
JOHN
COLTRANE
SIDE STEPS

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

Disc One

1. **WEEJA** 11:13
2. **POLKA DOTS AND MOONBEAMS** 8:40
3. **ON IT** 9:04
4. **AVALON** 9:40
5. **MATING CALL** 5:36
6. **SOULTRANE** 5:24
7. **GNID** 5:07
8. **SUPER JET** 5:53
9. **ON A MISTY NIGHT** 6:21
10. **ROMAS** 6:50

Disc Two

1. **TENOR MADNESS** 12:18
2. **POTPOURRI** 6:38
3. **J.M.'s DREAM DOLL** 8:40
4. **DON'T EXPLAIN** 6:59
5. **BLUE CALYPSO** 8:58
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7. **THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT** 8:26
8. **FROM THIS MOMENT ON** 6:16
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Disc Three

1. **OUR DELIGHT** 6:21
2. **THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME** 10:26
3. **WOODY'N YOU** 6:51
4. **I'VE GOT IT BAD** 6:17
5. **UNDECIDED** 6:54
6. **SOUL JUNCTION** 15:31
7. **WHAT IS THERE TO SAY?** 5:59
8. **BIRK'S WORKS** 7:37
9. **HALLELUJAH** 6:29

Disc Four

1. **ALL MORNING LONG** 20:21
2. **BILLIE'S BOUNCE** 9:24
3. **SOLITUDE** 8:33
4. **TWO BASS HIT** 8:51
5. **SOFT WINDS** 13:47
6. **LAZY MAE** 16:06

Disc Five

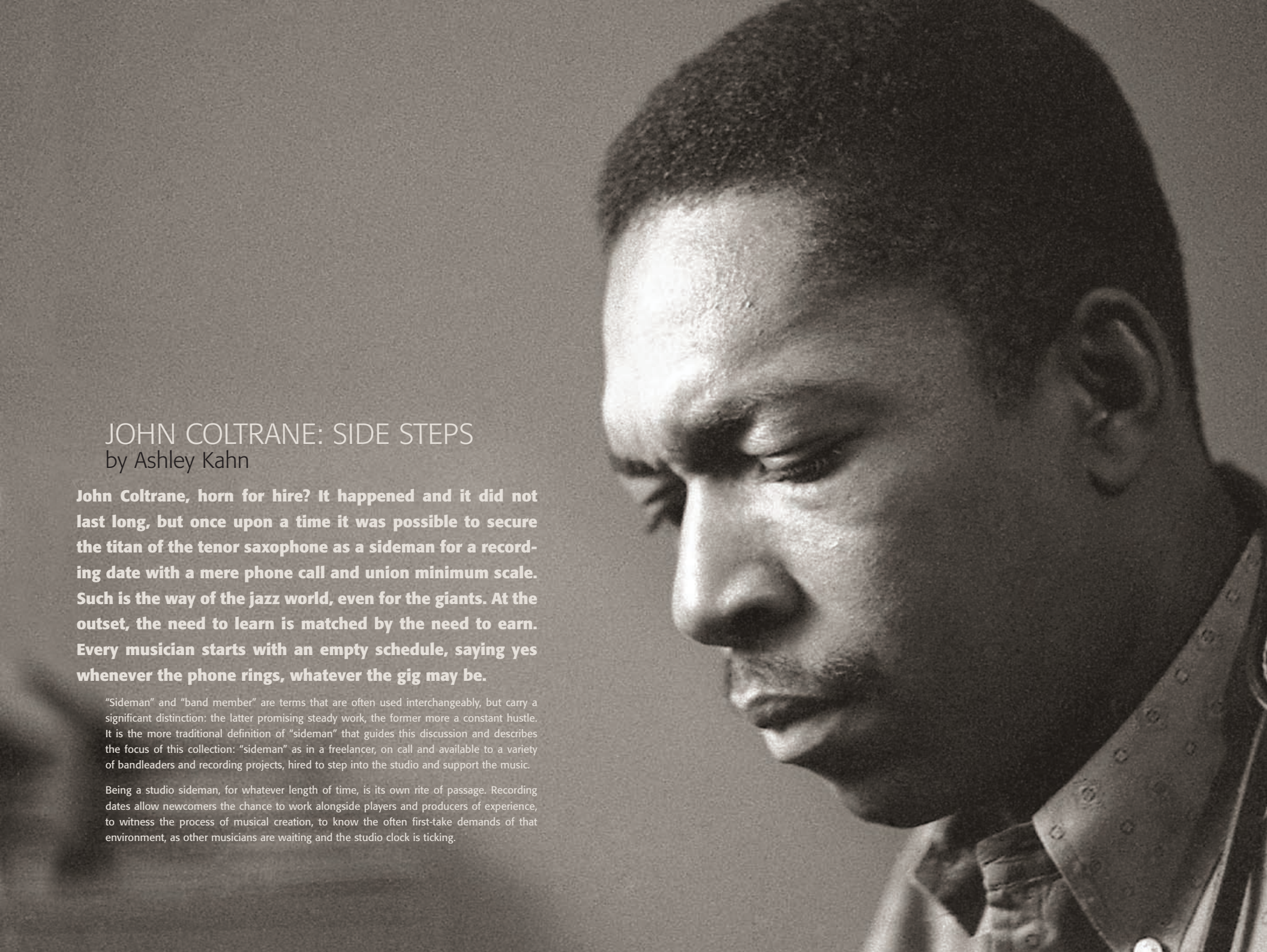
1. **UNDER PARIS SKIES** 7:47
2. **CLIFFORD'S KAPPA** 9:16
3. **FILIDE** 7:16
4. **TWO SONS** 5:23
5. **PAUL'S PAL** 7:14
6. **AMMON JOY** 13:17
7. **GROOVE BLUES** 9:34
8. **THE REAL McCOY** 8:34
9. **IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING** 11:32

PRESTIGE

ORIGINAL SESSIONS SUPERVISED BY BOB WEINSTOCK
Recorded by **RUY VAN GELDER** at **VAN GELDER STUDIO**, Hackensack, NJ.

BOXED SET PRODUCED BY CHRIS CLOUGH AND NICK PHILLIPS

Prestige Records, Tenth and Parker, Berkeley, CA 94710.



JOHN COLTRANE: SIDE STEPS

by Ashley Kahn

John Coltrane, horn for hire? It happened and it did not last long, but once upon a time it was possible to secure the titan of the tenor saxophone as a sideman for a recording date with a mere phone call and union minimum scale. Such is the way of the jazz world, even for the giants. At the outset, the need to learn is matched by the need to earn. Every musician starts with an empty schedule, saying yes whenever the phone rings, whatever the gig may be.

"Sideman" and "band member" are terms that are often used interchangeably, but carry a significant distinction: the latter promising steady work, the former more a constant hustle. It is the more traditional definition of "sideman" that guides this discussion and describes the focus of this collection: "sideman" as in a freelancer, on call and available to a variety of bandleaders and recording projects, hired to step into the studio and support the music.

Being a studio sideman, for whatever length of time, is its own rite of passage. Recording dates allow newcomers the chance to work alongside players and producers of experience, to witness the process of musical creation, to know the often first-take demands of that environment, as other musicians are waiting and the studio clock is ticking.

Countless improvisers chose to remain active sidemen throughout their careers. Coltrane's stint as a freelance studio sideman was brief, not even two years. But it constitutes a significant chapter of a legendary musical story—a chapter that opens in New York City.

In late 1955, the famed trumpeter Miles Davis was in a quandary. Sonny Rollins, his first choice of tenor saxophonist in a new quintet he was forming, had disappeared. Rollins, on the urging of his mentor Charlie Parker, had split town to rid himself of a drug dependency. Miles had to find a replacement—and soon. A national tour was about to start. Philly Joe Jones, designated to be the group's drummer, remembered an old cohort from Philadelphia, a tenor player who had crossed paths with Miles on a few one-night stands in the past. Jones suggested John Coltrane, and Miles called him to audition.

Miles was prepared to be unimpressed. He remembered Rollins had "set [Coltrane's] ears and ass on fire" at a Harlem show three years before. "I wasn't excited. But after a few rehearsals . . . I could hear how Trane had gotten a whole lot better." Not that Miles made it easy. "Trane liked to ask all these mother****ing questions back then about what he should or shouldn't play. Man, f*** that s***; to me he was a professional musician and I have always wanted whoever played with me to find their own place in the music. So my silence and evil looks probably turned him off."

Coltrane had no experience with such freedom or lack of explicit direction—not while in the reed sections of bands led by Jimmy Heath, Dizzy Gillespie or Johnny Hodges, nor while blowing rhythm and blues in ensembles fronted by the likes of Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Gay Crosse, or Earl Bostic. Since his professional start in 1945, Coltrane for the most part had been playing charts, dutifully blending into a collective sound. When the time came, he stood up, blew his 4- or 8-bar solo, and sat back down. In 1961, Coltrane admitted to the British publication *Jazz News* that he felt he had neither the experience nor the aptitude to warrant Miles's confidence.

"When I first joined Miles in 1955 I had a lot to learn. I felt I was lacking in general musicianship. I had all kinds of technical problems . . . and I hadn't the necessary harmonic understanding . . . I felt inadequate. All this was naturally frustrating in those days, and it came through in the music."

If Coltrane lacked self-assurance, he was not wanting for the kind of determination born from a burning need to make up for lost time. "All the things I started to do in 1955, when I went with him, were some of the things I felt I should have done in '47-'48," Coltrane later stated.

Of Miles's creative gifts, perhaps the most intuitive was his ability to recognize musical talent in the bud. "I don't think we would've had Coltrane's great contributions without Miles's belief in his potential," pianist Bill Evans said years after playing alongside both Miles and Coltrane. "At the beginning, most people wondered why Miles had Coltrane in the group—he was more or less a withdrawn presence on the bandstand, not fumbling exactly, but just sort of searching. But Miles really knew, somehow, the development that Coltrane had coming."

Bob Weinstock, head of Prestige Records, one of the jazz world's leading independent labels, shared in Miles's unswayable faith. His first impression of Coltrane led him to start using him only a few months after his arrival, and consider him for a future contract. As he had with others before Coltrane, and following the habit of another jazz label—namely Blue Note Records—Weinstock worked Prestige like a greenhouse: nurturing new arrivals through sideman dates, and signing those that reached maturity.

It is easy to measure Coltrane's musical growth through his recordings with Miles, and as a leader, while at Prestige. But it is especially revealing to gauge his progress through impromptu studio sessions with a wider variety of musicians and music. These sideman dates tested his increasing abilities, and allowed him to apply the techniques and confidence gained from Miles's tight-lipped tutelage (and his later apprenticeship with Thelonious Monk.) They also introduced his name to an expanding community of fans and fellow musicians, and permitted him entry into the rank and file of jazz players, many of whom were destined to become bandleaders shaping the future of the music.

Experience and exposure were two good reasons for taking the work; the bread was another. Not that it was much. In the mid- to late '50s, the musicians union scale was $13.75 per session, equal to roughly $108 in 2009. Living in New York City was never cheap; Coltrane could use the remuneration. But it's telling that Coltrane stopped taking sideman dates precisely when his other duties—as a member of Miles's quintet, a recording artist under his own name, and eventually bandleader in his own right—generated enough to take care of the bills.

Coltrane's freelance years lasted from the spring of '56 when he was 29 years old, until the end of '58 when he was 32. He recorded as a sideman for a variety of labels during that time, but it was for Prestige that he was most often in the studio, and it is his Prestige sessions that today reveal the progress of that pivotal period in full.

MAY 7, 1956
ELMO HOPE

It was not until May of '57—six months after Coltrane first made the trek out to Hackensack, New Jersey to Rudy Van Gelder's studio—that Weinstock called on him for a date other than with Miles Davis.

Coltrane was added to a frontline that included two other up-and-coming horn players of the day—trumpeter Donald Byrd and tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley. The session was led by pianist St. Elmo Sylvester Hope—Elmo Hope—whose quirky compositional ideas often triggered comparisons to Thelonious Monk, while his playing seemed to channel Bud Powell. But primarily, he received praise for his musical conception, which favored elements of surprise and a fresh approach to bop formulae.

