



## Hidemi's Rambling No.261

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I've been working for mastering of our new song for some time now. I still can't get it up to my satisfaction though, after using everything I've got. I successfully made the sound itself exactly what I'd wanted. The only problem is the volume. I tried countless compressors and limiters, read a book on the subject and looked it up around on the Internet with no luck. Our song stays in low volume compared to other CDs. The other day, I found mastering software that many engineers regard as an ultimate volume booster. It looked attractive, but it was quite pricey. It was my decision whether I bought it or took our song to a studio engineer. I just wanted to try the software and go through with the mastering so badly. I decided to try to the best of my ability and then, after it became certain that I couldn't, turn to a professional. I bought the software. Now, the road to a goal is one, only the ending will be either the software or the studio. I've known that completing a song takes time, but music also can be a money pit...

## Hideki's Rambling No.262

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Recently, there has been more and more news about bears and monkeys that appear in town and attack people all around Japan. It's said that they come down from the mountains for food, as there has been less food up on the mountains due to the climate change and deforestation. The area I live in now is animal-free so far, because there aren't mountains nor woods around, just too many crazy people. But at last, I heard the news that a bear appeared in the area I'm moving to. My new place is in the country with numerous woods and fields, surrounded by mountains. A bear was spotted in a field and a man got injured. Terrifyingly, the field was quite close to my new apartment and I think I walked beside it last time I went to my place and was on my way to shopping. That reminded me of a couple I saw on the street then. They were walking with tinkling bells. I knew that a bell worked to keep from a bear encounter and I thought they came back from hiking in the mountains. But now I know they were tinkling bells for the exact spot. By moving, I intended to be rid of people, but never thought I would live among bears instead...

## Hideki's Rambling No.263

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I'm very fond of stuffed animals. They have been my best friends since early childhood. For me, seeing a mascot moving around means my friend stuffed animal tribe comes to life and that always gives me great pleasure. I record and burn on a DVD when I see a mascot on TV, and go to him or her to say hello when I see one at a theme park, a supermarket or a drug store, by plowing through other kids. In Japan, the number of mascots has been increasing lately, with all sorts of a kind. Most of them are mascots of unknown, minor characters, opposite to famous characters such as Mickey Mouse, Snoopy or Hello Kitty. Whether famous or not, more mascots are greatly welcomed to me, as my dream is to live on a mascot planet. But Japanese people especially seem to like minor characters among others. A lot of companies, municipalities, campaigns and movements have introduced their original mascots and it's a trend. Unlike famous mascots from professional sports teams and theme parks, their characteristics are somehow loosely defined, their looks aren't so refined, and they're only known to a limited number of people. Even so, they're booming enough to have established their own category as 'unrefined characters'. And that seems the key to appeal to Japanese people most. This trend may reflect their subconscious about living in an undefined, unrefined country...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.264

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I have two different personalities inside myself. They're in stark contrast with each other and that often confuses me. I know fame and money would do no good and I try to live only in order to make good music, nothing else. But my other self always wants to live in Monaco and own a Formula One team. It sneers at my way of living and makes me feel miserable. I vividly remember the moment this other self was born inside me. It was when I was in the second grade. Until then, I hadn't talked to anyone but my family members, all through the years of kindergarten and the first grade at elementary school. To me, people outside my family were all evil and stupid. I despised them for some reason, and ignored them, as I didn't want to be one of them. As a result, my social life as a child was atrocious. Because of my attitude, other kids constantly picked on me, slandered and bad-mouthed. I was always alone and loathed school so much that I couldn't sleep every night of schooldays. I sensed that I couldn't live like this any longer. I was about to be broken like a machine with no lubricant, and couldn't stand it anymore. I knew the way to make my life easier was to become one of them. After long deliberation, I came to a decision, and my other self was born. I started talking to people, laughing with them, playing with them, by enduring the foolishness. I became popular and my school life turned into a less nightmare although my true self was very unhappy. Now I've grown up and chosen to live as my true self. Still, my other half disturbs me once in a while by craving fame and money. Am I really sure that other self isn't my true self? What if the other self is true me...?

## Hidemi's Rambling No.265

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The apartment I currently live in is furnished, and the place I'm moving to isn't. That means I need to get appliances. First, I bought a microwave oven. And now, I've been looking for a washer. To get a large appliance like it is quite tricky because it needs to be set up inside the room. Almost all retail stores have restrictions on delivery. They don't deliver large appliances to isolated islands or mountainous regions in Japan, or if they do, they charge extra cost. My new place is located in the mountains and right among the restricted areas. There's a way to shop at a local store to avoid those delivery restrictions, but the town I'm moving to is so small to have only one electrical appliance store. And since it's not a chain store, I would pay the list price. I usually have a strict policy to get something, which is to get at the lowest price on the market. But I can't apply my policy to getting large appliances this time. I have to give priority to a store that delivers to my place over a price. Combined with the extra charge, the price gets higher and higher. It's not my style of shopping, but I have no choice. Following a bear's attack, obstacles to live in the mountains have emerged one by one...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.266

