



DAVID R. ADLER JULIAN LAGE WORLD'S FAIR

Julian Lage, acoustic guitar
Modern Lore 99767 (CD). 2015.
Julian Lage, Matt Munisteri,
prods.: Armand Hirsch, eng. DDD.
TT: 37:56

➔ At 26, Julian Lage sat down with his 1939 Martin 000-18 and mostly original compositions and delivered one of the great albums in the chronicles of solo guitar. From the speedy intricacy of "Peru," "Gardens," and "Missouri" to the contemplative beauty of "40's" and "Day and Age," Lage set the bar high for personal expression and unforced assimilation of influences. Echoes of folk, country, and American roots, jazz early and modern: Lage rendered it all with a singing tone and fierce yet remarkably easygoing technique, creating moments "on the knife's edge of guitar mischief," to quote co-producer Matt Munisteri from the liner notes.

WEATHER REPORT WEATHER REPORT

Joe Zawinul, keyboards, piano, woodwind, percussion, voice; Wayne Shorter, tenor & soprano saxophones; Jaco Pastorius, electric bass, percussion, voice; Peter Erskine, drums, drum computer, claves; Robert Thomas Jr., percussion
Columbia FC 37616 (LP). 1982.
Joe Zawinul, prod.: Brian Risner, eng. AAA. TT: 40:38

➔ The final offering of the Pastorius-

Erskine years isn't widely acknowledged as a stunner, but it is. Zawinul's composing is full of depth and surprise, and Shorter's single entry, "When It Was Now," is a marvel of harmonic weirdness and quasi-mechanical groove. The ballad "Speechless" treads water a bit, but "Current Affairs" is timeless, undulating beauty, sandwiched between the ripping opener "Volcano for Hire" and the ambitious swing suite "N.Y.C." Pastorius used to knock Zawinul for "technological overkill," but dig those synth textures—they're still dynamically rich and otherworldly, without doubt rooted in a jazz aesthetic.

JOHN ATKINSON RACHMANINOFF PIANO CONCERTO 2; SIX MOMENTS MUSICAUX, OP.16

Dejan Lazic, piano; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Kirill Petrenko
Channel Classics CCS SA26308 (SACD/CD; DSD64, 24/192, 24/96, 24/44.1, MP3 downloads). 2008. Jared Sacks, prod., eng. DDD. TT: 64:15

➔ I had always liked Rachmaninoff's music, but I fell in love with the Russian composer in February 2000. In a private recital hall in Santa Monica, I was recording Robert Silverman performing, on a Bösendorfer 290SE player piano, Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas. Our

host had a file for the Bösendorfer, transcribed by Wayne Stahnke from a piano roll, of Rachmaninoff himself performing his transcription of Mendelssohn's *Spinning Song*. As I wrote in our January 2001 issue, "this was better than any hi-fi I had ever experienced—I actually had Sergei Rachmaninoff in the room, playing Mendelssohn just for me." Since that formative experience, I have been working—no, playing my way through his symphonies, sacred music, chamber music, music for piano, and the piano concertos, especially No.2. The DSD64 file of this live, award-winning performance by Dejan Lazic has been in constant rotation this past year. The Croatian pianist offers the perfect balance of passion, power, and lyricism, pointed by the occasional moment of hushed expectancy. He is supported by superb sound quality, with a rich, lush orchestral balance—and while the piano image is a little larger than life, it doesn't detract from the sweep of this lyrically sublime music.

TALK TALK LAUGHING STOCK

Verve 847-717-2 (UK CD). 1991.
Tim Friese-Greene, prod.: Phill Brown, eng. AAD. TT: 43:29

➔ Although Craig Roseberry made this fifth and final album from the UK's Talk Talk one of his 2004 "Records to Die For," I was late to the party,

listening to the band's two post-rock albums only after reading engineer Phill Brown's autobiography, *Are We Still Rolling?* I was aware of Brown's ability to make audiophile-quality rock recordings with true dynamic range and a real-sounding sense of space from Steve Winwood's first solo record, which was one of my "R2D4" selections for 2012. But when I read how *Laughing Stock* had been made—drummer Lee Harris playing unaccompanied patterns and grooves for 12 hours at a time, miked with a single Neumann U47 30' away in London's Wessex Studio, with spot mikes on the snare and kick drums—I had to hear the result. Brown ended up with 48 reels of 2" tape from which producer, keyboardist, and songwriter Tim Friese-Greene and singer-songwriter-guitarist/keyboardist Mark Hollis would select the drum take they liked best. From that take they would then create a song by overdubbing all instrumental and vocal parts. The result is a collection of sonically sophisticated explorations of space and groove that Roseberry described as "a haunting, meditative, intricate masterpiece." I can't say it better—I turn to this extraordinary album when I need to be transported into alternate worlds and different times—but the music will not be for everyone. The best summing up is given by Brown: "I settled Sally