"Weeja" and "On It" are both Hope originals: the former a riff-based bebopper borrowing the harmonic underpinning of Charlie Parker's "Confirmation," and the latter a blues that ends with Coltrane and Mobley trading decreasing numbers of choruses, then bars, in a classic two-tenor "chase." "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" is the down-tempo ballad of the date, with Byrd delivering the opening part of the melody, and Coltrane stepping in later to briefly solo with the breathy approach still leaning heavily on his passion for Lester Young. Leave it to a top-gear take of Al Jolson's "Avalon" to show off St. Elmo's fire, Paul Chambers's nimble arco work, and the fluidity of Mobley's saxophone sound. It also exposes a few slight fumbles in Coltrane's maturing attack—like minor slips in articulation at 6:04 (which could be the result of a sticky key) and 6:19, and a reed squeak at 7:00.

The music was initially released with the title *Informal Jazz* and credited to the Elmo Hope Sextet. Hope's career and life were cut short by substance abuse—he died in 1967 just a few weeks before Coltrane did—and his name slowly and unfairly faded. In later years the four tracks that featured Coltrane and Mobley were released on an album titled *Two Tenors*.

NOVEMBER 30, 1956
TADD DAMERON

By '56, pianist Tadd Dameron had more than a decade of experience arranging for a variety of swing, bebop, and R&B groups—including Jimmie Lunceford, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, and Bull Moose Jackson. But what earned him enduring recognition as a father figure of modern jazz was his role as composer of early bop standards ("Good Bait," "Hot House," "Our Delight"), and as an arranger, translating (some might say taming) bebop's complexities and wild rhythms into big band charts. Over the years, Dameron led ensembles of his own—notably a sextet featuring trumpeter Fats Navarro and a nonet with trumpeter Clifford Brown—but never quite established himself as a bandleader of permanence.

Mating Call, recorded the last day of November 1956, stands as a number of things. It is one of only five albums—three on Prestige, and one each on Blue Note and Riverside—that Dameron released under his name during his lifetime. It is arguably his career best, owing to a combination of Dameron's compositional and arranging genius, solid rhythm players—bassist John Simmons and drummer Philly Joe Jones—and Coltrane's role as guest soloist. And being well planned and fully conceived, it is quite possibly the most consistent of Coltrane's sideman dates on Prestige.

Mating Call was also intended as the recording that introduced Coltrane to the world. It was the first album by any label to feature his name on the cover, and half of Ira Gitler's original liner notes were devoted to his biographical details. As well, the notes held what soon became a common occurrence in writing about Coltrane: a defense of his challenging, raw style. "Trane is a searcher who is not afraid to essay new combinations of notes when performing publicly . . . he does not play by rote. As they say in Theatre, 'He reacts.'"

The title track opens with a dark, minor-key flavor. That, plus a Latin rhythmic tinge and Coltrane's signature, searching tone, makes "Mating Call" as accurate a precursor of his more mature sound as any in this collection. The slow ballad "Soultrane"—among the first of many song titles to play off the saxophonist's name—finds him respecting the melody with a traditional, rounded tone, even as Jones shifts the tune into double-time. The jaunty "Gnid" is a satisfying ensemble piece, replete with Dameron's bright yet understated solo, Jones's brief, buoyant statements, and Coltrane's agile jump between registers as he defines the form. "Super Jet" lives up to its name: a propulsive, bebop melody with descending harmonies, and a spirited section in which Coltrane and Jones trade fours. Dameron achieves a personal, sophisticated height with "On a Misty Night," which first appeared on this date—Coltrane providing the sliding figure at the tune's outset that adds a whimsical touch. "Romas"—a loose, themeless blues with a late-night groove—offers Coltrane familiar ground to which he would repeatedly return through his meteoric career.

MAY 24, 1956
SONNY ROLLINS

A chronological jump back to late May 1956 leads to Coltrane's second sideman session for Prestige. "Tenor Madness" captures the much-celebrated, spontaneous studio encounter of the two jazzmen most responsible for shaping the modern sound of the tenor saxophone. That Coltrane and Sonny Rollins recorded together but once—and only on one track—endows this extended jam with historical weight.

Rollins and Coltrane had history together and much in common. They had crossed paths and played on the same stage a few times since the early '50s. Through the rest of the decade, they became a mutual admiration society, each in awe of, and at times intimidated by the other. One opportunity was when both were intensely self-critical and given to incessant practicing. Both benefited from their interaction with Miles Davis, Rollins first, then Coltrane. Both achieved distinct, fully formed voices on the tenor, again with Rollins in the lead.

Yet, as Rollins told his biographer Eric Nisenson: "Coltrane was always Coltrane to me. He was unique when I heard him in the early 1950s and then later when he was in Miles's groups and his own group . . . It's writers who divide up careers into stages."

Guilty as charged.

The match-up, from an outside view, was not one of equals. In '56, the Harlem-born Rollins was well on his way to being the leading tenor saxophonist of the day; *Saxophone Colossus*, his breakthrough Prestige album, was already half-recorded and would solidify his stature upon release that year. Coltrane's appearance on a Rollins album was regarded as the latter offering a leg-up to the former.

The session was a quartet date—Rollins with Miles's rhythm section of the time. On a whim, Coltrane accompanied the group to Van Gelder's studio with saxophone in hand. Gitler's original album notes give credit to Coltrane for suggesting the collaboration. Rollins recalls a joint decision: "Coltrane was just hanging out during that date; I did not even know that he had brought his horn with him. When I found out that he had, we decided to do this song together."

The 12-minute performance leaned on a simple blues riff. Coltrane and Rollins each offer lengthy solos, then trade fours, providing—as Lewis Porter states in his biography on Coltrane—"a fascinating and exciting juxtaposition of the two masters at work . . . Rollins plays in a soulful, bluesy style with lots of blue notes and bent notes, whereas Coltrane tends to favor a lyrical approach . . ."

There is a feeling among many that Prestige could have made more of this saxophone summit. Hindsight is ever 20/20, and Coltrane and Rollins could have pursued a similar meeting in the years that followed. One opportunity was when both were signed to Impulse Records in the mid-Sixties, and though the two did not reunite in the studio, Rollins did borrow two of Coltrane's band members—bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones—to record his 1966 album *Easy Broadway Run Down*.

Rollins notes that after recording "Tenor Madness," Coltrane "was always saying, 'We should do another date together.' But unfortunately, that never came about."

SONNY ROLLINS

Paul Hoeffler/CTS Images

SAHIB SHIHAB

Esmond Edwards/CTS images (all)

BILL HARDMAN

JULIAN EUELL

ED THIGPEN

IDREES SULIEMAN

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

1957

In the timeline of Coltrane's life and career, his earlier years seem little more than a loose rehearsal for the hugely significant changes of 1957. Two took place in the month of April: Coltrane signed to Prestige, inking his first recording contract as a leader. And in what proved a serious wake-up call, Miles kicked him out of his group for his sloppy appearance and repeatedly nodding out onstage, and sent Philly Joe Jones packing as well. *Downbeat* magazine reported that "two of [Miles's] men were not in optimum playing condition"; "junkie s***" is how Miles described the cause.

Coltrane's firing had three consequences, all almost immediate and all positive.

First, sometime in early May, Coltrane kicked his narcotic habit cold turkey while gigging in Philadelphia. He returned to New York, recharged and re-dedicated to his musical path. His personal revival went deeper than just the physical. "During the year 1957, I experienced, by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life," Coltrane later wrote on his album *A Love Supreme*.

Second, he began to record and perform with pianist Thelonious Monk, whom Coltrane called "a musical architect of the highest order." Their relationship grew into a post-graduate seminar in advanced harmony and other insights handy to an improviser: Monk the instructor, Coltrane the willing student. Where his former boss had approached music on an intuitive level, his new professor was as analytical and communicative as he. "Monk is the exact opposite of Miles. He talks about his music all the time," Coltrane said. "If, by chance, you ask him anything, he'll spend hours explaining it to you if he needs to."

Lastly, Coltrane re-entered the jazz circle a free agent, master of his own schedule, able to take on whatever jobs he chose. With the drive of a man on a mission, and when not playing or studying with Monk, Coltrane became a constant presence on the scene—sitting in on jam sessions, rehearsing with fellow musicians, and recording on no less than 19 dates through the rest of the year. Of those, six were sessions Coltrane led or co-led—five for Prestige, and one that produced the famed *Blue Train* album for Blue Note (the latter a concession by Weinstock allowing Coltrane to honor a previous, un-contracted commitment). Of the remaining 13, six were sideman dates to which Coltrane added a maturing sound and growing reputation.

APRIL 19, 1957
MAL WALDRON

In 1957, pianist Mal Waldron was coming into his own, playing with his own group and with Billie Holiday, recording as a leader for Prestige, and intermittently serving as a production supervisor and arranger for the label. Born in New York City, he had developed a style that layered a moody, fluid elegance and a liberal use of space and somber voicings over angular rhythms reminiscent of Monk—making him a perfect foil for Coltrane.

Only a few days before Coltrane took off for Philadelphia to detoxify, he participated in three Prestige sessions on three consecutive days at Van Gelder's studio. The second was on April 19; Coltrane joined Waldron and a lineup drawn from the hard bop ranks of the day—trumpeter Bill Hardman, alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, bassist Julian Euell, and drummer Art Taylor. Together they recorded five tunes including three Waldron originals, which were dispersed between two albums—*Mal/2* and *The Dealers*.

"Potpourri" kicks off at a lively pace, its bubbling melody reminiscent of a big-band flag-waver; Coltrane handles the charging tempo with confidence. The dedication to McLean's wife Dolly—"J.M.'s Dream Doll"—is a leisurely, waltz-time piece that allows Coltrane the chance to probe the tune's sentimental heart. Much the same can be said of "Don't Explain," co-composed by Billie Holiday as a response to a philandering husband. It floats on a bed of emotional ambivalence (part of Waldron's musical signature), as Coltrane maintains the mood even while squeezing in a generous number of note patterns. "Blue Calypso" slips in and out of a Caribbean beat, Waldron shining with an improvisation that pushes and pounces with agility and invention. Rodgers and Hart's "Falling in Love with Love" receives a brisk, protracted treatment. Coltrane's solo is rich with bebop phrasing, and a trading of "fours" between the three horn players segues to an overlapping of the final theme, bringing the performance to a spirited close.

On May 17, roughly a month later, a similar sextet lineup assembled at Van Gelder's: trumpeter Idrees Sulieman, alto and baritone saxophonist Sahib Shihab, and drummer Ed Thigpen, with Waldron, Euell, and a clean-and-sober Coltrane.

Waldron's hip, creative arrangements take center stage, with inspired reworkings of two standards ("The Way You Look Tonight," "From This Moment On") and an original boasting a minimal theme with an understated groove ("One By One"). The improvement in Coltrane's performance on all three tunes is palpable: more assured, with a marked clarity in his ideas.

NOVEMBER 15, 1957; DECEMBER 13, 1957
RED GARLAND

If Coltrane can be considered the darker, experimental edge of Miles Davis's mid-'50s quintet, pianist Red Garland was the counterweight, maintaining a more familiar, brightly articulated approach. To Miles's credit, the two were a good match.

"I've always been struck by the continuity of his ideas and by his unique way of handling changes," Garland said of Coltrane in 1957. "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."

The Texas-born Garland, like Coltrane, had years of experience split between both jazz and rhythm-and-blues outfits. The two had actually worked together in Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson's band in 1949, and both entered the national spotlight upon joining Miles's quintet in 1955. (Garland was hired first and later said he had recommended Coltrane to Miles, a claim Philly Joe made as well. Most likely Miles polled each of his band members, as was his habit before making a personnel change.)

Unlike Coltrane, Garland arrived in '55 with a mature musical personality intact. His piano sound boasted a tasteful modern elegance. He charted a middle ground between Bud Powell complexity and the sparser, bluesy touch of Horace Silver. Adopting a technique pioneered by Milt Buckner and Nat Cole, he developed a distinct, electrifying approach to block chords—both hands striking the keys simultaneously, creating a seven- or eight-note chord, and repeating the maneuver up and down the keyboard. Garland liked to use dramatic cadences yet could be gentle and introspective. His style helped define the group that vaulted Miles into mainstream embrace, and eventually influenced countless pianists.

