

PR 7229

PRESTIGE

the
RED GARLAND quintet
with **JOHN COLTRANE**

dig it!



DESIGN: DOON SCHULTEN PHOTO: CHARLES STEWART

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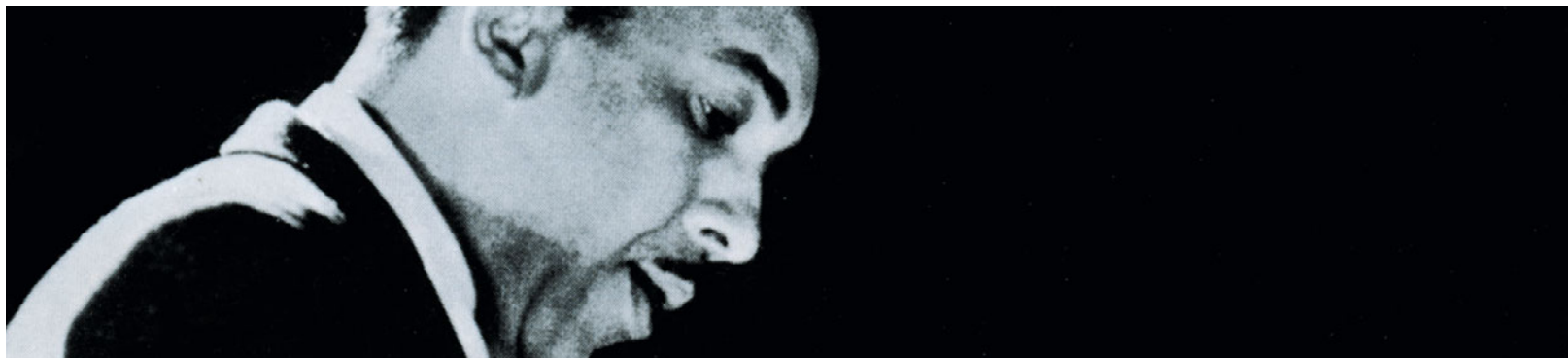


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THE RED GARLAND QUINTET WITH JOHN COLTRANE

RED GARLAND piano **JOHN COLTRANE** tenor saxophone (#1, 3, 4)
DONALD BYRD trumpet (#1, 4) **GEORGE JOYNER** bass (#1, 3, 4)
PAUL CHAMBERS bass (“Crazy Rhythm” only) **ARTHUR TAYLOR** drums

1 BILLIE’S BOUNCE 9:26
2 CRAZY RHYTHM (TRIO) 3:27
3 CTA 4:45
4 LAZY MAE 16:09



*I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks.
Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER*

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; March 22, 1957 (#3); December 13, 1957 (#1, 4); February 2, 1958 (#2).

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK Remastering, 2009—Rudy Van Gelder (Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

All transfers were made from the analog master tapes to digital at 24-bit resolution.

Notes by JOE GOLDBERG

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RED GARLAND

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The quintet represented on this album is widely regarded as being one of the most exciting and effective of the Fifties, even though the majority of its work did not come to light until that decade was over. The apparent paradox in that statement is resolved by the fact that this was primarily a recording unit, and although its participants have appeared together publicly in various combinations (most notably Red Garland and John Coltrane), a Red Garland quintet such as is represented here on this record was never a regular working unit.

The three previous collections which feature this unit, *All Mornin' Long* (Prestige 7130), *Soul Junction* (Prestige 7181), and *High Pressure* (Prestige 7209) were very well received, and the nature of the comment about them points to the reasons why this was such a valuable unit. Even given the undeniably unique nature of Coltrane's playing, the quintet represents, in many ways, the essence of New York jazz of the Fifties. The format itself is that established by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, and which became the standard basis of the bop and post-bop bands: saxophone, trumpet, and three rhythm. The material was made up of blues, originals, and the best pop and show tunes. Although some lasting jazz pieces came out of this arrangement, the emphasis was almost never on the material itself, but on the treatment of that material. Blowing dates, in other words: vehicles for the display of individual emotion.

Such a loose, free musical arrangement necessitates a high degree of extremely sympathetic rapport between the players involved. With so much emphasis on individual performance, it is easy to see how performances conceived in this manner can degenerate into strings of mutually unrelated solos. It is perhaps an extra challenge to a musician to know that he is treading a very thin

tightrope between meaningful jazz and pointless self-indulgence, and that may to some degree account for the small number of classic recordings which have resulted from this format. On the other hand, we are all far more familiar than we would like to be with examples of the latter possibility: sloppily played heads, perfunctory solos, endless running of the same old changes.

