



Soul Junction

the red garland quintet
featuring john coltrane
and donald byrd
prestige 7181

SOUL JUNCTION
RED GARLAND

RED GARLAND piano **JOHN COLTRANE** tenor saxophone **DONALD BYRD** trumpet
GEORGE JOYNER bass **ARTHUR TAYLOR** drums

1 SOUL JUNCTION 15:28

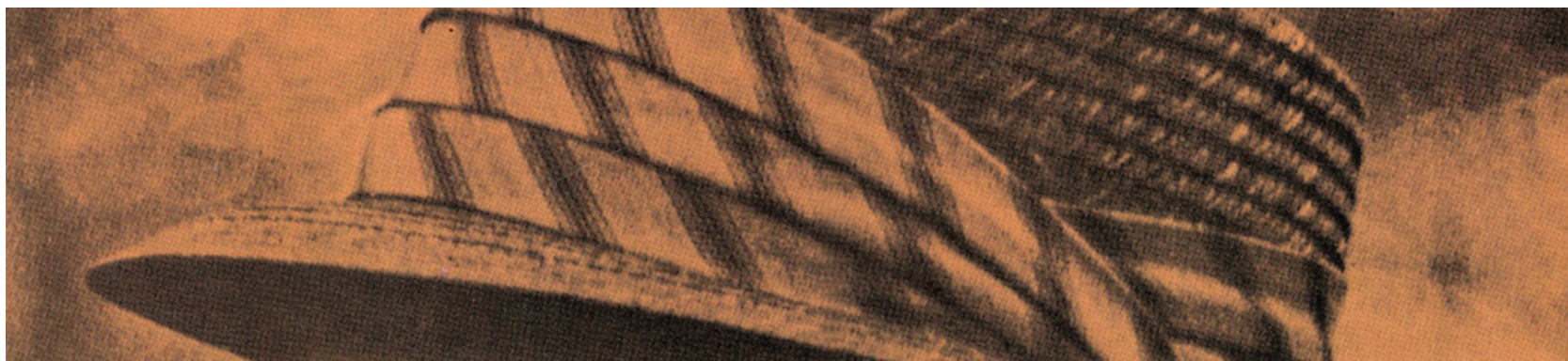
2 WOODY'N YOU 6:48

3 BIRKS' WORKS 7:35

4 I'VE GOT IT BAD

(AND THAT AIN'T GOOD) 6:17

5 HALLELUJAH 6:30



*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; November 15, 1957.

Supervision—BOB WEINSTOCK Remastering, 2007—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 DOUG RAMSEY

RED GARLAND

RED GARLAND piano JOHN COLTRANE tenor saxophone
DONALD BYRD trumpet GEORGE JOYNER bass
ARTHUR TAYLOR drums

In the early Fifties, Luckey Roberts ran an after-hours club in Harlem. Lucky had been the dean of New York rag-time pianists in the early decades of the century, and had influenced James J. Johnson, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington, among others. Luckey remembers that Red Garland was a frequent visitor to his place. "Red would ask me questions," says Luckey, "and keep requesting certain tunes." "I used to drop in," explains Red, "because Luckey is a real two-handed pianist. He plays with *ten* fingers, and that's what I like to hear."

Not generally known is that one of the pianists Red paid particular attention to when he was starting was James P. Johnson. Another was Art Tatum. "He was Mr. Piano, to me. I remember being so pleased when somebody asked Art in the mid-Forties which of the younger pianists he thought were going to amount to something. Art named Dodo Mar-maroso and me."

Red, for all his identification with modern jazz, has had a remarkably broad background of listening experience. He's also similar in temperament to many of the older generation of jazzmen in that he loves to play, after hours as well as on the job. Red regrets very much the passing of the jam session. "I go around and ask people to start up a session, but they all seem to withdraw these days. And yet, it's in sessions that jazz really develops. When musicians begin trading ideas, new things get started, and then it spreads. That's what happened with

Parker, Gillespie, and all of the early modern players."

This album illustrates both Red's strongly personal modern style and his considerable grasp of the jazz tradition as a whole. "A big influence," Red continues, "when I began in Dallas it was Nat Cole. I was very impressed by his touch and conception, especially by the way he phrased. People don't give Nat the credit due him as a pianist." Cole besides was a consistently lyrical player, and Red too has always sustained a singing line. "Then there were Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum. When I heard Bud Powell, I really became involved with modern jazz, but nobody ever much influenced me after Bud. That's not to say there aren't pianists I particularly like, two of them especially are Hank Jones, who's very underrated, and Oscar Peterson."