Within months of Miles's first Prestige session with his new quintet, Weinstock contracted Garland. Between '56 and '62, the pianist recorded 19 sessions as leader for the label. Two of those dates stand out: on November 15 and December 13, 1957, Garland entered the studio with a quintet that included Coltrane, trumpeter Donald Byrd, bassist George Joyner, and drummer Art Taylor, for a marathon blowing session that brought forth 15 tracks that generated four Garland albums (*All Mornin' Long*, *Soul Junction*, *High Pressure*, and *Dig It!*).

The tunes Garland selected were typical of the mix of melodies offered by a typically hard-working, post bop band of the day: show tunes and chestnuts from the swing era—"Undecided" (popularized by Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb's orchestra), Ellington's "I've Got It Bad," and "Solitude"—as well as bebop warhorses: Dameron's "Our Delight," Parker's "Billie's Bounce," and Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody'n You," and "Birk's Works."

Garland's few originals, some created in the studio, tended to be blues-based. "Soul Junction," for example, was born when "Bob Weinstock asked me to play some slow blues," Garland said. "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."

(An example of the door of influence swinging the other way: compare Garland's rendition of Benny Goodman's "Soft Winds"—originally a Charlie Christian vehicle—to Miles's "Freddie Freeloader" from the legendary *Kind of Blue* album, recorded 15 months later. Though it's now impossible to know if Garland's version provided a template, the two tunes are undeniably akin.)

One noteworthy detail regarding Garland: on most of the tracks, he takes the first solo, unusual for a pianist, yet has no problem in establishing a swing and mood for Coltrane and Byrd to follow. Another: Garland's distinctive, anticipatory manner of accompanying Coltrane's or Byrd's solos—reminiscent of Swing-era "comping"—provides a nice, forward push to the flow of the music.

As for Coltrane, by late '57, his sound was becoming a revelation. With Monk's guidance under his belt, he began to enter his so-called "sheets of sound" phase, playing multiple harmonies by stacking arpeggios and their accompanying scales with long and rapid flurries of notes, all executed with unbridled passion. Look to his improvisational passages on "Hallelujah" for an uptempo instance of his "sheets" style coming together, or "Lazy Mae" for the same in more relaxed time. (A word on a term that has been frequently misinterpreted to simply mean "playing fast." Coltrane himself explained that the "long, rapid lines that Ira Gitler termed 'sheets of sound'" referred specifically to his tendency to play three chords to each one played by the rhythm section. "At that time the tendency was to play the entire scale of each chord. Therefore, they were usually played fast and sometimes sounded like glisses [glissandos]").

On some slower tunes that spoke of the one-to-one of romance or the loneliness of the blues, Coltrane's phrasing and tone had developed the haunted feel that would so effectively color ballads like "Naima" in the future: check out "Soul Junction" and "Solitude."

DECEMBER 20, 1957
RAY DRAPER

As 1957 drew to a close, Coltrane stood ready to reclaim his position as Miles's featured tenor man. His star had risen to the point that it made sense that he only record as a leader for Prestige. As he entered the last year of his contract with the label, Coltrane would record eight more dates as a leader or co-leader. His last two sideman sessions for Prestige took place just before and after the new year.

The first was a December 20 date led by Ray Draper—an anomaly on the jazz scene due to his reviving the tuba in a modern jazz context (an instrument that had played a seminal role in the birth of jazz) and also because he had recorded his debut album at the ripe age of 16. A year later, Draper sought out Coltrane to help him with a few arrangements and the latter agreed to play on his next recording, as did pianist Gil Coggins, bassist Spanky DeBrest, and drummer Larry Ritchie. The five tracks—particularly the unison lines combining tenor and tuba—create a novel sound. The respective timbres and sonic densities of the two are widely disparate; at times Draper's playing seems an organ wash underneath Coltrane's relatively weightless, piercing tone.

The date featured three Draper originals, "Clifford's Kappa," "Filide," and "Two Sons"—the last a standout with its post-bop bounce. The session also included a snappy take on Sonny Rollins's "Paul's Pal," and introduced the Raymond Berthiaume chanson "Under Paris Skies" into the jazz lexicon with a Latin groove, and Coltrane double-timing with panache.

JANUARY 3, 1958
GENE AMMONS

Coltrane recorded his final sideman date for Prestige on January 3, 1958, as part of an all-star octet. Mal Waldron was once again pianist, composer, and musical director; rounding out the lineup were flautist Jerome Richardson, tenor saxophonist Paul Quinichette, baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, bassist George Joyner, and drummer Art Taylor. And the leader of the resulting album was tenor saxophonist Gene Ammons.

Ammons—"Jug" to friends and fans, son of boogie-woogie legend Albert—was known for a sound that, no matter how far he ventured geographically or musically, never completely strayed from the deep blues. Like other tenor players from Chicago—Johnny Griffin, Von Freeman—Ammons was equally at home in post-bop ensembles or jump blues groups, and successfully appealed to a healthy overlap of jazz and R&B listeners. With Prestige, he not only became one of the label's defining artists but according to Weinstock, its consistent best seller from the hard bop years of the '50s through the '60s soul jazz era.

Ammons and Coltrane shared much, other than being rooted in the blues. Both had served in a dance band led by trumpeter King Kolax in the '40s. In 1950, Ammons had a minor jukebox hit on Prestige with the tune "Gravy"; four years later, Miles Davis gave it an uptown polish but changed it hardly at all, and called it "Walkin'" (and later re-named it "Sid's Ahead"). Coltrane would perform it dozens of times—if not hundreds—between '55 and '60.

Oddly, though Coltrane had participated in a number of two-tenor meetings for Prestige and other labels—with Rollins, Griffin, Coleman Hawkins, Paul Quinichette, Frank Wess, Al Cohn, and others—his sole meeting with Ammons found him playing another instrument.

Hearing Coltrane on alto saxophone—the instrument on which he began his professional career—is one of the more surprising aspects of the four tracks from the session. Apparently, with Ammons's arrival from Chicago in doubt and the studio booked, Quinichette had been called. When Ammons did in fact show up, the abundance of tenor players led to some fast shuffling. The harmony sections of Waldron's arrangements benefited from the next step: Quinichette bowed out of the ensemble parts, and Coltrane borrowed an alto belonging to producer/writer Ira Gitler.

Yet, as the performances reveal, Coltrane's switch did not result in a throwback to a former style or past influence. By 1958, Coltrane's musical identity had evolved to the point that, as Waldron told liner notes writer Joe Goldberg, "unlike many who . . . allow the instrument to shape their conceptions so that their ideas vary from instrument to instrument, Coltrane on tenor equals . . . Coltrane on alto."

Waldron employed the full octet for three, lengthy originals. With its smooth and smartly swinging vibe, "Ammon Joy" could be straight from the Count Basie songbook of the mid-'50s; Coltrane's solo plays to its finger-snapping quality. "Groove Blues" is a jumpy twelve-bar form well suited for Ammons's smoky sound; Coltrane fleetly takes it in another direction altogether with his improvisation. "The Real McCoy"—dedicated to Chicago deejay Sid McCoy, not Coltrane's future pianist—is another briskly played blues. Solos by Ammons, Adams, Richardson, Coltrane, Quinichette, and Waldron, are followed by a final section with four-bar exchanges in the same order. An unhurried interpretation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "It Might as Well Be Spring" pairs Coltrane and Ammons alone, with rhythm. With the tempo nice and slow, it's easy to see who is following in the path of the saxophone masters who came before, and who has begun to forge his own way forward.

Through the critical year of 1957, Coltrane had fallen, cleaned up, and evolved with surprising speed. He would not slacken his rate of progress—musical or spiritual—for the remaining ten years of his life.

The same week Coltrane made the recording date with Ammons, he was back with Miles Davis, appearing at Birdland. The group had become a pressure-cooker, filled with new ideas and freedoms: Coltrane joined alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley in an expanded front line. A few months into '58, pianist Bill Evans replaced Garland, and drummer Jimmy Cobb took over for Jones, creating one of the most celebrated sextets of all time.

Nonetheless, Coltrane was itching to break out and follow his own musical ideas. In 1959, he began to assemble the players to form his own band, and soon moved up to higher ground, musically and financially, signing first with Atlantic Records and two years later, the Impulse label.

Coltrane was well established and a popular headliner when, on March 20, 1961, he dropped by 30th Street Studio to sit in with Miles Davis's band on "Someday My Prince Will Come"—a last, informal nod to his days as a studio sideman.

Other than Miles, is there a modern jazz star shining as brightly today as John Coltrane? His sound and stature have come to eclipse so many who also deserve lasting applause. It says much of his continuing appeal—and the way we hang on to our heroes—that some of the music included in this collection was later re-issued with Coltrane as the titular leader. Among its intentions, *Side Steps* is meant as an acknowledgment that greatness can begin, and abide, in a supporting role.

Ashley Kahn is the author of A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album, The House That Trane Built: The Story of Impulse Records, *and other jazz titles. He often contributes to National Public Radio's* Morning Edition.

Side Steps *joins two other collections—*Fearless Leader *and* Interplay*—in completing the release of all Coltrane's contributions to the Prestige catalog from 1956 through '58 (His recordings with Miles Davis are available in the 4-CD set* The Miles Davis Quintet: The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions.*) Many thanks and major credit for their respective musical insights are due to saxophonists Dave Liebman, Ravi Coltrane, and Professor Carl Woideck. —A.K.*

SPANKY DeBREST

RAY DRAPER

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images (all)

WEINSTOCK'S WAY: THREE YEARS OF JOHN COLTRANE ON PRESTIGE

by Ashley Kahn

Record collector and retailer turned record label owner, Bob Weinstock was certainly not the first to make the jump from selling discs to producing music when he established New Jazz Records in 1949, and its sister label Prestige shortly thereafter. Back in '34, Milt Gabler started the Commodore label in his Manhattan store of the same name. A few years later and a few blocks west, Steve Smith established the HRS label out of his Hot Record Society shop.

Yet, the archetype for Prestige was neither of those pioneering independents. It was Blue Note Records, founded by the fastidious, Berlin-born Alfred Lion who produced his first session ten years to the week before the 20-year-old Weinstock oversaw his first studio effort (Lion recorded boogie-woogie giants Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis on January 11, 1939; on January 6, 1949 Weinstock brought a quintet featuring pianist Lenny Tristano and saxophonist Lee Konitz into the studio.)

The musicians Lion chose to record, the musical styles and trends on which he chose to focus, and later, the look and feel he chose for Blue Note's album covers, all provided inspiration for Prestige's young owner/operator. "Weinstock told me that he followed Alfred's every move," says producer Bob Porter, who oversaw many sessions for Prestige. What at first may have been flattering, was soon vexing as Prestige became Blue Note's competitor. Yet, according to Lion's wife and office assistant Ruth, "Alfred was conscious of it. But what he did was to go his own way and if they followed him, as Prestige did, he just was not going to let it phase him."

Weinstock watched closely and learned well. Like Lion, Weinstock was especially proud producing debut recordings of emerging talent. Like Lion, he relied almost exclusively on a small recording studio in Hackensack, New Jersey. In fact, as Weinstock once told *Audio* magazine, it was the decision to use Rudy Van Gelder that saved Prestige in 1954: "It was discouraging to have a good date spoiled by poor sound. I was thinking seriously of getting out of the business when we tried Van Gelder. Not only did he give us good engineering, but he has a thorough understanding of how a session should be handled."

Same musicians, same studio—but there were differences. Lion was a hands-on producer who preferred carefully rehearsed recording dates; Prestige sessions favored the spontaneity of a live performance, and left musicians and engineer in charge. "Weinstock wanted Rudy to do what Rudy did and stayed the hell out of his way," Porter says. Van Gelder himself adds that, "Alfred had to make everything really good and break new ground musically. Prestige was the other side of that, a laid-back approach, easygoing. So it created a different kind of music. One was more relaxed . . . all improvisation. And the other was intense."

