Subject: Random Thoughts
Posted by Neil on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 05:45:18 GMT
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2.) So in a slightly nostalgic (will I be able to play half-ass decent again?) mode due to #1 , I broke out some things that I had done in the past - stupid, right? lol Anyway, I hadn't heard this stuff in a LONG time - some years, actually, and a few things occurred to me, namely:

2a.) Analog tape absolutely has something different on the low end that I just don't believe you can get out of digital AT ALL. Now this is my own stuff, so I know it well; recorded to analog on two different formats (2" 24 track Dolby SR, and 1" 16-track DBX) and mixed through three different consoles (Trident 24 & SSL 4000 for the various 2" stuff, and a Tascam of some kind for the 1" stuff), and some of it was mixed down to tape & some of it was mixed down to DAT, and the ONE THING that's consistent among it, is a certain sort of smooth strength to the low end... it's not a distortion (Charles Dye), it's not just a "bump" somewhere (Because the tape speeds varied - Tascam 1" was 15IPS, Studer 2" was at 30IPS, so the "bumps" are at different frequencies), it's a certain something that's totally missing from digital, and as I said, the only way I can describe it is that it's very strong & present, yet smooth. To me, digital low end sounds "hollow" compared to this. Just pointing this out. It's what miss about tape, I think.

2b.) The dbx 902 is absolutely the best de-esser on the planet - I need to get one & just leave it inserted on lead vocal channnels - or someone needs to port this to a plugin.

Listening to it again, on stuff that I know that I used it on, really reveals this. No plugin comes close - again, it's a vibe thing ifyaknowwhatimsayin'.

2c.) I know it was an 80's trick; but DAMN, triggering some pink or white noise on the snare really makes it sound farking HUGE! lol I may start doing this again! lol

and finally on the nostalgia front...

2d.) Damn, I could sing a lot higher then.
2e.) Damn, I could play a lot faster then.

lol

4.) I'm in a creative slump/composers' block - brought on by a combination of external influences, no doubt... too much metal exposure recently, for one - it's hard for me to get out of one mode & into another - I find I have to kind of "purify" or go through "musical detox" from one genre to another, so I listen to something completely opposite of what I've been doing for a period. When I did this all the time it was easy to switch - I could be nimble in terms of working on & contributing to a jazz project one week & a C&W project the next, but it seems with greater distances between projects & more time spent on each particular one, it's harder to get out of a certain mode & get back into something else, like writing, for example (in this case). Ever experience that? Used to be I'd listen to "So" over & over for a day & I was "clear" - not 'so' anymore (pun intended LOL).

And the last random thought for the evening...

4.) As I was listening to Aja, again, for the dozenth or so time in my attempt to get "clear" (but NOT in the manner that Bill Lorentzen would interpret that! lol) , it occurred to me that the likelihood is that there will NEVER, ever, again, be another "Aja", which made me quite sad upon realizing said revelation. I've come to this determaination based on the following theorems:

4a.) Becker & Fagen notwithstanding, there simply aren't any artists out there at this time that can conglomerate the level of talent in the kind of numbers necessary to promulgate this kind of endeavor... there USED to be more - sure, any A-list artist could & can hire top-level talent, but to what purpose? To achieve something like this? Nope.

Who did so, even back then? Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, Peter Gabriel (in different genres, but still...)

4b.) There simply ARE no musicians of this caliber left! Well, I might be overstating it, but back in "the day", you could pretty much walk down any street in New York or LA & trip over half a dozen Larry Carltons or Bernard Purdies... where do you eve find people like that anymore? Sure, they're out there, but where? Who can find them? Are enough of them concentrated around where someone wants to record so that they can be put to work on a project? I doubt it.

4c.) The economics of the biz has changed... who gets the kind of budget anymore where you can afford to have seven different A-list guitarists (if you can even find that many) hit the solo on "Peg" a few times each until someone nails a take you like? In this same line of questioning, who can expect to sell enough records anymore without even going on tour so they don't have to worry about recouping, so they can sit at home doing nothing but writing & perfecting this shit for two or three years until it's at this kind of level? Who gets the kind of budget where you can essentially have five different bands record a basic track on a song until you get the one you like? NOBODY! Some rich rockstar like Chad Kroeger of Nickelback would have to decide they wanted to do some kind of project like this & put their own money into it & hire the best people, the best musicians, the best recording engineers, etc, etc, etc, and then ultimately what would happen is that the label would get ahold of it, and then would just turn around & send it off to Chris Lord-Alge to mix, and it would come back sounding just like Nickelback. lol

