

Jan Jelinek: Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records

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The fact that Jan Jelinek composed *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records* entirely from jazz samples isn't as surprising now as the fact that he didn't disclose it. The record came out in 2001, four years removed from DJ Shadow's *Endtroducing...* and one from the Avalanches' *Since I Left You*. Sampling was still a futuristic and dangerous art, and to create an entire record from bits of other people's music was laudable in itself. But when *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records* came out, critics thought the title was a snide joke, akin to Throbbing Gristle's *20 Jazz Funk Greats*.

That Jelinek withheld such a delicious bit of context from the critics – and the fact that he released it under his own name instead of either of his monikers, Farben or Gramm – suggests he was confident his work would stand by itself. And indeed, this is one of the best Y2K-era clicks-and-cuts albums. It also speaks to how little this album has to do with jazz, or with the stereotypes of jazz that might lead a lesser producer to use it as a touchstone for their work. For all its breadth, jazz is still often desired for its noir-ish cool, for images of smoky bars and half-lit late-night sessions. But it's hard to think of a record less in line with that cliché than this one.

This music isn't nocturnal but thrives in blinding daylight. It's as static-drum as any Stones Throw beat tape, but instead of evoking dusty vinyl that's been languishing at the bottom of a crate for decades, the static here fills in the gaps in the stereo field to form an enveloping blanket. This is a supremely *clean* record, evoking sterile, hyper-modern living spaces and a lonesome sense of serenity. While most similar music goes for creepy digital corrosion, *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records* is warm and comfy, something to sit back and sink into like a couch.

The feeling is consistently lazy and stoned. The tracks melt into each other. The chords don't change so much as slowly droop. The most sudden moment comes on opener "Moiré (Piano & Organ)," when Jelinek decides he's had enough of the static and dub effects that have been crackling for three minutes and brings in a pendulous ghost of vibraphone. Vibes are a constant here – Jelinek's love of the instrument would later lead to a fruitful partnership with vibraphonist Masayoshi Fujita, with whom he's released most of his output this decade – and their shimmering jewel tones are a perfect fit for *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records*'s antiseptic landscape.

Recognizable sounds are otherwise few. The drone that courses through "Moiré (Piano & Organ)" doesn't sound like that of a piano or organ. What's in the back of "Moiré (Strings)" sounds kind of like strings, but it shimmers and wobbles in a way normal strings don't. Jelinek sometimes brings in an organ during the album's more plaintive moments, as when he underlines the chord change that marks the midpoint of "Tendency" (the closest thing to a club track here, and a beloved entry in the microhouse canon). But the most obvious sounds here are the thick floor of bass and the dubby pops, clicks and hisses that obscure the album's more melodic elements.

Like Gas's *Pop*, this is a good first ambient album because its pleasures are so instantaneous; you don't have to get lost in it for it to make an impact. From the opening seconds of "Moiré (Piano & Organ)" onward, it's deeply comforting and gorgeous, bringing wonderful images to mind in a way that's almost psychedelic. Most albums this sterile evoke something eerie and inhuman, but listening to *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records* feels like standing in your house after you've just cleaned it and finding freedom in how much space you've opened up for yourself. Its whooshes and vrooms are as ripe for vacuum-cleaner jokes as those on *Loveless*.



Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records was originally released on Pole's ~space label and, in time for a resurgence of interest in post-club ambient, has been reissued on vinyl via Jelinek's own Faitiche label. Two new tracks have been added, both from the EP that introduced "Tendency." "Moiré (Guitar & Horns)" feels like a half-finished doodle, its samples groaning deep within a murky mix that's incongruous on such a pristine album. The keeper is "Poren," which closes the record on a plaintive note. It's the moodiest track here, relying, like "Tendency," on thick drops of organ for its emotional wallop. Together, the two tracks tack on enough extra square footage to deepen the album, whose original 51 minutes is a bit short for an ambient record this immersive.

To enjoy it on vinyl, you're stuck with the two extra tracks, "Moiré (Guitar & Horns)" right in the middle. Digitally-minded listeners can choose between the longer version and the original, and the choice essentially comes down to length vs. consistency; an album that's easier to lose yourself in versus one with a higher ratio of good stuff. Either way, you're getting a fantastic album, one of the best in ambient, and it's hard to complain about too much of a good thing.

- Label:
Faitiche
- Release Date:
April 28, 2017