

[Excerpted from a conversation in 1976]

Q: Do you think all the technology has been a benefit to music or do you think possibly it's been a detriment?

JC: I hope it hasn't proved itself one way or another yet. I think it's still in the formation phase. I think it's hurt it in some ways, but a lot of things have hurt music in some ways. The whole world affairs have hurt music in some ways. I think it'll get back more to ...well, now a days when you record, the nice thing about 24 track or 16 track is I can do it from the floor and I know that I've got everything ...I don't like to be in the control room anymore. I like to work from the floor--without ear phones if possible. The studio I'm building up in the attic is not gonna have ear phones. We're gonna have a normal ... a regular sounding room and speakers around, monitor speakers so we can hear each other. But that won't be a custom type studio where you've gotta go from one set-up to another. It'll be stylized for a group. Now, if we do it directly on the floor and the machines are running correctly then we'll be able to go in there later and mix it like we want it. If we cut it flat...if we don't have any echo or anything like that going in. That's the way I record. Whatever we want to add later, we can do it.

I can hear it on the floor... I can hear the instruments. If they play right and it sounds balanced out there.. it's okay on the tape unless something went wrong technically.

I like that when I'm singing, 'cause I don't have to worry about mixing it right then, just get the singing part.. .the performance part. So, I like 16 track and 24 track, but at the same time we could get back to doing some things the other way too... .certain types of things. Sometimes a bad mix makes it sound good, an unpredictability factor, sort of wiped out all this being able to mix them for months...years. There's one thing to it. You can always go back several years later and remix it, with a different perspective. It's good from that standpoint. Once you put echo on it, you're stuck with it. You can add it later.

So, you have to get used to it sounding kind of funny while you're cutting it. Studios sound funny. They don't sound natural. They're designed to sound funny....without a little echo added to give it an illusion of a room sound.

Yeah..I don't like the way studios sound. I think a recording studio is the worst place in the world to make a record. Studios sound funny...too dead. It's disorienting to the musicians. Now, if you stand there and get used to it - you get used to it up to a point. (laugh) You always got to compromise somewhere. Musically, we gotta not compromise unless we damn have to. That's the way I feel about it.

When I was producing at Sun, I was running the board and the whole thing. Just one person in the control room, and the other people were out there. The word producer wasn't even used in the record business at that time. There wasn't any producer sitting there. I'm really into sort of back to the same way we made records. You can't call it back to mono, but back to doing everything at once when the whole band is there. Rather than stacking tracks. It's more real. If you're going after performances -- the kind of records I'm trying to make. You've got to have the performance by everybody at once. It's a thing of the moment. To get five people doing that thing on the same time continuum. If you're going to do somebody else's part later, you're moving around in time and space. You're guessing it at. You're trying to recreate a mood. Rather than create one, you're trying to get back into something. And you get fooled that way You get all confused and think that things sound good, when they really don't. Somehow the music gets lost in all this shuffle. That's the reason music sounds so shitty these days.