So, the era of "Aja's" is gone, which I guess explains why we haven't heard anything like it since... there will be no more "Sgt. Peppers", no more "Pet Sounds" or "Rumours" or "Hejira's", there will be the occasional song that kicks ass just because chaos theory stipulates that even good things can happen in synchronization at times, but the album as a landmark, as a piece of literature, is dead. Perhaps we all realized it already, or perhaps we all were kind of waiting/hoping for the next earth-shaking/mind-blowing one. But I don't think it's ever going to happen again - not in the popular realm, anyway, and that's the sad part. The fringes are of no import in this regard - and I say this as a guy who's always been on the fringes, both in terms of success AND preferred genre; there's always been good stuff on the fringes.... but what kind of impact would the Mona Lisa have had if the only people who

ever saw it were DaVinci & the girl who's picture he painted?
Think about that one...

OK, rant's off... i'll be back when I can type again - in the
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CARRY ON!

:)

Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Tom Bruhl on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 06:05:37 GMT
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This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

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Content-Type: text/plain;
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Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

Neil,
Deep thoughts man. =20

You will pull through with flying colors.
Your playing technique will adapt and all will be fine
sooner than you think. The mind/body connection
is an amazing thing. Watch what happens!

I agree with the analog tape/bass phenomenon you describe.
I can't play as fast or as clean as I used to.
I never used a 902 but I've also never been satisfied with
any software DeEsser.
White/pink noise can be wicked cool on a snare.
I haven't written a new song in over a year.
Music history always brings big picture emotions out of me too.

I'm sure tomorrow is playing a big part in your mind set. This
will be the start of another level for you. Believe it!
I wish you the best of luck for your surgery!
Sincerely,
Tom

"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:471d8a6e$1@linux...

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Neil

I choose Polesoft Lockspam to fight spam, and you?
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  in message <A=20
  =
href=3D"news:471d8a6e$1@linux">news:471d8a6e$1@linux</A>...</DIV>
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CARRY =
ON!

:)

Neil</BLOCKQUOTE>
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------=_NextPart_000_0034_01C81519.345E9A80--

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by dc[3] on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 06:08:38 GMT
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Hey man, I wish you well with that surgery and hope you have a
quick and musical recovery.

And oh-hey, you are thinking way too much...

But yeah, no one will ever do this

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOvGa-8-Lns

again. Too bad because it kicks butt...

I think part of the reason is that baby boomers are much less critical

about music than our parents were.

Our parents HATED rock music, remember?

Well, that made us do stuff like Aja and Chicago, and Yes, and ELP and Mahavishnu and Quadrophenia and all the rest to show them how good we could be.

Today, if you even criticize rap, fer Pete's sake, you get the BS back about you being another baby boomer missing their youth, so we have no influence with younger people in the way that our parents had on us. Yet, play Beatles for a young person and they love it.

We have failed to champion the musical tradition that we were handed and it shows.

They had Bitches Brew, we get Nickleback...

My kid played some Skillet for me, and I hated it. Terrible songwriting,

overwrought rubbish and I actually stood up and said so. Oh, she says, they're using an orchestra and everything!! Yeah, well Metallica did it better, way better, not to mention Procul Harum, ELP, the Moody Blues, and even Mason Williams (remember him?)

So, she still likes Skillet, and I still hate 'em, but she is learning more of
what has come before.

The kids are not the problem. The damn baby boomers are.

rant #2 off now.

Let us know how the surgery goes willya?

take care

DC

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Jamie K on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 06:29:57 GMT
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Good luck tomorrow, Neil!

You will rock again.

The next AJA might be made by emailing tracks around between people who discover each other online.

Cheers,
-Jamie
www.JamieKrutz.com

Neil wrote:
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> :)
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> Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by steve the artguy on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 08:49:53 GMT
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ok, Neil. I'll take the bait.

1. You've admitted your chops aren't what they used to be. If your playing changes, there's a chance it will change it for the better. Who knows. I know of several top guitarists who had to literally start over from scratch after hand injuries. It can be done. There's a good chance your finger will heal fine. Wait and see.

2. You're so much more experienced in recording, both tape and to disk, than I am that I have no constructive comment. I do know that, regardless of what is on tape or hard drives, my hearing is so much worse now that I doubt I can tell the difference.

3. There was no three!

4. I bet you'll have lots of tunes going through your head while you're healing. Being in a situation where I'm away from an instrument always does that to me.

4. All your points are true and well taken. But I think it likely that the next Ajas are right now on some kid's hard drive in his bedroom.

Before Aja, a case could be made (and frequently was, by critics) that the highpoint of recorded music had already been reached, whether by great classical

artists in the early to mid 20th century or Ellington or Dizzy or Miles or Django or Bechet or Armstrong or Jobim -- or the Beatles, or Hendrix, or Pink Floyd, or you name it. Yet Aja came.