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

Weinstock also diverged from Lion's example with an unusual frugality in the studio. He kept tape costs down by recording over first takes (very few alternate takes of music recorded in the Fifties exist in the Prestige library). Unlike Blue Note's habit of photographing every session, Prestige dates went largely undocumented visually. And as the Fifties rolled on and Prestige grew, Weinstock began to focus his energy primarily on the running of his company, and unlike Lion, hired others to produce the sessions. Ira Gitler, Ozzie Cadena, Esmond Edwards, Chris Albertson, Don Schlitten, and Bob Porter were among the producers who helped keep the Prestige machine rolling.

But of all the ways that Weinstock deviated from the Blue Note manner of doing business perhaps the most significant was that he proved more willing to sign a variety of artists to exclusive contracts—a move that required paying advances for future recordings. Orrin Keepnews, whose Riverside label competed with both Blue Note and Prestige in the 1950s, recalls:

> *At the time, the standard musicians' union exclusive recording contract was signed yearly, and it committed the record company to do a minimum number of sides with the artist in that year . . . you had to do eight sides. Alfred was a very, very cautious businessman. He loved the music but I don't think he had confidence in its commercial potential. None of those early people [on Blue Note] were under contract. For example, he recorded Miles so very, very early—but he didn't keep him on Blue Note, and Miles got bigger.*

Bigger indeed. Weinstock's gamble on signing Davis paid off handsomely: the trumpeter's popularity skyrocketed after he switched from Prestige to the major Columbia Records in 1957, and sales of his previous recordings received a considerable, profitable boost.

Which brings us to John Coltrane. Both Weinstock and Lion were well aware of the saxophonist with the startlingly different sound from the time he arrived from Philadelphia in late 1955. They both followed his progress as he gained confidence and followers over the next year and a half. Prestige called on Coltrane's services for eight sessions from late 1955 to early '57, including three momentous dates with Miles Davis. Blue Note used him as a sideman twice during that period.

Why Weinstock and Lion both waited until early 1957 to attempt to sign Coltrane may never be known. Perhaps the two needed corroboration; at the time, there were certainly many on the jazz scene—critics and musicians alike—who were unconvinced of the saxophonist's talent. What is known is that at some point around March or April of '57, both Prestige and Blue Note made overtures to sign Coltrane exclusively.

Apocryphal or not, there are stories that relate what transpired next. One tells of a shaken Lion suddenly canceling an appointment with Coltrane after witnessing his cat fall from his office window to its death. Another tells of Coltrane arriving at the office to pick up some Sidney Bechet albums and to speak of signing with Blue Note, but that Francis Wolff—Lion's partner who handled artist contracts—had left for the day.

In any event, on April 8, 1957, Coltrane inked a standard, three-page, one-year contract—with a one-year option—with Prestige Records. Intriguingly, Weinstock used a boilerplate agreement form that dated from the 78rpm era, leaving the line listing the agreed-upon minimum number of recordings blank. But, handwritten at the bottom of the last page, is a notation that would certainly have given Lion cause for hesitation: "Prestige agrees to pay John Coltrane $300 per 12" album and will record three 12" albums per year."

A few months later, Weinstock agreed to allow what seems to have been a previous, undocumented agreement between Coltrane and Lion; perhaps Coltrane made the permission a requirement to his signing with Prestige. In any case, the iconic *Blue Train*—one of the brightest gems in Blue Note's catalog, and one of Coltrane's most revered recordings—was the result.

In 1959, when Prestige marked its tenth year in business, Blue Note was celebrating its twentieth. Nat Hentoff interviewed Lion on his radio show on New York's WBAI, asking the question: "Have you ever made one big goof, one guy you let get away that later became an important name?" "Well sure, we all make mistakes. I made plenty of mistakes," admitted Lion, "one happened to be John Coltrane and he slipped away." But, Lion added hopefully, "He might come back . . ."

All these years later, signing Coltrane seems such an obvious move. Equally apparent is Weinstock's business acumen. In the mid-Sixties, when major, well-funded corporations, many unconnected to the music business, began to buy up independent record companies, Lion and many of his contemporaries—like Jerry Wexler and Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegun at Atlantic Records—sold their labels. Weinstock wisely held out for a few more years. In 1971, as the rock explosion pushed the value of music catalogs higher than ever before, he cashed in his chips, selling Prestige to a larger label that was then flush with profits earned by their star rock group. In the Fantasy Records catalog, Coltrane's recordings took their place side by side hit albums by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Weinstock retired and moved to Florida's Boca Raton area. Using an investment system of his own making, he spent his time working on his stock portfolio, and save for a brief foray producing South Florida jazz musicians for Fantasy, never returned to the recording studio. He passed away at the age of 77 in 2006. In February 2001 I reached Weinstock by phone, and he generously agreed to an interview, parts of which appeared in the book *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album*. The full transcript of that conversation follows.

A VERY, VERY SPECIAL PERSON: WEINSTOCK ON COLTRANE

AK: How old were you when you started Prestige?

BW: Twenty . . . nineteen, twenty. My first recording session was Lee Konitz, with Lennie Tristano, I knew of Tristano many years before, and I knew about Konitz with the [Claude] Thornhill band. I followed the Woody Herman Herd around, and I got to record Stan Getz and those people. Man, it was something special.

AK: Between November 1955 and the end of '58, Prestige recorded a great amount of music with John Coltrane. When did you first decide you wanted to work with him?

BW: Well, when Miles's quintet came to record the first quintet record, I heard Trane, and as soon as I heard him play, I said, 'That's it,' and wanted to sign him to a contract.

AK: Did you deal directly with him, or did he have representation?

BW: No, in those days, musicians didn't have representation—it was done directly with them. And he said he would be willing to do it if I would do for him what I did for Miles, and what he meant by that was to record him with various types of groups. Because I recorded Miles with all different kinds of groups, you know, with Milt Jackson, with Monk, this and that quartet . . . and Trane was aware of what I did with Miles.

AK: Why do you think Coltrane wanted that variety approach?

BW: I don't know, I think this was the day when he was emerging into something. I don't think he realized what his potential was, he was just coming off the floor sort of, just coming up, and I think he had no idea or dream of even being a leader of a group. But just being around Miles gave him confidence.

AK: What was his personality like?

BW: He wasn't an aggressive type at all. He was a very easygoing person. He had a good sense of humor, and he just seemed to go along with the times, without the desire to reach for the stars. I don't think he saw what would be or what could be.

AK: What about his approach to music?

BW: Oh, he's a genius, you know. Trane was a phenomenon. There were certain musicians who knew every song ever written, almost—Stan Getz, Red Garland, Al Haig, and John Coltrane. You could name any song from any stinking movie of the Twenties, Thirties, or Forties, and he knew it. You know, those four people were incredible, and I worked with all of them. On sessions, he could say, 'Let's do this,' and they'd say, 'Okay,' and they did it. Those four guys were tremendous. And Trane—I never thought I'd find another one after Red Garland. I think Getz and Haig worked that way, because I recorded them a lot together, and individually, as well as listening to them in person. I knew they were that way, and then all of a sudden, Red Garland comes along. And that's one of the reasons Miles loved Red Garland—Red would expose him to all kinds of new songs.

AK: Your deal with Coltrane was exclusive to Prestige, right?

BW: Yes, it was exclusive.

AK: Was it a multi-year contract?

BW: We signed three years at a time. [Ed. Note: The term of a standard Prestige contract seems to have been one year, with an option to extend another year.]

AK: So what happened in '58? Did you want to re-sign him? How did he end up on Atlantic?

BW: Naturally, most of the musicians, when their recording contracts terminated, that was the end of my relationship. But, you know, there's a thing that went on in the jazz world that I didn't really like. I didn't like it at all, and Alfred Lion didn't like it. Blue Note and Prestige were the main pioneers amongst jazz, because we would record people that weren't that famous, you know? And the other companies, like Bob Thiele [at Impulse], and Atlantic, and CBS, they'd wait like vultures for smaller independents to make artists famous or popular, and then they'd just take them away, because they'd offer them more money. Now you look back, Nesuhi Ertegun, God bless him, and Ahmet, they're good people. But look at Nesuhi's record, as an example. How many people did he discover that were not known? He did one album with Tony Fruscella, a trumpet player. That was his claim to discovering unknown people. Look at Bob Thiele, how many people did he discover. Nobody. And then at CBS, nobody.

AK: So the major labels would wait until you had built somebody up?

BW: That's right, that's what happened with Miles, Coltrane, you name it. It always happened. Not one of the musicians ever said, 'My contract is up, can we negotiate?' No, they just went, they didn't even ask me to negotiate. But I always expected it. In the case of Miles, I knew about it beforehand, I said 'Oh yeah, Miles is going over to Columbia,' from a hundred dollar advance, to ten thousand dollar advances. You know, so I laughed to myself, I said, 'Okay, they got him, but they're going to have to play the game,' you know, the big advances. I hear when Miles left at the end, from CBS to Warner Bros. [in 1986], it was staggering the amount of advances he commanded. That's what the rumors said, I don't know for fact. So I'd ask myself, and I'd think of one thing only, I'd think of Branch Rickey [creator of the farm system in major league baseball]. He discovered all the stars for the St. Louis Cardinals [in the late '20s and '30s], and if the stars got too big he'd bring them up to major league team, but he'd have new guys coming in all the time that were even better. Later he worked with the [Brooklyn] Dodgers and brought Jackie Robinson into the majors.

I envisioned myself as having the ability to discover talent, and I always knew, the bigger an artist got, the less important he would be. Look at Armstrong's early records, and then look at his records at the end. Even Ellington, as great as he was, his early things were the masterpieces, when he had the Blanton/Webster band. And then the time he's on CBS, he's making all these dumb records. So, I'd laugh at the whole process.

AK: When Impulse took Coltrane away from Atlantic, did you feel there was poetic justice in that?

BW: Yeah, that was good. Whatever takes away from Atlantic, which was always taking, it was good. Or whenever you heard the amount of money a musician like Miles'd get from Sony or CBS, you'd laugh; all musicians would laugh, they'd think it was great.

AK: So in a way you're happy for Coltrane in that he moved up from Atlantic to ABC? [Ed. Note: Impulse Record's parent company was ABC-Paramount.]

BW: I never had malice for any of these people. Like I said, I didn't depend on them, but you know what the biggest joke of it all was? You mentioned it, you said R&B, right? The big joke was, I had Gene Ammons since the year I started the company to the end when I sold it, I had Gene Ammons who outsold everybody two to one. Because Gene Ammons appealed to the R&B, and the pop audience with the pretty ballad, and Ammons sold more than Miles, Coltrane, Monk, all of them put together, because he reached the people. And these other companies, they didn't even go near Ammons. And Gene, whenever he got out of prison, you know what he'd say to me? 'Thanks for keeping my name in front of the people while I was away.' We'd do a lot of recording and I always had Gene Ammons records to release until I sold Prestige. And the major labels should have taken Gene Ammons, because he had an ability with ballads. He did 'My Foolish Heart' and it sold a million records. He had the ability to reach the people, juke boxes, everything.

AK: So Coltrane was never a big seller for you?

BW: No, not really. Later, but not at the time.

AK: When did he start becoming a big seller?

BW: Well, after he did 'My Favorite Things,' that put him over.

AK: And then his older Prestige stuff . . .

BW: Yeah, well, Miles didn't become a big seller until much later also. None of these people—Rollins, Monk . . .

AK: You said you had no malice. Were you aware of any malice between ABC and Atlantic?

BW: No.

AK: Because ABC signed Ray Charles away from Atlantic, and then did the same with John Coltrane.

BW: Yeah, it's typical, you know. [ABC/Impulse producer] Bob Thiele was a great jazz person, don't get me wrong. [Ed. Note: Creed Taylor, who created the Impulse imprint while on-staff at ABC Records, signed Coltrane to Impulse, a few months before he departed in 1961 to run the Verve label. Thiele was his replacement.] The things he did with Hawk and Lester Young, they're masterpieces. The man has great talent, but the man, like Nesuhi, they didn't have the ability to pick out the musician who was starting out, so they had to fight it out with dollars to get who they wanted. And as great as Nesuhi was, he doesn't hold a candle to Bob Thiele, believe me. But Thiele didn't have one guy he had discovered.