It should go without saying that the better and more highly developed the individual talents of the musicians involved, the more likely the chance for success will be. And since the time of these recordings, at least two of the musicians involved have carved ineradicable places for themselves in the story of jazz of the Fifties; the rest have been important contributors.

Red Garland, the leader of these sessions, occupies a unique place in the story of jazz piano. That such immediately accessible music as his should have become controversial is somewhat surprising. But it has, in a possibly significant way. People who write about jazz or discuss it in private have come to employ Garland's work as a standard of comparison. It is quite common to hear a new pianist spoken of as owing a debt to Red Garland; whether or not the assessment is a complimentary one is a matter of the private taste of the person making the comparison, but it is almost always made. First coming to general attention as a member of the Miles Davis Quintet, he has gone on as solo performer and leader of a trio to record a large series of albums, mostly standards, in which he gradually seems to be compiling a definite list of his impressions of the more durable popular songs of our time. In some ways, his career is reminiscent of Erroll Garner's: he is widely acclaimed, contemptuously derided, many people treasure his albums who have little use for any other

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BILLIE'S BOUNCE
CRAZY RHYTHM
CTA
LAZY MAE

jazz and through it all, Garland goes right on, doing what he does and leaving the analysis to others.

Since Garner's name has come up, it might be relevant to recall the early records he made with Charlie Parker, such as *Cool Blues*, of the few times a supposedly "popular" pianist recorded with an acknowledged giant and formulator of jazz. To an extent, a similar situation exists when Garland records with John Coltrane. Coltrane is certainly, with Sonny Rollins and Ornette Coleman, one of the three most important saxophonists to have appeared since Parker, and there is little doubt that at the moment he is the most influential of the three. Today, as at the time these pieces were recorded, he is a highly controversial musician. But in 1957 and 1958, his talent was just beginning to be recognized; now he is an established figure whose detractors must come up with much more than the simple out-of-hand dismissal they afforded him then.

The other hornman, Donald Byrd, is a brilliant example of a musician who has finally come into his own after years when he was either praised too highly or else not taken into consideration at all. The beginnings of his present commanding authority are heard here.

The rhythm section consists of bassist George Joyner and drummer Arthur Taylor, two men whose admirably consistent work, either together or separately, was responsible for the rhythmic pulse of some of the finer jazz records of the period.

Actually one of these tracks, "C.T.A.," was recorded at a session for which Taylor was the leader. The album, *Taylor's Waiters*, is no longer available, but enough people were anxious to have this version of the piece (which Miles Davis first recorded) to warrant its

inclusion here.

There is another piece, "Crazy Rhythm," which is played only by the rhythm section, with Paul Chambers substituting for Joyner, to show their collective skill in that setting and also to serve as a reminder of the context in which Red Garland has achieved his principal fame.

As is fitting, the remaining two selections are blues. As is particularly fitting in the circumstances, one of the two is a Charlie Parker tune, "Billie's Bounce." This version with its searing, intense opening choruses by Coltrane, can almost stand as a definition of the changes that took place in jazz between the time of Parker's greatest days and this recording. All the soloists are notable, but particular mention should be made of bassist George Joyner, who rarely has been given this much opportunity to display his talent.

The entire second side is given over to "Lazy Mae," a piece presented in one of the oldest manners known to jazz; the slow, relaxed blues, heavy with the feeling of after-hours playing of men who are finally playing only for themselves. Garland instantly sets this mood with a figure reminiscent of the oldest jazz. Each soloist in turn retains this mood, making of the piece at the same time a statement of the historical validity of the collective approach, as well as a summation of the advances these men have made. With performances such as these, the Red Garland Quintet accomplished more than many groups which appeared constantly before the public.

— JOE GOLDBERG

I WAS THE ENGINEER on the recording sessions and I also made the masters for the original LP issues of these albums. Since the advent of the CD, other people have been making the masters. Mastering is the final step in the process of creating the sound of the finished product. Now, thanks to the folks at the Concord Music Group who have given me the opportunity to remaster these albums, I can present my versions of the music on CD using modern technology. I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks. Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —*RUDY VAN GELDER*

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REVISITED

ALRIGHT, THIS IS RED GARLAND'S ALBUM, it was his turn to be leader, but it is necessary to speak of Coltrane first. He gets the first solo on the opening track, "Billie's Bounce," a Charlie Parker blues, and a half century later, the virtuosity is so amazing that you want to gasp at the mere idea of somebody actually being able to do that. And do it so cleanly—not just be technically astonishing but able to make meaningful music at the same time, making this worth preserving long after the fact.