An echo from Red's listening background is the motif of the opening "Soul Junction." "Bob Weinstock asked me to play some slow blues," Red recalls, "and this theme popped into my mind. In part, it's from "Floyd's Guitar Blues," the number guitarist Floyd Smith used to play with Andy Kirk." Red plays the blues with an unselfconscious naturalness that again reminds me of the poised confidence of the best swing era pianists. There's no grunting or pounding the blues into soul-for-sale music. This is simply unpretentious blues, the common jazz language, carried on through the decades by thousands of players. Note too Red's Wilson-like gentleness

of touch which is, however, also firm and which articulates each note with a ringing clarity. Red gets a "sound" from the piano that's refreshingly and thoroughly pianistic. He's not one of the drummer-pianists.

Red receives relaxed support from Arthur Taylor and George Joyner throughout the long, (ruminative) blues. "I'd worked a lot with Art, and have felt for a long time that he's one of the steadiest and most swinging of drummers. George Joyner was rather new to me at that date, but he fitted in very naturally." John Coltrane takes the first solo and blows with direct, strongly emotional power. His intriguingly structured variations indicate how freshly he approaches even a simple theme. To Coltrane, everything is a challenge. And always, as has been noted, there is a demandingly communicative "cry" in Coltrane's playing.

Donald Byrd is one young modernist who didn't allow early attention from the critics to push him into megalomania. Since coming to New York, he has continued studying both at the Manhattan School and in a wide variety of playing experiences. His work, as in this opening blues, has grown in strength and decisiveness from the fluent "hummingbird" quality that characterized him during his early months in New York.

"Woody'n You," Red remembers, "was the first modern tune I ever heard in my life. It was in Dallas when I was about 20 and had been playing about four years. A trumpet player, Oscar

Williamson, found the record by Dizzy on the juke box, and played it for me. "I'd never heard anything like it. I laughed; it made me so happy. I admit I was confused at first, especially by the way Dizzy ran his progressions, but I began to catch on." In this version, Donald Byrd again indicates the added bit to his playing that began to be noticeable around the time of this record. There is also the increased depth of tone, even in as quicksilver a solo as this one.

During his years with Miles Davis, Red grew to know John Coltrane's style well. "I've always been struck by the continuity of his ideas and by his unique way of handling changes," Red observes. "He can start a chord in the strangest place. The average cat might start on a seventh, but Coltrane can begin on a flatted fifth. And he has the damnest way of breaking chords down, but I have no trouble accompanying him because of that sense of continuity I was talking about." John is characteristically free of clichés in his solo here, and yet his self-absorption in the potentials of a tune never results in cold intellectual exercises. This is as *hot* jazz playing as can be heard in contemporary jazz. Red builds a solo of thorough clarity. There is muddiness neither in Red's touch nor in his sequences of ideas. And throughout, there is his energizing beat, almost like an exceptionally fleet, jazz-oriented dancer's.

"Birks' Works" is a favorite of Red.

SOUL JUNCTION

SOUL JUNCTION
WOODY'N YOU
BIRKS' WORKS

I'VE GOT IT BAD
(AND THAT AIN'T GOOD)
HALLELUJAH

"It's a naturally swinging thing, no matter who plays it, it has a built-in-swing. The tune is like a minor, 12-bar blues in structure; but Dizzy somehow worked it into a very distinctive theme." Note Red's superior solo, one of the best of his I've heard. It has a forward-moving inevitability that has to do again with the clarity of his ideas and also with his rolling beat. Coltrane, who seemed to be making everything he reached for this day, digs in with a slashing, burning solo that is, however, ordered and organically interrelated. Also impressive about Coltrane is the sheer pulsating force of his beat. Byrd is also intense here but less ferocious than Coltrane.