AK: So you're saying that if Atlantic hadn't had a hit with 'My Favorite Things' ABC would never have . . .

BW: Exactly. [Speaks off-phone]: I'm being interviewed about John Coltrane. I'm the king of jazz.

AK: I'll tell her for you. You are the king of jazz, Bob.

BW: [Speaks off-phone] He's going to tell you something, pick up the phone.
[Female voice] Hello?

AK: Hi, I'm supposed to tell you that Bob Weinstock is the king of jazz.
[Female voice] I already made him a crown, he knows that.

AK: So now there's no question about it . . .

BW: Me and Paul Whiteman . . . [laughs]

AK: Let's go back to your producing sessions. How did you start using Rudy Van Gelder in the first place?

BW: As I said, I was a collector, so I had all the Blue Note records, I loved Blue Note. Alfred Lion was my hero. And I knew Alfred was recording with Rudy Van Gelder, and the sound was very good, I heard it on the records, you know? And I knew it said 'Rudy Van Gelder,' and one day I was walking in Teaneck [New Jersey] on Cedar Lane, the main street there, and I passed a store next to a bakery, and it said, 'Rudolph Van Gelder, Optometrist.' And I went in the store, and I said, 'Is Rudy Van Gelder here?' and he said, 'Yes, I'm him.' 'Are you the Rudy Van Gelder that was recording for Blue Note?' and he said, 'Yes, how did you know?' and I said, 'I have the records, they're great,' and I wasn't happy in my studios, I was bouncing around, and I said, 'Are you allowed to record for other people beside Blue Note?' and he said, 'Sure.' I said, 'I'd like to record with you, I have a Miles session coming up, will you do it.' And he said, 'Sure.' And after that, he did a Miles quartet.

AK: So what was the difference between the other studios and Rudy's?

BW: Well, the main difference was, you'd have to waste time at the other studios. Say you were doing a 78 session, four 78 sides, and you were allowed three hours before you went into overtime. It'd take an hour or three hours just to get a good balance that I was happy with or the musicians were happy with. With Rudy, it's like I said, they just walked in and they started recording. He knew immediately how to set it up once you said who was coming.

AK: He is a real scientist.

BW: Yeah, well he knew the music, he knew what he was doing. He's a genius, let's face it.

AK: Was Coltrane's relationship with Van Gelder different from Rudy's relationships with other musicians?

BW: No, Rudy is a very—this is my observation—Rudy, his personality was such, he respected all the musicians tremendously, he loved jazz. Because Rudy, like me, he loved music before he even got into the business. He was an optometrist, when he was in college he was a fan, and he loved the music. That's why he became a great engineer, he understood the music, and he treated the musicians with tremendous respect. He made all the musicians feel like they were royalty visiting from foreign countries, whoever came to record, from the most unknown

musician to the most famous musician. And they in turn treated Rudy with respect. He didn't meddle with their playing, and they didn't meddle with his work. It's like me: I was like a kid that was stuck into the ball club, because here I was, an 8-year-old loving jazz. By the time I was 20 I was recording all the famous modern jazz musicians.

AK: What was Trane like in the studio?

BW: Trane was always on time, he always knew what he was doing, never had to run over anything, he just did it. Most of the musicians I had worked with liked Trane, and also liked working with Rudy Van Gelder. There was a joke amongst the musicians that they'd come in the door, and they'd said, 'Ready Rudy?' and he was always ready I'd just tell him who was coming, and he knew what to do with the sound and all that. I never worried about the sound, the musicians never worried about the sound, or anything, they'd just say, 'Ready Rudy,' and wham! They'd start recording. And Trane was always like that at his recording sessions. Miles, Trane, Red Garland—they were all like that.

AK: In speaking with Atlantic engineer Tom Dowd I heard that Trane would always come early and practice arpeggios and scales . . .

BW: No, not with me. He just came in and played, he knew what he was going to play. I'd say whatever, and bang, bang, boom boom. Didn't rehearse the musicians, because the groups were not always the same; but the talent of the musicians was so amazing—Garland, Flanagan, whoever. For instance, you could just say, 'We're going to play, 'Russian Lullaby,'' and they knew it. Just bang, bang, and that's the way it was recording with those types of spontaneous musicians.

AK: So there wasn't any rehearsal?

BW: Oh, no. Never.

AK: Can you describe a typical session with Coltrane as leader?

BW: They would park outside Rudy's family's house, and the living room was the studio, and as I recall, they would come through the door right into the living room, and the microphones would be there all set up, and Trane would know which microphone to go to, it was obvious. They'd unpack, they'd play a few notes, and like I said, this cry that was heard from group to group to group: 'Ready Rudy?' 'Ready Bob?' And I would say, 'Okay,' and I knew who I was recording, so I wouldn't even stay in the control booth. There was no need. Whatever Rudy did was fine, I didn't care. Rudy is Rudy, and he was the boss as far as I was concerned. So I would go out, and Rudy had a couch there, and I'd sit down, and in fact, he had a TV in there, and I was a big sports fan, and they had a lot of daytime baseball in those days. And if it was baseball season, I'd turn on the TV, right next to where the leader horn man would stand, and I wouldn't turn the sound on or anything, but I'd watch the ballgame, and I'd sit there with my stopwatch, and I'd say, 'Okay, Trane. What do you want to do?' And he'd play, and the other musicians would follow. It was almost a rule with me and with Miles, that he wouldn't even listen to the playback. So I'd listen, and then I'd say, 'Okay, next.' Once and a while, though, I'd say, 'Okay, let's try that one over.' And Rudy wouldn't keep the out takes. He'd erase it immediately. That's why Prestige never had any out takes. I think he maybe has three or four out takes altogether. I had a signal, if they were playing too long, or not enough, if I wanted them to play more choruses. But they seemed to sense how long to play.

AK: How long would you normally want them to play?

BW: Well, somewhere between five and seven minutes. Naturally you had more choruses for a blues, or if the choruses were longer or slower. And then, as the session wound down, sometimes they'd be done with the songs that they came with, and Trane would say, 'What do you think we should do now?' and well, you haven't done any slow numbers, ballads. Sometimes he'd touch all the bases; ballad, fast tempo, and I'd say, 'Well, you haven't done a blues.'

AK: Bob, did you ever come up with a specific song suggestion for Coltrane?

BW: Oh, yeah, sure. I did that with all the musicians.

AK: Can you think of one or two examples with Coltrane?

BW: Well, I can think of one session where the songs weren't long enough, he needed a lot of time. So I said, 'Let's do a slow blues to finish out the session.' And Trane said, 'YOU write it,' and I said, 'I can't write it, I don't know music,' and he said, 'Just tell me what you want me to play,' this was like a joke. He had a good sense of humor. And he said, 'Should it go like this?' and he went 'vv-vv-vv-vv-vv' and whatever it was, it was 'Sweet Sapphire Blues' and he said, 'Okay, you wrote it,' I said, 'I didn't write it,' he said, 'I insist, it's your song, you wrote it.' You know, that's the only song I ever got credit for writing, is that 'Sweet Sapphire Blues,' because it was a long blues, and Coltrane was just playing around with me. So he said, 'It's your song, you wrote it.' You know, he was a wonderful person, I loved the man. Of all the musicians, he had such a nice, warm personality.

AK: During Coltrane's years at Prestige he went from being a narcotics user to being dedicated to a clean and healthy life. Did you ever notice the before or after?

BW: I don't know. I must have been stupid or dumb or something. But if you said drugs to me back then, all I knew was marijuana. I smoked it, I saw folks smoke it and so on, but I gave it up even before I came to Prestige. And I gave up alcohol. I remember Miles telling me I'd live a long healthy life if I gave up all that s***. And thank God I listened to Miles, because at my age I'm very healthy and happy. I really owe it to Miles, he straightened me out, talked to me. But anyway, I did not know. This is unbelievable, I look back on it and I hear 'He was on—he wasn't on . . . ' I don't know! Man, if these people were on, I didn't know it. And I'm not kidding you, I was a hippie even before Prestige. I hung out with a lot of people I knew were junkies. Nodding, scratching, that type of person, if he was ON, you knew it, right? But with the musicians, I never saw one of them in that state, believe it or not. Not one of them. I knew Ammons was involved; Miles was on; and I was flabbergasted when I heard Coltrane was on. I couldn't believe it. I didn't see it, and so I wouldn't know, and really didn't know. People say, 'you're full of s***.' No, I'm not full of s***. You're not talking to somebody who is totally naïve, I knew junkies when I saw them. So, I don't know, really. It's one of those things that people spend too much time in the history of jazz wondering who was on drugs and who wasn't. I saw a crime show once, and the guy says, 'I don't care about their personal life, that's their own life.' So who the f*** cares?

AK: Would you go hear Coltrane live?

BW: No, I eventually stopped going out to hear live music. I became really annoyed hearing live jazz because it would go on and on and on. In a set they'd play one or two songs, the atmosphere wasn't good and I didn't drink. I was too much of a record collector, ever since I was 8 years old. So, it's like now, I don't go to the movies. Metaphorically speaking, why go to the movies when I can play the greatest movies? And that's what I thought when I was going to see jazz, why do I have to go to all the clubs—the smoke, waiting in line, big bread, and the whole thing. I have all the records, and they're all great, you know—Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Bird, Prez—what do I need a crowded club for? I have six thousand jazz cassettes that I take with me in the car, out to the beach, out all over—why do I have to go out when I can hear all the greatest jazz ever recorded?

AK: Coltrane's sound went through a lot of changes from the beginning of his recording career until the end. What did you think about that?

BW: Well, you know I always had a saying: 'It's Miles Davis, he can do no wrong.' And that meant musically and personally. Same thing with Coltrane. Whatever he does, he's John Coltrane, it doesn't matter what he does. Could do no wrong. Sonny Rollins, the same thing . . . Gene Ammons, whatever anybody says, it was good. The man was a giant, he developed really fast.

That was quick development like I have never seen, you know. You can hear it only, I think, in the old Charlie Parker, if you listen to the Jay McShann band sides where he plays solos, and then go immediately from there to the Dials and Savoys. That's the way Trane was, very quick. The reason I would call on Trane more than any other musician except Gene Ammons, was that I had the feeling that he was going to be the next Charlie Parker. I believed that, you know.

I have everything Coltrane ever recorded that I know of. He's one of my all time favorite musicians because, to me, Coltrane, had the ability of a Bird, he had the creativity, the musicianship, and whatever he played was great, just phenomenal playing. I don't think he ever achieved Bird's level, but he came pretty damn close. In the history of jazz, outside of Armstrong, I think there's only Bird and Hawk and Prez, and Coltrane, really close to the top. That's about all I can say.

AK: What did you think of Coltrane's direction after he left Atlantic to record for Impulse?

BW: Well, I think he was taking it out a little too far, you know? And I have a stupid theory—I'm

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

like Woody Allen, I've been in therapy for 50 years, so I'm always analyzing. But if Woody Allen is like that, I'm happy to find somebody else who is like that. . . Anyway, I think Coltrane destroyed himself physically, mentally, and musically playing too much, playing way too much. That stuff he was doing, *Live at the Vanguard*, the group with Garrison and Dolphy. I think that Dolphy was another one that could've been up there with Trane, tremendous player also. But I think the two of them destroyed themselves by going too far too fast musically. They put too much stress on themselves, especially Coltrane. I think that's why he passed on. Really, that's my theory. His intensity is so great. I've never heard another musician like that in my life.

AK: Physical stress or mental?

BW: Well, I think it was all rolled into one, trying so hard musically, that it had an effect mentally, physically, and technically. I think he'd still be with us today if he were more like a Lester Young or a Coleman Hawkins, and was more lyrical, not quite so technical. He really was a lyrical player if you listen to the stuff I did with him. You know 'Stardust,' 'Lush Life,' that type stuff. Really lyrical playing. And then he just changes like a comet into this intensity. I have the records, I listen to them. I'm not knocking the records at all, they're great.

AK: With Impulse he did make some great ballad type albums.