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I had a dream about my grandparents last night and couldn't go back to sleep because I missed them so badly. Both of them have passed away, but they raised me when I was a child in place of my parents who were too busy working out in the field as farmers. When I lived with my grandparents, I didn't appreciate being with them, as they were strict, quiet and boring, and I constantly missed my parents. But after I grew up and left my hometown, I realized how my grandparents regarded me and felt about me. Until they passed away, I had returned home once or twice a year. My grandfather would wait for me with an envelope that had some money for me inside, and my grandmother with my favorite food that she would have prepared and cooked from morning. She would wear particularly for the day something I had given to her before, to show me her gratitude. Those things were what I could never expect from my parents. My parents would be seldom at home when I returned although my homecoming was only yearly and informed well beforehand. That was not because they were working. They would be out for shopping or, at one time, they were even gone on a trip to Hawaii. They seemed to lack the sense of pining for and anticipating someone. Or, they may have simply avoided me. Parental affection doesn't necessarily come from parents. In my case, it was my grandparents who gave it to me...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.267

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Formula One's 2010 season is going to end this weekend. This year, the championship title will be decided on any of the three drivers. All three are my favorite drivers and deserve the title. In that respect, it was a very good season, because there's sometimes a season in which an unworthy driver wins the championship. The worst case was the years when Schumacher had dominated the sport. He cheated, banged off other driver's car, and grabbed the title year after year. On the other hand, there's a splendid season such as the one when Villeneuve won the title fair and square. Justice is served on one season, and isn't on the other. Precisely speaking, two of the three contenders weren't so fair this year. One driver hit and pushed off one of the three, and the other driver used a loophole to do a test run in spite of the testing ban and had one win handed over by his team mate in spite of the team-order ban. That tells who will clinch the title this weekend is the remaining one, if this year is the case for justice to be served. But looking through the past record, justice is treacherous and unreliable for this sport. Maybe that's evidence that the championship title is meaningless and has nothing to do with justice...



## Hidemi's Rambling No.268

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The exciting 2010 season of Formula One is over with the champion being Vettel. He's deserved and while I congratulate on his first title, I can't help feeling disappointed about my favorite driver Alonso's result. Currently, he's the fastest, the most skillful, focused and intelligent driver in the field. Up to the last race, he had led the point standings and been closest to the title. I had predicted that he would be the world champion this year before the season started. One setback was that he transferred to Ferrari for this season. Ferrari is notorious for cheating and I had to cheer the least favorite team for Alonso. He started from the third position on the last race and I was convinced that he would grab this year's title because finishing fourth was enough for him to do just that. I watched the race on TV so intensely that I could hardly breathe at one point of the race. By the time the race ended, I was short of breath, extremely exhausted, and had a headache. Alonso finished seventh, much less forth, and lost the championship. During the course of the season, Ferrari technically infringed the testing ban and the team-order ban. To me, it seemed that those infringements weren't forgiven and he lost for that. Since cheating is Ferrari's specialty, he might not win the championship as long as he stays in Ferrari...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.269

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It's Mickey Mouse's birthday today! I throw a birthday party for him every year, as he's my best friend. He has helped me a lot every time I went through a difficult time. I always wonder about rather cold treatment of him from American people. When I lived in California, I went to Disneyland on Mickey's birthday to celebrate it. While there are some kinds of special event on his birthday at Tokyo Disneyland, I was surprised that there was none at Disneyland. They just had regular shows and parades without mentioning his birthday. A cast member didn't even know it was Mickey's birthday when I asked about the special celebration event. She gave me a vacant look, seeming to have no clue what I expected and made a big deal of. Furthermore, people say 'Mickey Mouse' when they refer to something too trivial and easy. One year ago today, I also wrote here about how important he was to me, and saw a sudden and sharp drop in the number of my blog readers on the next day. I call it Mickey shock. Now that I wrote about him again this year, I'll lose my precious readers that I've gained with effort for the whole year...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.270

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I found that the problem I've been tackling, which is to boost the volume of our new song, could be solved by redoing the mixdown. But it'll take a few more months to complete. Although we have more than 20,000 visitors for our website and MySpace profile, and they kindly keep coming, not a single song has been up there yet. That's shameful to me. Also, I feel reluctant to tell my partner that I need more time to complete the song. I thought about an extreme. What if I were the only human on this planet? If there were no one else besides me, I would redo by taking as much time as I want until I reach my satisfaction. Time is relative like happiness and bears meaning simply in relation to others. Come to think of it, our new song is written just about it. While I've been working on it, I ignored what I had written myself. So, I decided to go back to the mixdown. Considering the song's theme, it was destined to take time...