

October 2018 Thoughts for the Day

10/31/18

I am not sure what to mention to finish out the month. But probably Mozart's Requiem is most fitting, in honor of my father dying. Next May it will have been 10 years since he passed.

10/30/18

The classical music that got me liking the genre were the first three Brandenburg Concertos by Bach. My father introduced me to them. When my father had his stroke and was dying, we played some of his favorite music. With his one good hand he conducted along with the music. Even though much of his brain had died, that part was still quite alive. I believe that playing music, and the Brandenburg Concertos in particular was a way to allow him to more calmly and peacefully die.

10/29/18

I was watching an episode of M*A*S*H and Charles teases a woman playing the accordion. Then she sits in front of the piano and plays the most well known part of Beethoven's "Pathetique". Charles has a new found respect for her and acknowledges that he underestimated her musical abilities. I love "Pathetique". It's a musical piece that evokes emotion in me.

10/28/18

Going back to Chaka Khan when she was with Rufus. One of my favorite feel good songs is "Tell Me Something Good". It's a super funky song and Chaka is challenging a man to give her a chance because she will set him on fire.

10/27/18

My favorite Prince song is "The Love We Make". Written in memory of a friend who died of a heroin overdose. I believe it is one of his more beautiful songs ironically speaking about a tragic and heartbreaking topic. It's another example of a musician making an accessible song with a serious message. The melody draws you in and the words make you think.

10/26/18

Peter Frampton is one of those people who has had a musical career that has lasted for 40+ years. I remember buying Frampton Comes Alive and wearing out more than one copy of it. It always amazes me when a person's voice lasts this long. He has many big hits, but the one of loss and heartache is today's theme. The song is "Lines on My Face". Dealing with being left and how life must go on.

10/25/18

Al Green's "Love and Happiness" is a song that I can listen to over and over. It's about how amazing love is, but at the same time, how it can motivate you to do things so wrong too.

10/24/18

And then there is Sade's "Your Love is King". Whether simply about love, or overtly sexual, either way a wonderful love song, only performed in the way Sade can.

10/23/18

OK-- I stumbled upon Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" which I hadn't heard in a long time. In my mind a beautiful love song. Ever felt this way about someone? It's a beautiful feeling.

10/22/18

Eminem's "The Monster" seems like a fitting song to mention at this point. Many people seem to glamorize the idea of fame. But there are definitely downsides. Many times people don't realize them until they're close friends with the monster under their bed.

10/21/18

It's funny where your stream of consciousness takes you. When thinking about the Cult of Personality it made me think of "For the Love of Money" by the O'Jays. Why? Makes me think of Trump and The Apprentice. In the U.S. we have been raised to worship money and wealth. Ironically, fame seems to be running neck and neck with money these days. The social media generation seem to be one viral video away from feeling like they are important and having meaning in their life.

10/20/18

I feel almost compelled to mention Living Colour's "Cult of Personality" after "Ace of Spades". Why would a person follow or connect with a person similar to Lemmy's Ace of Spades? Because in the end most of us are susceptible to this dynamic. As the lyrics say "Like Mussolini and Kennedy". We are looking for people we can "vibe" with. Some venerate Kennedy. Others might feel more comfortable with Mussolini. I have always felt the world we surround ourselves with is a mirror. What is your world telling you by who you have surrounded yourself with?

10/19/18

Not sure why I am inspired to talk about Motorhead's "Ace of Spades" today. A song about a person who is reckless, likes to take risks, and lives in the moment. He knows it's a losing strategy in life, but that's who he is. And when he invites people into his life he is warning them that they shouldn't expect anything different. Throughout the song he has used gambling metaphors to describe his life. And ultimately he knows that he will draw the Ace of Spades, which ironically is the best card in the deck and yet it is the card symbolizing death. So the ultimate experience with him will also be the last.

10/18/18

Pearl Jam has many well known songs. But I like "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town". I've always thought that this is about someone who stayed in a small town when others have left. And there is that moment when two lives intersect again with the person who stuck around and someone who has left comes back. And the memories come flooding back. And you think about saying "hello" but aren't really sure you even want to reconnect. And as quickly as the memories come back and you have the desire to reconnect, the person leaves and you go back to your same life and it fades away.

10/17/18

One of my favorite songs by Jane's Addiction is "Standing in the Shower Thinking". I believe that many people use that time to think about their day, their life, or other things on their mind. The water and the sensory experience seems like it stimulates thinking. I was going to mention "Been Caught Stealing", but since it was written by Lou Reed and I just mentioned him, I chose a different JA song.

10/16/18

Lou Reed is someone who I feel fortunate to have experienced perform live. Both his years with Velvet Underground as well as a solo artist have produced some amazing music and lyrics. "Walk on the Wild Side" is probably one of the more well known songs he created. The subject matter of the song paired with easy-to-access music allowed it to get significant radio airplay in the 70s, breaking down barriers about subjects that were taboo to talk about in general. I believe art (regardless of the medium) is intended to stretch our thinking and create visceral reactions, whether pleasant or unpleasant. It's always interesting when artists pair the comfortable with the uncomfortable as a way to get people to take in their work. He definitely succeeded on that level.