BW: Yeah, it was too late already, he had made the commitment. Who did he do *A Love Supreme* for?

AK: Impulse.

BW: Yeah, I think that if he had stayed at that level, he'd still be with us. That was a really beautiful thing he did. Who said he had to go on for chorus after chorus and tempos? I don't really know why. Jazz is not meant to be that way. You can try a little of that, you know, but not so much.

AK: But in the Fifties, there were those honkers and bar walkers coming out of the R&B bag who blew long and intense . . .

BW: Yeah, but that was easier music.

AK: Do you think his habit of playing chorus after chorus might have started from that?

BW: No. With Trane, the way I see it, he'd just get an idea, and develop it and develop it and whip it to death. That's the way I thought of it. I was just playing an old record I did with Tiny Grimes on Prestige that has Hawk on it—Coleman Hawkins. And they're doing 'See See Rider' which is kind of apropos as you mentioned, borrowing from R&B. And Hawk takes chorus after chorus, but it's so relaxed, it's not intense. He makes it so easy, and it's fun, almost. Coltrane wasn't fun, Eric Dolphy wasn't fun. It's ironic that they got together at the end.

AK: You mentioned one of Coltrane's best-selling albums *A Love Supreme*. Do you have any personal feelings about it?

BW: You know, it was a beautiful record, and it was a statement of a beautiful man. That's all I can say. He had a warmth. The minute you met John Coltrane you loved him. You know, the first time I met him with Miles, such a wonderful warm person, and he had such a nice sense of humor, and he had no pretense as he was growing and being discovered. It never bothered him, he just went straight ahead and took it all in stride, he was a phenomenal person, really. With him, you just believed anything could be. If he wanted to be religious, he could be; if he wanted to be funny, he could be, you know? He was that type of person.

I was interviewed for a documentary by these English people about Miles, they came to my apartment here and filmed me for a television documentary. And I just told them that Miles was not what he appeared—he was more what he wanted people to think he was. Miles was a very intelligent, sensitive type person. But he hid his personality, with all his acting. But Trane didn't hide it, he just grew. It's almost like the [Nat] King Cole record of 'Nature Boy'—"there was a boy—a very strange enchanted boy. . ." You know the lyric? And at the end it says all he wanted was to love and be loved in return. That's the type of person Trane was, and every now and then you'll meet a person like that, and it's very rare. He was a very, very special person.

AK: Thank you Bob.

BW: I liked the man very much, and I'm glad you called me.

ART TAYLOR, JACKIE McLEAN, AND COLTRANE
Recording session for The Dealers, *April 19, 1957*

MONDAY, MAY 7, 1956

Donald Byrd: *trumpet* • John Coltrane & Hank Mobley: *tenor saxophones* • Elmo Hope (leader): *piano* • Paul Chambers: *bass* • Philly Joe Jones: *drums*

DISC ONE

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
1.	884	**WEEJA** *(Elmo Hope)*	Prestige 7043
2.	885	**POLKA DOTS AND MOONBEAMS** *(James Van Heusen/Johnny Burke)*	Prestige 7043
3.	886	**ON IT** *(Elmo Hope)*	Prestige 7043
4.	887	**AVALON** *(Al Jolson/Buddy DeSylva/Vincent Rose)*	Prestige 7043

PAUL QUINICHETTE, MAL WALDRON, AND GEORGE JOYNER
Recording session for Groove Blues, *January 3, 1958*

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images (all)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1956

John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Tadd Dameron (leader): *piano* • John Simmons: *bass* • Philly Joe Jones: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
5.	1025	**MATING CALL** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070
6.	1026	**SOULTRANE** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070
7.	1027	**GNID** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070
8.	1028	**SUPER JET** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070
9.	1029	**ON A MISTY NIGHT** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070
10.	1030	**ROMAS** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7070

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1956

Sonny Rollins (leader): *tenor saxophone* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Red Garland: *piano* • Paul Chambers: *bass* • Philly Joe Jones: *drums*

DISC TWO

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
1.	906	**TENOR MADNESS** *(Sonny Rollins)*	Prestige 7047

FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 1957

Bill Hardman: *trumpet* • Jackie McLean: *alto saxophone* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Mal Waldron (leader): *piano* • Julian Euell: bass • Art Taylor: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
2.	1199	**POTPOURRI** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7111
3.	1200	**J.M's DREAM DOLL** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7111
4.	1202	**DON'T EXPLAIN** *(Billie Holiday/Arthur Herzog, Jr.)*	Prestige 7111
5.	1202	**BLUE CALYPSO** *(Mal Waldron)*	Status 8316
6.	1203	**FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE** *(Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart)*	Status 8316

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 1957

Idrees Sulieman: *trumpet* • Sahib Shihab: *alto & baritone saxophones* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Mal Waldron (leader): *piano* • Julian Euell: *bass* • Ed Thigpen: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
7.	1267	**THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT** *(Jerome Kern/Dorothy Fields)*	Prestige 7111
8.	1268	**FROM THIS MOMENT ON** *(Cole Porter)*	Prestige 7111
9.	1269	**ONE BY ONE** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7111

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1957

Donald Byrd: *trumpet* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Red Garland (leader): *piano* • George Joyner (Jamil Nasser): *bass* • Art Taylor: *drums*

DISC THREE

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
1.	1392	**OUR DELIGHT** *(Tadd Dameron)*	Prestige 7130
2.	1393	**THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME** *(George Gershwin/Ira Gershwin)*	Prestige 7130
3.	1394	**WOODY'N YOU** *(Dizzy Gillespie)*	Prestige 7181
4.	1395	**I'VE GOT IT BAD** *(Paul Francis Webster/Duke Ellington)*	Prestige 7181
5.	1396	**UNDECIDED** *(Charlie Shavers/Sid Robin)*	Prestige 7209
6.	1397	**SOUL JUNCTION** *(Red Garland)*	Prestige 7181
7.	1398	**WHAT IS THERE TO SAY?** *(Vernon Duke/E.Y. "Yip" Harburg)*	Prestige 7209
8.	1399	**BIRK'S WORKS** *(Dizzy Gillespie)*	Prestige 7181
9.	1400	**HALLELUJAH** *(Vincent Youmans/Leo Robin)*	Prestige 7181

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1957

Donald Byrd: *trumpet* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Red Garland (leader): *piano* • George Joyner (Jamil Nasser): *bass* • Art Taylor: *drums*

DISC FOUR

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
1.	1401	**ALL MORNING LONG** *(Red Garland)*	Prestige 7130

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1957

Donald Byrd: *trumpet* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Red Garland (leader): *piano* • George Joyner (Jamil Nasser): *bass* • Art Taylor: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
2.	1405	**BILLIE'S BOUNCE** *(Charlie Parker)*	Prestige 7229
3.	1406	**SOLITUDE** *(Duke Ellington/Eddie DeLange/Irving Mills)*	Prestige 7209
4.	1407	**TWO BASS HIT** *(Dizzy Gillespie/John Lewis)*	Prestige 7209
5.	1408	**SOFT WINDS** *(Benny Goodman)*	Prestige 7209
6.	1409	**LAZY MAE** *(Red Garland)*	Prestige 7229

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1957

Ray Draper (leader): *tuba* • John Coltrane: *tenor saxophone* • Gil Coggins: *piano* • Spanky DeBrest: *bass* • Larry Ritchie: *drums*

DISC FIVE

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
1.	1410	**UNDER PARIS SKIES** *(Hubert Girard/Jean Drejac)*	New Jazz 8228
2.	1411	**CLIFFORD'S KAPPA** *(Ray Draper)*	New Jazz 8228
3.	1412	**FILIDE** *(Ray Draper)*	New Jazz 8228
4.	1413	**TWO SONS** *(Ray Draper)*	New Jazz 8228
5.	1415	**PAUL'S PAL** *(Sonny Rollins)*	New Jazz 8228

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1958

Jerome Richardson: *flute* • John Coltrane: *alto saxophone* • Gene Ammons (leader) & Paul Quinichette: *tenor saxophones* • Pepper Adams: *baritone saxophone* • Mal Waldron: *piano* • George Joyner (Jamil Nasser): *bass* • Art Taylor: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
6.	1426	**AMMON JOY** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7201
7.	1427	**GROOVE BLUES** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7201
8.	1428	**THE REAL McCOY** *(Mal Waldron)*	Prestige 7132

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1958

John Coltrane: *alto saxophone* • Gene Ammons (leader): *tenor saxophone* • Mal Waldron: *piano* • George Joyner (Jamil Nasser): *bass* • Art Taylor: *drums*

TRK #	MASTER #	TITLE	ORIGINAL RELEASE
9.	1430	**IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING** *(Richard Rodgers/Oscar Hammerstein II)*	Prestige 7201

All sessions supervised by **BOB WEINSTOCK**
Recorded by **RUDY VAN GELDER** at **VAN GELDER STUDIO**, Hackensack, NJ

All tracks mono.

DISCOGRAPHY

Numbers in brackets preceding song titles indicate the disc and track number for that song in the boxed set.

ELMO HOPE SEXTET: INFORMAL JAZZ

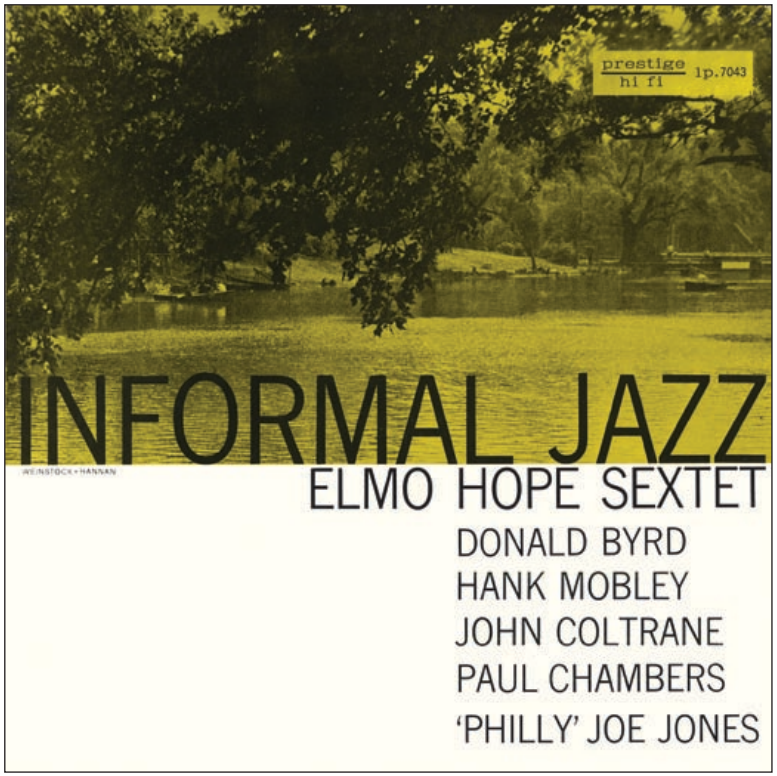
Prestige 7043
Released: 1956

SIDE ONE

[1/1] **WEEJA**
[1/2] **POLKA DOTS AND MOONBEAMS**

SIDE TWO

[1/3] **ON IT**
[1/4] **AVALON**

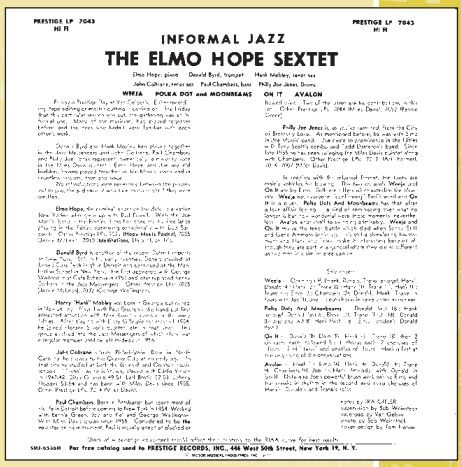


Friday is Prestige Day at Van Gelder's. Either recording, tape editing or master cutting is carried on. The Friday that this particular session was cut, the gathering was an informal one. Many of the musicians had played together before and the ones who hadn't were familiar with each other's work.

