Music

An Evening with Julian Lage

The Redstone Room

Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.

Welcome to the *Reader*'s first What's Happenin' section of 2013! We're glad to have you with us, and as a way of starting the new year on the right foot, I've made a resolution: I have decided that, from this day forward, I will no longer seethe with jealousy and resentment every time I write about some visiting artist whose talents and accomplishments dwarf my own.

Having said that, let me tell you about January 16's Redstone Room concert with jazz guitarist Julian Lage, a former child prodigy who began performing in public at age six, became the subject of an Oscar-nominated documentary appropriately titled *Jules at Eight*, performed at the Grammy Awards at age 13 ... .

Oh, man. This is gonna be rough.

Praised by the *Washington Post* for his “obvious talent” and “music that is astonishingly understated,” Lage – a faculty member at Stanford University’s renowned Stanford Jazz Workshop since 2003 – has been a popular presence at concert venues and festivals worldwide. A graduate of the Berklee College of Music, the guitarist has wowed jazz fans at the Monterey, London, Tanglewood, Umbria, and San Francisco jazz festivals and has performed with dozens of notable musicians over the years, among them Carlos Santana, David Grisman, Gary Burton, and Herbie Hancock.

But in addition to his playing, which was described by *JazzTimes* as “phenomenally fleet-fingered,” Lage has also been widely lauded for his skills as a composer, with his *Sounding Point* CD earning him a 2010 Grammy nomination for “Best Contemporary Jazz Album.” Selections from this release, and Lage’s acclaimed follow-up *Gladwell*, will no doubt be heard when the gifted, New York City-based musician treats Redstone Room guests to “An Evening with Julian Lage.” And as a way of wrapping up this completely envy-free piece on the man, allow me to wish Mr. Lage a belated happy birthday, as his biography mentions that he was born on Christmas day 1987.

Wait a minute. *1987*? That means Lage is only *25*? He was a Grammy nominee at *22*?!? He’s been teaching at Stanford since he was *15* ?!? Aw, come *on* ! *Nobody* should be allowed to be that ... !

Well, that resolution was fun while it lasted.

Tickets to the Redstone Room’s Julian Lage concert are $12 in advance and $15 on the day of the show, and more information on the evening is available by calling (563)326-1333 or visiting RiverMusicExperience.org .

Music

Rakim

Rock Island Brewing Company

Saturday, January 12, 9 p.m.

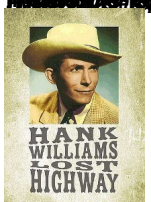
The Rock Island Brewing Company, on January 12, will host an evening with the rap and hip-hop artist Rakim, who once released a solo CD titled *The Master*. Near as I can tell, this is one of those rare instances in which an album title that sounds rather grandiose is, in actuality, more than a bit of an understatement.

One-half of the legendary rap duo Eric B. & Rakim, and a 2011 nominee for induction in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the performer began his professional music career amidst New York's hip-hop scene in the late 1980s, and he and Eric B. released their debut album *Paid in Full*
when Rakim was all of 19 years old. Peaking at number 58 on
Billboard
's Top 200 chart (and hitting platinum-selling status by 1995),
Paid in Full

produced five singles, but more impressively it cemented the duo's placement among the greatest artists in their musical genre; the *New York Times* described the album as "an artistic and commercial benchmark," and *Rolling Stone* – when discussing *Paid in Full* for the article "The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time" – wrote, "Rakim is a front-runner in the race for Best Rapper Ever, and this album is a big reason why."

But the plaudits for Rakim hardly stopped after he embarked on a solo career. With his free-rhythm style earning him comparisons to Thelonious Monk, Rakim has continued to amaze listeners with his relaxed vocal approach and smart, thoughtful musicianship; writing for AllMusic.com, Steve Huey raves about the artist's "complex internal rhyme, literate imagery, velvet-smooth flow, and unpredictable, off-the-beat rhymes." Huey goes on to state that "Rakim is near-universally acknowledged as one of the greatest MCs – perhaps *the* greatest – of all time within the hip-hop community," so by all means prepare for an unforgettable experience when the man plays his Saturday-night RIBCO set. In a 2007 interview with *Billboard* magazine, Rakim stated, "I'm hoping to kill the old state of hip-hop and start with the new." It actually sounds like *any* evening with Rakim would be pretty damned killer.

Rakim performs in Rock Island with guests BURNTmd, Maxilla Blue, and DJ GMJ, advance tickets are $25, and more information is available by calling (309)793-4060 or visiting RIBCO.com.



RiverMusicExperience.org