4a. Some artist will do it because he or she can. Technology and imagination and talent can make up for lack of money.

4b. Yes, talent. There are kids out there who are absolute monsters. The guitarist I mentioned the other day, Julian Lage, is one. I played a gig with a 21 year old bass player about a month ago who scared me to death. I didn't hear Jaco when he was 21, but I honestly think this kid was on the same level. The monster talents now may not surface at labels. They may not go on the road. They may not show up on TV. But they're out there.

Imagine if a Brian Wilson was coming up now, and instead of having a dad smack him upside his head he had a nice Cubase rig with a suite of pluggins and vst instruments. Do you doubt he could make his own "Pet Sounds" in his bedroom? I don't.

Imagine if two kids with the talent of Becker and Fagan (I guarantee they're out there) decide to spend their time studying music and producing music instead of blowing most of their energy on the sex, drugs, and rock and roll scene and lifestyle. Imagine if Becker and Fagan had. Sounds cliched, but I'm serious.

I will make a wild prediction. I think a brilliant inspired kid with the technology we have today can make up for a lack of a stable of "A list" musicians and the lack of a George Martin.
Someone is building his own "Pet Sounds" on his or her hard drive right now. Let's hope we're lucky enough to hear it.

-steve

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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts

Posted by rick on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 08:52:13 GMT
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good luck neil.

break a pick

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>Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by mike audet[1] on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 12:35:52 GMT
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"Tom Bruhl" <arpegio@comcast.net> wrote:
>

>I never used a 902 but I've also never been satisfied with
>any software DeEsser.

Hey! What's wrong with my deesser? :)

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by mike audet[1] on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 12:36:54 GMT
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Good luck, Neil. All my hopes are with you.

All the best,

Mike

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Robert on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 14:01:50 GMT
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Good luck Neil, I'm sure things will work out fine bro.
Rob

"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:471d8a6e$1@linux...
>
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> am continuing to try to remember - a VERY minor thing in the
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> Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Gene Lennon[4] on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 14:20:20 GMT
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Good luck with the surgery Neil.

in modern day rock, they have been all forced to move to jazz, classical,
or session work. The next Aja? Who knows. It could happen spontaneously with
a group of great musicians just doing it for the love of it. After all, everyone
has good recording gear today.

Gene

"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote:
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>Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts

Posted by D-unit on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 15:35:44 GMT
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"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message

> So, the era of "Aja's" is gone,

I hope you're wrong about that but I see your point.

Check out Bela Fleck and the Flecktone's "Little Worlds"

This comes close to the artistic statements your looking for.

There's stuff on there that will blow your mind.

Their latest one won a grammy for reason's I can't understand.
It's nowhere near as good as Little Worlds. IMO.

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Tom Bruhl on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 15:42:11 GMT
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This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

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Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

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It's a make up call.
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"D-unit" <cof42_AT_embarqmail.com> wrote in message =
news:471e150c@linux...

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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by D-unit on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 19:29:17 GMT
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db

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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Bill L on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 20:12:14 GMT
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Hey Neil,

Brother I can totally understand you being bummed right now, but after it's over and you've had a few weeks to recover and get your spirits up, I am confident that you will bounce back and be playing great again. There's a lot of ways to pick a string and if you're determined, you will find a good way.

I agree that analog tape has a mojo you can't seem to get any other way. When I listen to shit I did analog it's got a round smoothness that digital does not have. What the fuck! Does that mean we have to go back to it??? Argh. Break out the alignment reel...

Dude, there will be more and better records than Aja. You gotta believe!

My favorite record of all time is First Circle by the Pat Metheny Group, and it will certainly be surpassed one day. Everything will be. We, people here on Earth, are getting better. Look at history. We always get better.

Always look on the bright side of life, da da da dum da da.

ML, Bill

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Posted by Bill L on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 20:43:58 GMT
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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by TCB on Tue, 23 Oct 2007 21:51:35 GMT
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Good luck with the surgery. I won't go into much here (our opinion about Steely Dan is probably as divergent as the opinions Don and I hold about natural selection), but I will say this. The 'sing higher/play faster' bit just hit home for me. I don't really care about being able to play fast, that was never what I did to stand out anyway. But I've been doing scratch vocal harmonies for the Monkies, trying to drop in some of those Big Star type harmonies in on a couple of things. Now then, I could never sing as high pitched as Alex Chilton or Chris Bell, but despite a very low speaking voice I grew up with a huge range including a very good falsetto. My mom as a young 'un was a coloratura with a five octave range and I got some of her pipes. Well, I can still do the takes, but the combination of smoking in my twenties and drinking in my thirties and just plain old getting older are hard to miss. It's a lot more work and there are some notes I just can't hit anymore. I'm going to try practicing more (I've never practiced singing in my life) but my guess is they're just gone. Gotsa hope wisdom, comping, and hopefully more creativity will make up for it.