"I've Got It Bad," the song that Ivie Anderson explored with aching definitiveness while with Duke Ellington, underlines Red's capacities as a ballad player. "It seems to me," says Red, "that one reason many of the younger pianists seem uncomfortable with ballads and have to double-time them is that you have to have lived what a ballad is talking about. You have to know and experience the beauty of a woman, and the losing of it. Maybe some of those youngsters have never really been in love. You have to play this kind of song out of your life." Byrd plays with silvery openness of tone and thoughtfulness of conception. Coltrane effectively understates the yearning of the song but makes his emotions clear. Red's caressing closing section includes an expressive, reflective George Joyner

solo.

The final "Hallelujah" is a high-spirited "heed" with Red's nimble solo never blurring the line; Coltrane searching into the interstices of the tune (firmly followed by Joyner); and Donald Byrd crisply carving his own variation. As in Coltrane's solo, Garland and Taylor dramatically lay out during parts of Byrd's statement, leaving him and Joyner to drive ahead. A.T. juggles poly-rhythms, and the band returns to end what strikes me as an unusually free-flowing but temperamentally cohesive session with more meaningful spontaneity than most.

Red is now happily leading his own trio, and does not intend to return to band work if he can help it. Yet, as this album and all the ones he made with Miles Davis indicate, Red has as personal a skill in combo playing and accompanying as he does when soloing with just rhythm background. Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderley, among others, have lauded the buoyant sureness and taste with which Red accompanies horn men. And for all the preaching these days of the need for roots, Red has unaggressively made clear his feeling for and knowledge of the jazz tradition for a long time.

—NAT HENTOFF

These notes appeared on the original album liner.

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

SOUL JUNCTION REVISITED

THE UNPRETENTIOUS B-FLAT BLUES that opens this compact disc and provides its title finds three soloists in a convergence of the past, present, and future of jazz. Red Garland embodies knowledge, wisdom, and judgment inherited from a line of piano masters and crafted into a personal style. Donald Byrd, in full command of his idiom and his instrument, radiates the energy and spirit of the post-bop period. John Coltrane, beginning an apotheosis of artistic development, scouts the territory ahead. The album places Garland at an important intersection of change in the music. *Soul Junction* is at once timeless, representative of its era and, in Coltrane's catalytic work, a harbinger of things to come.

In the fall of 1957, after two years that brought him renown as a member of the Miles Davis Quintet, Garland found himself at liberty. Earlier that year, Davis fired Coltrane and drummer Philly Joe Jones for unreliability brought on by bad habits. He replaced them with Sonny Rollins and Arthur Taylor. That left Garland and bassist Paul Chambers the surviving original members of the band that had accompanied Davis as he catapulted out of a faltering career into stardom. In September, Taylor left following a dispute over Davis's demands that he approximate Philly Joe's style. Shortly, Garland was out, too. In his autobiography, Davis reports simply, "Later on that week or the next, I fired Red Garland and brought in Tommy Flanagan on piano." He doesn't say why.

Garland's dismissal by Davis left him neither disconsolate nor unemployed. His credentials as one of the most experienced and best known pianists in jazz made it easy for him to freelance in New York, which he did during the rest of 1957. Usually, he worked with just bass and drums, but on occasion his sidemen were Coltrane, Byrd, Taylor, and George Joyner, the young bassist on this recording. Later known as Jamil Nasser, Joyner went on to work with Ahmad Jamal and Randy Weston. In November and December, Garland's quintet recorded enough music in Rudy Van Gelder's studio for four Prestige albums. Garland chose the repertoire from among superior standard songs and jazz originals. Of course, it included the blues.

I asked Garland in the 1970s if he had considered capitalizing on his reputation by following the money to a fusion of jazz and rock. His fellow Miles Davis alumni Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock had taken that step. "The blues, yes, that's my heart," he said, "and let me play some Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, good standards, improvise on those. But play rock and roll? No sir, that just isn't music to me. I'd wash dishes first."

The blues, yes. In *Soul Junction*, we hear Garland's influences in microcosm, all the way back to his native Dallas, where the blues was a part of the fabric of life in the black community. He learned to play the alto saxophone under Buster Smith, a profound influence on Charlie Parker. Smith, a mainstay of territory bands in the Southwest, was known as "Prof" for his teaching ability. He saw to it that young William Garland became an expert reader. When he was in the Army, the eighteen-year-old Red applied that skill to learning the piano. The firm, precise touch evident from the first notes of "Soul Junction" reflects his admiration for Teddy Wilson and for Nat Cole, whose playing in the early 1940s had a profound effect on a generation of pianists at the same time that his singing was opening the way to popular success. The vigor Garland brings to the riff-like punctuations in his choruses preceding Coltrane's solo and following Byrd's recall two of his earlier influences, the stride pianists James P. Johnson and Luckey Roberts.