Donald Byrd and Hank Mobley had played together in the Jazz Messengers and John Coltrane, Paul Chambers, and Philly Joe Jones represent, numerically, a majority vote in the Miles Davis quintet. Elmo Hope and Joe are old buddies, having played together in Joe Morris's band and in countless sessions, then and since.

No introductions were necessary between the players but to you, the audience, it would be an oversight if they were omitted.

Elmo Hope, the nominal leader on the date, is a native New Yorker who grew up with Bud Powell. With the Joe Morris band in the Forties, Elmo has done mostly freelance playing in the Fifties, appearing occasionally with Dud Bascomb. Other Prestige LPs: 7021 (*Hope Meets Foster*), 7035 (Jackie McLean *Lights Out*), 7010 (*Meditations*, Elmo Hope Trio).


PRESTIGE LP 7043 HI FI

INFORMAL JAZZ

THE ELMO HOPE SEXTET

Elmo Hope: piano Donald Byrd: trumpet Hank Mobley: tenor sax
John Coltrane: tenor sax Paul Chambers: bass Philly Joe Jones: Drums

WEEJA POLKA DOT and MOONBEAMS ON IT AVALON

PRESTIGE LP 7043 HI FI

Donald Byrd is another of the recent Detroit imports to New York. Still in his early twenties. Donald studied at famed Cass Tech High in Detroit and continued at the Manhattan School in New York. He first appeared with George Wallington at Café Bohemia in 1955 and later replaced Kenny Dorham in the Jazz Messengers. Other Prestige LPs: 7035 (Jackie McLean *Lights Out*), 7032 (George Wallington).

Henry "Hank" Mobley was born in Georgia but raised in New Jersey. Played with Paul Gayton's r&b band but first attracted attention with Max Roach's combo in the early Fifties. After playing with Dizzy Gillespie for most of 1954, he joined Horace Silver's quartet late in that year. This group evolved into the Jazz Messengers of which Hank was a regular member until he left midway in 1956.

John Coltrane is from Philadelphia. Born in North Carolina, he moved to the Quaker City at an early age. In that city he studied at both the Granoff and Ornstein music schools. "Trane," as he is known, played with Eddie Vinson in 1947-48, Dizzy Gillespie 1949-51, Earl Bostic 1952-53, Johnny Hodges 1953-54, and has been with Miles Davis since 1955. Other Prestige LPs: 7014 (Miles Davis).

Paul Chambers. Born in Pittsburgh but spent most of his life in Detroit before coming to New York in 1954. Worked with Bennie Green, Jay and Kai and George Wallington. With Miles Davis group since 1955. Considered to be *the* new star on his instrument, Paul is equally adept at plucked or bowed solos. Two of the latter are his contributions in this set. Other Prestige LPs: 7014 (Miles Davis), 7052 (Bennie Green).

Philly Joe Jones is, as you've surmised, from the City of Brotherly Love. As mentioned before, he was with Elmo in Joe Morris's band. Joe came to prominence in the Fifties with Tony Scott's combo and Tadd Dameron's band. Since late 1955 he has been swinging the Miles Davis quintet along with Chambers. Other Prestige LPs: 7017 (Art Farmer), 7014 (Miles Davis).

In keeping with the informal format, the tunes are mainly vehicles for blowing. The two originals "Weeja" and "On It" are by Elmo. Both are riffers which expedite the blowing. "Weeja" has everyone "confirming" Bird's word and "On It" is a blues. "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" has that after a love affair feeling—a kind of reminiscing over what no longer is but how wonderful were those moments, nevertheless. "Avalon" lends itself to swinging admirably. "Weeja" and "On It" revive the tenor battle which died when Sonny Stitt and Gene Ammons broke up. It's still a stimulating tournament and Hank and Trane make it interesting because although they are both in a general idiom they are as different as two men in a similar area can be.

Solo order:

"Weeja"—Opening riff (Hank, Donald, Trane (bridge), Hank); Donald (4); Hank (2); Trane (2); Hank (1); Trane (1); Hank (1); Trane (1); Elmo (3); Chambers (2); Donald, Hank, Trane in fours with Joe (1); Joe (1); out chorus in same order as opener.

"Polka Dots and Moonbeams"—Donald (first 16); Hank (bridge); Donald (last 8); Elmo (1); Trane (first 16); Donald (bridge and last 8); Hank (first 16); Elmo (bridge); Donald (last 6).

"On It"—Donald (8); Elmo (8); Hank (3); Trane (3); then 2 choruses each, followed by 1 chorus each, 2 choruses of "fours," 2 of "twos" and another of "fours." Hank is first at the beginning of the conversations.

"Avalon"—Hank (1); Elmo (4); Hank (4); Donald (4); Trane (4); Chambers (1); Joe (1); Hank (melody with Donald in back). Note also Joe's powerful brush work behind Elmo and the breaks in rhythm in the second and third choruses of Hank's, Donald's and Trane's solos.

—Ira Gitler

These notes appeared on the original album Informal Jazz.

ELMO HOPE

Ray Avery/CTS Images

SONNY ROLLINS QUARTET: TENOR MADNESS

Prestige 7047
Released: 1956

SIDE ONE

MY REVERIE
PAUL'S PAL

SIDE TWO

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD
WHEN YOUR LOVER HAS GONE
[2/1] **TENOR MADNEES**

One of the greatest contributors to the advancement of the career of Sonny Rollins has been Miles Davis. Before Sonny was known beyond the circle of musicians in New York, Miles gave him his biggest opportunities by employing him on many of his recording dates.

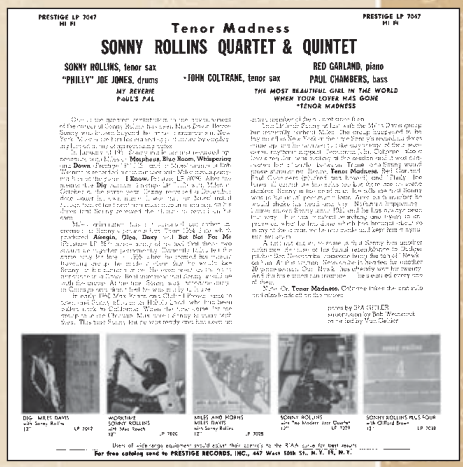
In January of 1951 Sonny made his first recorded appearance with Miles on "Morpheus," "Blue Room," "Whispering," and "Down" (Prestige LP 7025), and at Miles's urging of Bob Weinstock recorded a solo number with Miles accompanying him at the piano ("I Know," Prestige LP 7029). After the memorable *Dig* session (Prestige LP 7012) with Miles in October of the same year, Sonny recorded a December date under his own name. It was through Miles's initial recognition of his talent and insistence in using him on his dates that Sonny received the chance to record on his own.

Miles's admiration has not subsided but rather increased as Sonny's prowess has. Their 1954 date which produced "Airegin," "Oleo," "Doxy," and "But Not for Me" (Prestige LP 187) made many of us feel that these two should be together permanently. Evidently Miles felt the same way for late in 1955, when he formed his current traveling group, he made it clear that

he would like Sonny as his running mate. He even went as far as to announce in a *Down Beat* interview that Sonny would be with the group. At the time Sonny was "woodshedding" in Chicago and didn't feel he was ready to leave.

In early 1956 Max Roach and Clifford Brown came to town and Sonny filled in for Harold Land, who had been called back to California. When the time came for the group to leave Chicago, Max asked Sonny to come with them. This time Sonny felt he was ready and has been an active member of the quintet since then.

The LP finds Sonny at last with the Miles Davis group but ironically without Miles. The group happened to be laying off in New York at the time Sonny's recording dates came up and he decided to take advantage of their wonderful rhythmic support. Tenorman John Coltrane, also a Davis regular, was visiting at the session and it was suggested that a "battle" between "Trane" and Sonny would prove stimulating. Hence, "Tenor Madness." Red Garland, Paul Chambers (plucked and bowed), and "Philly" Joe Jones all contribute fine solos too but there are no scene stealers. Sonny is the head man. Joe tells me that Sonny was in his usual pessimistic form. After each number he would shake his head and say "Nothing's happening." I have known Sonny since 1951 and he has always been this way. It is this constant searching and trying to improve on what he has done which has brought about so many of the advances he has made and kept him a dynamic musician.


PRESTIGE LP 7047
HI FI

Tenor Madness

SONNY ROLLINS QUARTET & QUINTET

SONNY ROLLINS, tenor sax
"PHILLY" JOE JONES, drums
MY REVERIE
PAUL'S PAL

JOHN COLTRANE, tenor sax

RED GARLAND, piano
PAUL CHAMBERS, bass
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD
WHEN YOUR LOVER HAS GONE
TENOR MADNESS

A fact not known to some is that Sonny has another nickname. Because of his facial resemblance to Dodger pitcher Don Newcombe, someone hung the tag of "Newk" on him. At this writing, Newcombe is headed for another 20-game season. Our "Newk" has already won his 20. And dig his earned run average . . . he's earned every one of them.

Note: On "Tenor Madness," Coltrane takes the first solo and also leads off on the chases.

—Ira Gitler
These notes appeared on the original album Tenor Madness.

JOHN COLTRANE WITH TADD DAMERON: MATING CALL

Prestige 7070
Released: 1956

SIDE ONE

[1/5] **MATING CALL**
[1/7] **GNID**
[1/6] **SOULTRANE**

SIDE TWO

[1/9] **ON A MISTY NIGHT**
[1/10] **ROMAS**
[1/8] **SUPER JET**

The last time Tadd Dameron appeared on record was on his own *Fontainebleau* (Prestige LP 7037). There were eight pieces in the group and the main effort was the title composition with Tadd's arranging talent coming strongly to the fore. While there are only four men present for this session and arranging is certainly not stressed, Tadd's composing is as potent as ever with such memorable items as "Mating Call," "Soultrane," "Gnid," and "On a Misty Night" far above the usual "originals" that often appear on a recording date.

To play these compositions, the aid of tenorman John Coltrane was enlisted. Trane's tenor answered the mating call of Tadd's music.

Many of you know Tadd through his work for and with Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan among others in the Forties, the small group he led in 1948 and the results of these associations which have endured on record. Born in Cleveland in 1917, Tadd was, to me, *the* arranger of the new movement of the Forties. In his compositions today you can hear the best of the melodic from the Thirties and Forties coupled to the harmonies of the Forties which he was instrumental in forming and utilizing. He has always known how to pick musicians of caliber and has fostered their careers by featuring them. Outstanding examples are Fats Navarro and Allen Eager in 1948 and Clifford Brown in 1953. Here it is the tenor sax of John Coltrane.

John William Coltrane was born in Hamlet, North Carolina on September 23, 1926. From an early age he heard music around the house as his father, a tailor by profession, played several instruments in his spare time. Trane's first instrument was the Eb alto horn which was followed by the clarinet. In high school he moved to the saxophone and later, in Philadelphia, studied at the Granoff Studios and the Ornstein School of Music. In the Quaker City he made his professional debut in 1945 but soon entered the Navy and was stationed eventually with a Navy band in Hawaii through 1946. After his discharge, Trane traveled with the Eddie Vinson band in 1947 and 1948. Then he joined Dizzy Gillespie's big band on alto in 1949. When Diz disbanded early in 1950 to form a small combo, Trane switched to tenor and remained until 1951. Then it was back to the rhythm and blues trail with Earl Bostic in 1952 and 1953 but in the latter year he left to join Johnny Hodges. The Rabbit was his leader through 1954. It wasn't until he joined Miles Davis's newly formed quintet late in 1955 that Trane began to receive some recognition. From his employment record you can see that he did not appear on the scene full blown. It is rather a matter of dues which he has been paying for a while. The past year with Miles has been invaluable to his development and that growing process has speeded considerably as the year progressed.

Trane's admitted favorites on tenor are Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, and Stan Getz. The first two show up strongest in his style. He sculpts a line in the Stittian manner with personal turns of phrase and his scooping of sustained notes is reminiscent of Dexter Gordon in the mid-Forties. His upper register sound is similar, too, to the way Gordon wailed (literal not colloquial jazz meaning) his higher notes.