Saw Dave Bruebeck a few years ago. He was still killing it.

TCB

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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by emarenot on Wed, 24 Oct 2007 05:18:38 GMT
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Best of luck Neil.
You will prevail.
....I haven't listened to Aja for a LONG time. I'm gonna have to go out and
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MR

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> Neil

Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Rich Lamanna on Wed, 24 Oct 2007 05:32:27 GMT
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Dude, I went through this a few years ago and have pulled out stronger. You always find your strengths when put to the test. My embouchure is like rubber now from my dystonia, but I found the Synthophone and I'm also bangin' on the steel drum, four mallets at a time. The creator closes one door and opens another, in my case.

Interesting and insightful thoughts. You're so right. Where are the genius producers of today and the musicians who can put it to tape. This disappearance has happened before in the age of Jazz: Trane, Parker, Zawinul, Brecker, Miles, Jaco, Bill Evans, Cannonball, etc.., and the big

bands: Kenton, Ellington, Basie, Herman, Dorsey, etc.. It's all cyclical, something new will replace the vacuum. But, you're right nothing has replaced these great artists recently, though there is a great new bass player in France, Hadrian Fareud, got to check this cat out. He's on John McLaughlin's cd, "Industrial Zen". He's incredible and only 23 years old. Maybe Bill Gates will start a new record company :-)

You'll be fine,
Rich

"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:471d8a6e$1@linux...
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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Sarah on Wed, 24 Oct 2007 10:15:49 GMT
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Logging in late here, Neil, but I hope your procedure went well. Take good care of it so it doesn't get infected. Lot of nasty bugs out there these days.

Too tired to type all my thoughts on all your interesting comments, but I hope your creative slump lifts. Maybe just don't worry about how high you can sing or how fast you can play and just focus on how much you can express what you're feeling. Personally, I feel like my music comes to me from "out there" somewhere, the cosmic stream of creativity, or whatever it is. Just keep your antennae up there and create what you would like to hear.

My two cents. Heal fast.

S

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Subject: Re: Random Thoughts
Posted by Johnny Blaze on Sun, 28 Oct 2007 12:18:14 GMT
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I read this rant from Neil, and I would have to say he is right on the money.
It is very hard to find people who are passionate about creating something
new and on the fringe. They keep turning out carbon copies of shit, but
the sad fact is, that most musicians that want to record and make an album
are so into sounding like their favorite bands. I figure even their favorite
bands at one point went to record and wanted to sound like their favorite
bands and the circle continues hahaha. It's hard to find someone who wants
to take a risk and try novel ideas. It all starts to sound the same after
a while. I really liked Nirvana, too bad the singer killed himself, but
on a good note, he left behind some heart wrenching haunting vocals that
by no means are classical or hint at any vocal training, but are so damn
human you can hear the sorrow in his poetic melodies it makes you feel that
chill.

No one holds a candle to the Beatles, especially Sgt Peppers LHCB, that was
the sheeeet!

Thanks for sharing your thoughts it definitely will be a page in my heart
that I will carry with me when thinking of ways to improve our selection
of music for the masses. I always strive to open the eyes and hearts of
each musician I work with, without preaching, and without condescending,
but a simple nudging and subtly imploring them to exercise their skills to
be the best player of their instrument that they can be.

I use the analogy of an Ice Skater in the olympics, they don't make it to
the Olypics by being ordinary, they make it by putting in the hours (some
10+ hrs per day) honing their skills to mesmerize people. Whether we mesmerize
our fellow humans entertaining them in a Ballet, with a written movie, or
by song, it should be well thought out and it should scream devotion.