Like virtually all pianists who emerged in the bebop era, Garland was under the spell of Bud Powell. No one has ever quite equaled Powell's level of manic energy and forward thrust, but in Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody'n You," Garland approaches it. The lightning runs in his "Hallelujah" solo present evidence of his love for Art Tatum. Garland's reach to the past, his assurance and stability, his eager acceptance of new ideas, made him the ideal pianist in the Miles Davis Quintet in which Coltrane seemed to be making measurable daily progress toward a new way of playing.

When Davis fired Coltrane for the second time, it shook the saxophonist and helped put him on a new path. He cleansed himself of drug addiction and moved toward a spirituality that deepened for the rest of his life. That summer, Coltrane began an engagement of several months with Thelonious Monk's quartet at the Five Spot Café. He described the experience as "working with a musical architect of the highest order." During his time with Monk, Coltrane accelerated his move toward the greater freedom that was to become apparent in his playing on Davis's 1959 *Kind of Blue* album. During the Monk group's layoffs, he appeared with Garland in clubs and made these recordings. He and Donald Byrd comprised a compatible front-line team and a dramatic stylistic contrast as soloists. Byrd had perfected his adaptation of the Clifford Brown school of trumpet playing. Coltrane was surveying the future. Particularly in "Hallelujah," we hear him straining against the standard harmonies that he was finding increasingly confining. Employing his wizardly technique and vast knowledge of chords, he searched every crevice and corner, looking for a way out of the song form.

In December of 1957, Miles Davis returned from a stay in Paris and reformed his band, this time as a sextet. He rehired Garland and the revitalized Coltrane and added alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley. Garland stayed with Davis until 1959, when he left to lead his trio with bassist Doug Watkins and drummer Specs Wright. Davis replaced him with Bill Evans. The Davis sextet, with *Kind of Blue* its milestone, became an incubator for important careers. Davis, Coltrane, Adderley, and Evans went on to lead jazz in new directions.

Garland continued straight ahead, pursuing what the late Ralph J. Gleason once identified as the essence of his playing, "the sublime virtue of swing and a deep, solid groove." He worked steadily in New York and Philadelphia and moved back to Dallas in 1965 when his mother died. With his hometown as his base, he played engagements in New York and Los Angeles. Then, in 1975, he dropped out of music. The Dallas club where he had been headquartered, the Texas Magic Asylum, went out of business and so did he.

"Let's just call it a vacation," he told me in 1977. "The record royalties were coming in, so I did nothing. I watched television for eighteen months and played with my grandchildren."

Finally, the owners of a club aptly named the Recovery Room persuaded Garland to come out of retirement. He thrived there. Producer Ed Michel took him into the studio for one new album (*Red Alert*, OJCCD-647), Orrin Keepnews for another (*Crossings*, OJCCD-472). Garland worked again in New York clubs, performed at jazz festivals and played at San Francisco's Keystone Korner, but happily kept his home in Dallas. One of the most admired and influential musicians of his time, he enjoyed renewed popularity until his death in 1984.

—DOUG RAMSEY
MARCH 2007

Doug Ramsey's latest book is *Take Five: The Public and Private Lives of Paul Desmond*. He blogs about jazz and other matters at www.artsjournal.com/riffides

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1 SOUL JUNCTION 15:28

(Red Garland) Prestige Music-BMI

2 WOODY'N YOU 6:48

(Dizzy Gillespie) Edwin H. Morris & Co.-ASCAP

3 BIRKS' WORKS 7:35

(Gillespie) Dizlo Music-ASCAP

**4 I'VE GOT IT BAD
(AND THAT AIN'T GOOD)** 6:17

(Webster-Ellington) Famous Music/Webster Music Corp.-ASCAP

5 HALLELUJAH 6:30

(Youmans-Rubin-Grey) Warner Bros. Music/Range Road Music/
Jerry Leiber Music/Mike Stoller Music/Music Sales Corp.-ASCAP

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JOHN COLTRANE tenor saxophone

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GEORGE JOYNER bass

ARTHUR TAYLOR drums

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