Red Garland, too, was having an exceptional day. He always did what was required of him by his employer at the time, Miles Davis, even when Miles wasn't around. Listen to the block chords on Red's feature, "Crazy Rhythm," a style made famous on "Bye Bye Blackbird," but seldom played so precisely or extensively.

On this track Paul Chambers also hits all the right notes, both plucked and—his specialty—bowed. Like Garland and Coltrane, he was a member of the Miles Davis Quintet. It is apparent that these guys are used to playing together; they're completely relaxed in one another's company.

The last track, "Lazy Mae," credited to Garland and no doubt improvised by him on the spot, took up one entire side on the original LP. It's back to basics. Garland keeps sounding like he'll start playing "After Hours" at any moment, exploring what at the time of the recording would have been called his roots. Then, when it seems like "After Hours" isn't going to be forthcoming after all, you start to wait for Coltrane's inevitable entrance, and eventually, you get it. Sometimes overlooked in the continuing controversy over his later, more controversial recordings, is the indelible fact that Coltrane was one of the greatest of blues players—with that cry in his tone and the hint of back country guitar in his lines. Bassist George Joyner follows with a solo, and only then does Donald Byrd play, in a departure from the usual bop group format.

Byrd seems determined to demonstrate that this is not a road show version of a Miles Davis group. Where Miles

is introspective and muted, Byrd is extroverted and glorying in the full brass sound of the open horn. He is going the other way, the Clifford Brown way, as far as he can, and that's considerable, resulting in one of his finest solos.

Except for the one track featuring Paul Chambers, the bass is played on these recordings by George Joyner, who apparently didn't hang out with this crowd, and is consequently less well known than the others. Later, though, he joined the trio of one of the few people Miles Davis named as an influence, Ahmad Jamal. Like his boss—who came from Pittsburgh and was born Fritz Jones—Joyner took a Muslim name, Jamil Nasser.

The drummer is Arthur (later Art) Taylor, who played with these guys far more frequently. I once saw him at the Café Bohemia in New York with a Miles Davis quintet that included, besides the leader and Chambers, Sonny Rollins and Tommy Flanagan.

The surprising thing here, given the quality of the work, is that these tracks are left over from three different sessions on three different days, each of which produced its own album.

Bob Weinstock, founder and owner of Prestige, was not a man to let anything go to waste. If there were enough completed takes to total somewhere around forty minutes, he would find a way to make an album out of them. The first album I ever annotated for him was a Coltrane collection that included some tracks made with only bass and drum accompaniment, recorded that way because the scheduled piano player failed to show up for the session. Bob was also not one to cancel a record date for which he had booked time at Rudy Van Gelder's studio because of a minor roadblock like that.

Similarly, as noted on the original LP, "CTA" was not even a Red Garland date, but was released under the leadership of Art Taylor. (This is not a practice limited to Prestige. A United Artist record by another Taylor, Cecil, on which Coltrane appeared under the easily decoded pseudonym Blue Train, is now marketed as a Coltrane record.)

It would seem that these players were more up on one of the quintet dates than the other. I will leave it to the listener to decide which that was. But that is the risk you take whenever you go to a jazz club or concert. Are you going to catch your favorite artist on merely a good night or a great night?

It would seem that openness to the vulnerability that comes with spontaneity was the essence of Bob Weinstock's philosophy of recording. In one sense, the very act of recording would seem to be the exact opposite of the core premise of jazz—that is, in and of the moment, and therefore unrepeatable. To capture that moment and make it permanent, as a photograph does through mechanical means, would seem to be the elusive thing that Bob Weinstock did with such regularity that, as you can hear by listening to this music, the artists made it look, and sound, easy.

Try it yourself sometime.

—**JOE GOLDBERG**

May 2009

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**SONNY ROLLINS WITH THELONIOUS MONK/
KENNY DORHAM**—Moving Out (PRS-31594)

1 BILLIE'S BOUNCE 9:26

(Charlie Parker) Atlantic Music-BMI

2 CRAZY RHYTHM (TRIO) 3:27

(Caesar-Meyer-Kahn) Irving Caesar Music/Larry Spier LLC/
Warner Bros. Inc.-ASCAP

3 CTA 4:45

(James Heath) EMI U Catalog-ASCAP

4 LAZY MAE 16:09

(Red Garland) Prestige Music-BMI

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ARTHUR TAYLOR drums

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Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK

Remastering, 2009—Rudy Van Gelder
(Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

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RUDY VAN GELDER REMASTERS



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