Cheers,

Johnny

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>> describe it is that it's very strong & present, yet smooth.
>> To me, digital low end sounds "hollow" compared to this.
>> Just pointing this out. It's what miss about tape, I think.
>>
>> 2b.) The dbx 902 is absolutely the best de-esser on the
>> planet - I need to get one & just leave it inserted on lead
>> vocal channnels - or someone needs to port this to a plugin.
>> Listening to it again, on stuff that I know that I used it
>> on, really reveals this. No plugin comes close - again, it's
>> a vibe thing ifyaknowwhatimsayin'.
>>
>> 2c.) I know it was an 80's trick; but DAMN, triggering some
>> pink or white noise on the snare really makes it sound
>> farking HUGE! lol I may start doing this again! lol
>>
>> and finally on the nostalgia front...
>>
>> 2d.) Damn, I could sing a lot higher then.
>> 2e.) Damn, I could play a lot faster then.
>>
>> lol
>>
>> 4.) I'm in a creative slump/composers' block - brought on by
>> a combination of external influences, no doubt... too much
>> metal exposure recently, for one - it's hard for me to get out
>> of one mode & into another - I find I have to kind of "purify"
>> or go through "musical detox" from one genre to another, so I
>> listen to something completely opposite of what I've been doing
>> for a period. When I did this all the time it was easy to
>> switch - I could be nimble in terms of working on &
>> contributing to a jazz project one week & a C&W project the
>> next, but it seems with greater distances between projects &
>> more time spent on each particular one, it's harder to get out
>> of a certain mode & get back into something else, like writing,
>> for example (in this case). Ever experience that? Used to be
>> I'd listen to "So" over & over for a day & I was "clear" -
>> not 'so' anymore (pun intended LOL).
>>
>>

>> And the last random thought for the evening...
>>
>> 4.) As I was listening to Aja, again, for the dozenth or so
>> time in my attempt to get "clear" (but NOT in the manner that
>> Bill Lorentzen would interpret that! lol) , it occurred to me
>> that the likelihood is that there will NEVER, ever, again, be
>> another "Aja", which made me quite sad upon realizing said
>> revelation. I've come to this determaination based on the
>> following theorems:
>>
>> 4a.) Becker & Fagen notwithstanding, there simply aren't any
>> artists out there at this time that can conglomerate the
>> level of talent in the kind of numbers necessary to
>> promulgate this kind of endeavor... there USED to be more -
>> sure, any A-list artist could & can hire top-level talent,
>> but to what purpose? To achieve something like this? Nope.
>> Who did so, even back then? Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell,
>> Peter Gabriel (in different genres, but still...)
>>
>> 4b.) There simply ARE no musicians of this caliber left!
>> Well, I might be overstating it, but back in "the day", you
>> could pretty much walk down any street in New York or LA &
>> trip over half a dozen Larry Carltons or Bernard Purdies...
>> where do you eve find people like that anymore? Sure,
>> they're out there, but where? Who can find them? Are enough
>> of them concentrated around where someone wants to record
>> so that they can be put to work on a project? I doubt it.
>>
>> 4c.) The economics of the biz has changed... who gets the
>> kind of budget anymore where you can afford to have seven
>> different A-list guitarists (if you can even find that many)
>> hit the solo on "Peg" a few times each until someone nails a
>> take you like? In this same line of questioning, who can
>> expect to sell enough records anymore without even going on
>> tour so they don't have to worry about recouping, so
>> they can sit at home doing nothing but writing & perfecting
>> this shit for two or three years until it's at this kind of
>> level? Who gets the kind of budget where you can essentially
>> have five different bands record a basic track on a song
>> until you get the one you like? NOBODY! Some rich rockstar
>> like Chad Kroeger of Nickelback would have to decide they
>> wanted to do some kind of project like this & put their own
>> money into it & hire the best people, the best musicians,
>> the best recording engineers, etc, etc, etc, and then
>> ultimately what would happen is that the label would get
>> ahold of it, and then would just turn around & send it off
>> to Chris Lord-Alge to mix, and it would come back sounding
>> just like Nickelback. lol

>>
>> So, the era of "Aja's" is gone, which I guess explains why we
>> haven't heard anything like it since... there will be no more
>> "Sgt. Peppers", no more "Pet Sounds" or "Rumours" or "Hejira's",
>> there will be the occasional song that kicks ass just because
>> chaos theory stipulates that even good things can happen in
>> synchronization at times, but the album as a landmark, as a
>> piece of literature, is dead. Perhaps we all realized it
>> already, or perhaps we all were kind of waiting/hoping for the
>> next earth-shaking/mind-blowing one. But I don't think it's
>> ever going to happen again - not in the popular realm, anyway,
>> and that's the sad part. The fringes are of no import in this
>> regard - and I say this as a guy who's always been on the
>> fringes, both in terms of success AND preferred genre;
>> there's always been good stuff on the fringes.... but what kind
>> of impact would the Mona Lisa have had if the only people who
>> ever saw it were DaVinci & the girl who's picture he painted?
>> Think about that one...
>>
>>
>> OK, rant's off... i'll be back when I can type again - in the
>> meanwhile, I'd love to read your thoughts on all this.
>>
>> CARRY ON!
>>
>> :)
>>
>> Neil
>
>