanted to go to the big city and become a pop star. I interned at a studio which will remain nameless. I met a production crew there called Dangerous LLC. That's when everything changed for me production-wise. I was always making music with computers and always wanted to produce, and I finally got the nerve to show my stuff to the head of Dangerous LLC. They were coming off a string of hits--they had done "Window Shopper" for 50 Cent, a bunch of other things. He was like, "This is really great but there's one thing--your drums suck." A couple days later he handed me a CD and said, "Why don't you try this stuff out." And there were like 5000 drum samples on there. I started playing with them and very quickly my productions started sounding more current. And I got obsessed with drum programming in general. I started producing a ton of stuff for them, for G-Unit. Nothing ever landed on an album, but it's when things clicked for me. I was making so much music and having such fun. And the funny thing was that the stuff I thought of as my own stuff, as opposed to the stuff I was making to submit to them, was the stuff they liked better. They were like, You should do *that stuff*. It wasn't that I thought I was keeping the best stuff for me, it was more that I didn't think 50 or whoever would like Doctor Rosen Rosen music. But it was an important lesson--you really have to make the music you like to make. You can't just make music that you think other people will like.

TM: So when you make remixes these days, do you start with the drums then?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: It depends. It's different every time. With remixes, I only ever use the vocals. So I put them on a timeline and figure out whether I want to speed it up or slow it down. And then I'll start playing a bass or piano sound, or sometimes start with the drums. But I like to start playing under the vocals until the right idea comes to me.

TM: Why did you decide to move to LA?

DOCTOR ROSEN ROSEN: It seemed advantageous because a lot of pop music was happening there. There's a bigger community working on, say, Britney Spears records. And I kind of wanted to get into that. I live in Silverlake and have some cool t-shirts and sneakers, but at the end of the day I would love to write the next "Toxic." But doing that with my own style rather than mimicking anything that's out there.