10/15/18

Another under-appreciated musician is George Clinton. Robbed of his royalties by greedy men, he had a recent court victory reclaiming some of the rights to his songs. While many musicians have had their songs covered, George Clinton has written many more musical "hooks" that have been sampled. I'm not sure if he is the most sampled artist, but he has to be up there. If you listen to Clinton's "Not Just Knee Deep" or "Atomic Dog" you'll immediately recognize parts of these songs that have been used by more contemporary artists to make millions. Thank you George!

10/14/18

Sly Stone is another amazing composer. And his band had so much talent as well. So many of his songs are still relevant today, in spite of him not creating music in many years. Today's song is "Dance to the Music" about getting out and moving and enjoying oneself. I had the honor of seeing this song performed while Cynthia Robinson was still alive. One of her most famous lines is in this song when she shouts "All the squares go home!" Some days are meant for partying and having fun. And if you can't get into that, don't ruin it for everyone else... Go Cynthia!

10/13/18

When it comes to Carole King she wrote a song called "Up on the Roof" which is a spot that is her refuge, her safe place in the middle of the city. I currently live in a place where I can be up on a roof. And for those who have been up on my roof with me, you understand why. It is a private and secluded space in the midst of a bustling city and all the big city problems.

10/12/18

Along these lines, two women who have not necessarily written songs for others, but who have had their songs covered are Carole King and Joni Mitchell. Both are amazing songwriters. To me songwriters are story tellers delivering their art through words and music. I love Joni Mitchell's lyric from "A Case of You" - that goes "I am a lonely painter, I live in a box of paints. I'm frightened by the devil, and drawn to those who ain't afraid." She has written a lot of beautiful lyrics. This is the one that seems to resonate the most with me currently.

10/11/18

David Foster is another man who is a prolific song writer, having written a large number of mega-hits. He wrote songs for Whitney Houston, Chicago and Peter Cetera, Madonna, The Tubes, and Earth Wind and Fire, to name a few. Probably my favorite David Foster song is Through the Fire performed by Chaka Khan. A song of perseverance.

10/10/18

Nile Rogers is such a talented composer of music. He has written many well known songs for singers. From Duran Duran, to Madonna, to Daft Punk/Pharrell Williams, to Ariana Grande, Keith Urban, Diana Ross, not to mention his own band Chic. It's interesting that he also wrote "Let's Dance" for David Bowie. What an amazing songwriter, who isn't necessarily in the spotlight that much, but his songs definitely are.

10/9/18

Today's song is "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory" by Johnny Thunders. While talking about the heartache when someone isn't around, he also talks about how you can feel alone even when they are around. The bottom line - show your love, because when it's gone, you can't put your arms around a memory.

10/8/18

Apparently I am on a roll. Today is "I Remember You" by Skid Row. One of my favorite lyrics: "Remember yesterday. Walking in hand in hand. Love letters in the sand. I remember you!" Love isn't permanent.

10/7/18

When it comes to the Grateful Dead I was much more a fan of Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter's songs than Bob Weir's. However, I always have liked "Looks Like Rain" by Bob Weir. The song of the heartache of losing a love.

10/6/18

Eleanor Rigby by the Beatles is a song about loneliness and isolation. And there are a lot of lonely, isolated people in the world. And we all yearn for connection to others, it's part of being human, it's part of being happy for most. Father MacKenzie, who is part of the church isn't even immune to this. We can all decrease the suffering of others and for ourselves through our willingness to connect with people and not live in isolation.

10/5/18

Prince's "Sometimes It Snows in April" is an song about losing someone important to you, too soon. One of my favorite parts of the song is the lyric, "Always cry for love, never cry for pain." Cry for the love you've had for a person not the pain of missing them.

10/4/18

I just finished experiencing two days of Stanley Jordan at Jazz Alley again. He was here exactly a year ago. He is such a talented musician who gives 100% every night.

10/3/18

I remember when Seal's album came out in 1994 and "Kiss from a Rose" was the huge hit from it. And "Prayer for the Dying" was a song that moved people. But "Don't Cry" was an amazing song that I liked much better. It's this song of support and love when you are struggling. It's the hug when you need one.

10/2/18

In contrast... Recently I saw musician Liv Warfield perform locally and she was amazing. She has a song titled "I Decided" that is about leaving an abusive relationship. It was moving and powerful listening to her perform this live vs. listening to it on an album. She is currently touring with Prince's NPG horn section, and they mesh quite well. Unlike Effie in Dreamgirls, Liv sings about being the one ready to leave.

10/1/18

In Dreamgirls Jennifer Holliday on Broadway and then Jennifer Hudson in the movie both sang "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going". As their character Effie is being dumped both personally and professionally, they are refusing to accept it. They still love someone who doesn't love them back and is moving on. And they are demanding to be loved.