Trane is a searcher who is not afraid to essay new combinations of notes when performing publicly. He listens to what is going on behind him and does not play by rote. As they say in the Theatre, "He reacts." This is why his playing is deep with emotion, conveyed by a sound much like the human voice.

Tadd's intelligent comping, the strength of veteran John Simmons's bass and the brightly burning power of the consistent Philly Joe Jones adds up to solid sum that is the rhythm section.

Each track has something to offer: the exotic "Mating Call," the aptly named ballad that is "Soultrane," the acrid, tart, stimulating "Gnid," the bright-tempoed "Super Jet," the sad/happy charm of "On a Misty Night," and the creeping funk of the blues "Romas."

—Ira Gitler
These notes appeared on the original album Mating Call.

MAL WALDRON: MAL/2

Prestige 7111
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[2/8] **FROM THIS MOMENT ON**
[2/4] **DON'T EXPLAIN**
[2/7] **THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT**

SIDE TWO

[2/9] **ONE BY ONE**
[2/3] **J.M.'s DREAM DOLL**
[2/2] **POTPOURRI**

This is *Mal/2*, a further exploration of the talent that is Mal Waldron's.

Here, the groups employed are sextets rather than a quintet as was used in *Mal-1* (Prestige LP 7090). In addition to Mal, there are some other returnees from the first album. Trumpeter Idrees Sulieman is in one of the sextets and bassist Julian Euell in both.

In *Mal*/2, Waldron has done three standards, not often recorded, which he had become attached to. Originals have not been neglected either but where *Mal-1* featured all original material, *Mal*/2 is an even mixture of three standards and three originals. Tempo played an important part in Mal's choosing of the material in both areas.

Side A contains the standards.

"From This Moment On," as arranged by Mal, has its melody sharply defined as it is fenced in by accents of the rhythm section. The separation between rhythm and horns is similar to Mal's usage in his "Bud Study" of *Mal-1*. The result is a highly charged atmosphere that heightens the straight swinging improvised section. Swingers are Coltrane, Shihab, Sulieman, and Waldron.

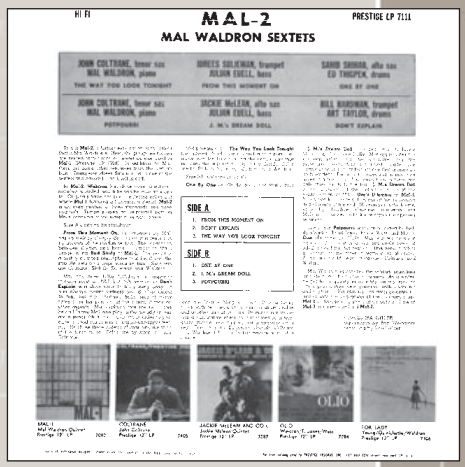
Mal has been Billie Holiday's accompanist through most of 1957 but this version of "Don't Explain" was done prior to his joining Lady. It has always meant sadness and disillusionment to him but after hearing Billie sing it many times from his position at the piano, it took on other aspects. Mal explains that the two notes he had Jackie McLean play in the melody chorus are a minor 7th and a major 7th in order to produce a good major-minor (happy-unhappy) feeling. He chose these instead of changing the third of the tonic chord. Solos are by Hardman and Coltrane.

Mal's treatment of "The Way You Look Tonight" has altered chord changes and a four part harmony with the bass playing the bottom line that includes the important roots of the chords. Solos are by Shihab, Sulieman, Coltrane, and Waldron.

Side B houses the originals.

"One By One" recalls the feeling of Mal's days with the Charlie Mingus group. It is a funky blues with two units of 16 bars, a drum bridge and another unit of 16 bars. Its minor key theme has a cumulative effect as it is stated in a telegraph manner like tapping out a message on a key. The solos by Sulieman, Shihab, Coltrane, and Waldron follow a 16-bar pattern without a bridge.

"J.M.'s Dream Doll" is a dedication to Jackie McLean and his wife Dolly. Mal appreciates the romantic relationship the two have; they are more like lovers than a married couple. The composition is a waltz but not one that is immediately evident. The way the bass and drums walk gives it a feeling of four even though there are only three beats to the bar. "J.M.'s Dream Doll" is an outgrowth of the feeling in some of the waltz section of Mal's "Dee's Dilemma" in *Mal-1*. It has two key centers, D minor at the beginning and G minor at the end. McLean plays the theme; solos by Waldron, Coltrane, Hardman, and McLean follow before Jackie re-states the opening segment.



The closer, "Potpourri," was first recorded by Teddy Charles, Thad Jones, Frank Wess, and Mal in *Olio* (Prestige LP 7084). Mal wanted to do it again and since it is a fast and lively piece, it filled a need for this session. This version offers a contrast to the other in terms of tonal colors. Solos are by McLean, Hardman, Coltrane, and Waldron.

Mal Waldron epitomizes the serious, searching attitude of our best young jazzmen. As a writer, he produces quality in quantity; as a player he offers provocative new patterns, both harmonic and rhythmic. His playing and arrangements together with the solo power of the hornmen make *Mal*/2 a diverse and stimulating outing. I await *Mal/3* as eagerly as I did *Mal*/2.

—Ira Gitler

These notes appeared on the original album Mal/2.

THE RED GARLAND QUINTET: ALL MORNIN' LONG

Prestige 7130
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[4/1] **ALL MORNING LONG**
[3/2] **THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME**

SIDE TWO

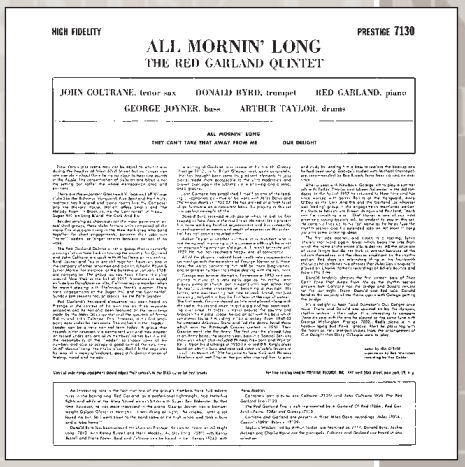
[3/1] **OUR DELIGHT**

New York's jazz scene may not be equal to what it was during the heyday of West 52nd Street, but no longer can one complain about there being no place to hear live sounds in the Apple. The concentration of clubs on one block is not the setting but rather the whole metropolitan area and environs.

There are the important Greenwich Village and off Village clubs like the Bohemia, Vanguard, Five Spot, and Half Note; midtown has Birdland and piano rooms like the Composer and the Hickory House; Harlem offers Small's and the Melody Room; in Brooklyn, it's the Continental; in Newark, Sugar Hill; on Long Island, the Cork and Bib.

Besides serving as showcases for the more permanent, established groups, these clubs feature units composed of the many fine musicians living in the New York area who band together for short engagements, between their jobs with "name" leaders, or longer tenures between periods of no work.

The Red Garland Quintet is not a group that is currently playing clubs in New York or touring the country, for Garland and John Coltrane are back with Miles Davis at this writing. Byrd, Joyner, and Taylor are still together, however, and in the company of other tenormen and pianists (Charlie Rouse and Junior Mance, for instance, at the Bohemia in January 1958) are carrying on. The group, as you hear it here, did play around New York in the fall of 1957. Sometimes it would include Lou Donaldson on alto; Coltrane was a member when he wasn't playing with Thelonious Monk's quartet. There were engagements at the Sugar Hill and the Continental; Sunday jam sessions too, at places like the Palm Garden.


HIGH FIDELITY PRESTIGE 7130

ALL MORNIN' LONG
THE RED GARLAND QUINTET

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

ALL MORNIN' LONG
THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME OUR DELIGHT

Red Garland's keyboard eloquence has been heard on Prestige in the context of his own trio on three separate occasions and he has also been featured on the recordings made by the Miles Davis quintet and the quartets of Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane. This, however, is his first small band date under his own name. This makes him the "leader." Leader can be a very nominal term today. A group that records is not necessarily a permanent unit and may appear on record under any one of its members' names, but it is still the responsibility of the "leader" to choose some of the numbers and also to occupy a good part of the solo time. In *All Mornin' Long*, the titular blues, Red fills the requisites by way of a many-splendored, deep-dish demonstration of feeling, mood, and melody.

In writing of Garland in a review of his trio LP, *Groovy* (Prestige 7113), critic Ralph Gleason said, quite accurately, "He has brought back some long absent elements to jazz piano, made them acceptable to the ultra-modernists and proven again the sublime virtue of swing and a solid, deep groove."

John Coltrane has established himself as one of the leading saxophonists by virtue of his work with Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk in 1956-57. He has arrived at a high level of performance on a consistent basis; his playing in this set is a perfect example of this.

Donald Byrd received much praise when he did his first playing in New York in the mid-Fifties. He never let it prevent him from working hard at improvement and has constantly moved upward in means and depth of expression. His potential has not been exhausted either.

Above: Later pressings of All Mornin' Long *featured a different layout for the front cover.*

Arthur Taylor is another example of a musician who is mellowing and improving with experience although he is not yet approaching any ripe old age; A.T. won't be 30 until 1959. He, too, has reached a happy level of consistency.

All of the players involved have made many appearances on Prestige with the exception of George Joyner and, therefore, the words concerning him will be more biographical and of greater number than those dealing with the returnees.

George was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1932 and was started in music at a very early age by his mother who played piano at church, but it wasn't until high school that he really became interested in becoming a musician. His father, who was teaching him how to cook (literal, not jazz meaning), helped him buy his first bass at

RED GARLAND

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

the age of 16. The first week, George stayed up late and played along with the radio; the second week he got a gig and has been working ever since. In order to travel around the country and broaden his musical scope, he did an act with his bass which sometimes found him riding it like a jockey. From 1949 to '52 he attended Arkansas State and led the dance band there which won the Pittsburgh Courier contest in 1951. Then George went into the Army. The first year he played tuba in the Army band; the second year, bass in a Special Services show unit which also included Phineas Newborn and Wynton Kelly. Upon his discharge in 1955 he joined B.B. King's blues band on electric bass and received some valuable lessons in "soul." In March of 1956 he came to New York with Phineas Newborn and met Charlie Mingus who inspired him to play and study by lending him a bass to replace the beat-up one he had been using. George's studies with Michael Krasnapolsky, recommended by Ray Brown, have been carried on ever since.

After a year with Newborn, George left to play a summer job with Teddy Charles and Idrees Sulieman in the Adirondacks. In the fall of 1957 he returned to New York and has since worked with Sonny Rollins at the Vanguard, Anita O'Day at the Cork and Bib, and the Garland (or whoever was leading) group in the engagements mentioned earlier. His favorite bassists are Brown, Mingus, and Pettiford, "each one for something else." That Joyner is one of our most promising young bassists will be evident to you in this set. He certainly lives up to his last name as he helps fuse the rhythm section and his extended solo on "All Morning Long" presents some arresting ideas.

The first side opener, and closer, is a rocking, funky (there's that word again) blues which bears the title from which the name of the entire album derives. All the solos are of some length but do not lack in interest because of the soloists themselves and the devices employed by the rhythm section. Red does an interesting thing in his 14th chorus as he combines two phrases that Miles Davis originally played on Charlie Parker's recordings of "Billie's Bounce" and "Now's the Time."

Donald tenderly phrases the first 16 bars of "They Can't Take That Away from Me" as the rhythm section answers him. Coltrane has the bridge and Donald returns for the last eight. Trane, Donald, and Red solo; Donald handles the majority of the theme again with George getting the bridge.

It's a delight to hear Tadd Dameron's "Our Delight" once more. Trane and Donald are spurred on by the dynamic rhythm section in their solos. It is interesting to compare Donald's solo with the one he played on the same tune with George Wallington (Prestige 7032). Red's piano is in a hard-swinging Bud Powell groove. Then he plays tag with the horns as they interject strains from the arrangement of "Our Delight" that Dizzy Gillespie used to play.

—Ira Gitler

These notes appeared on the original album All Mornin' Long.

GENE AMMONS' ALL STARS: THE BIG SOUND

Prestige 7132
Released: 1958

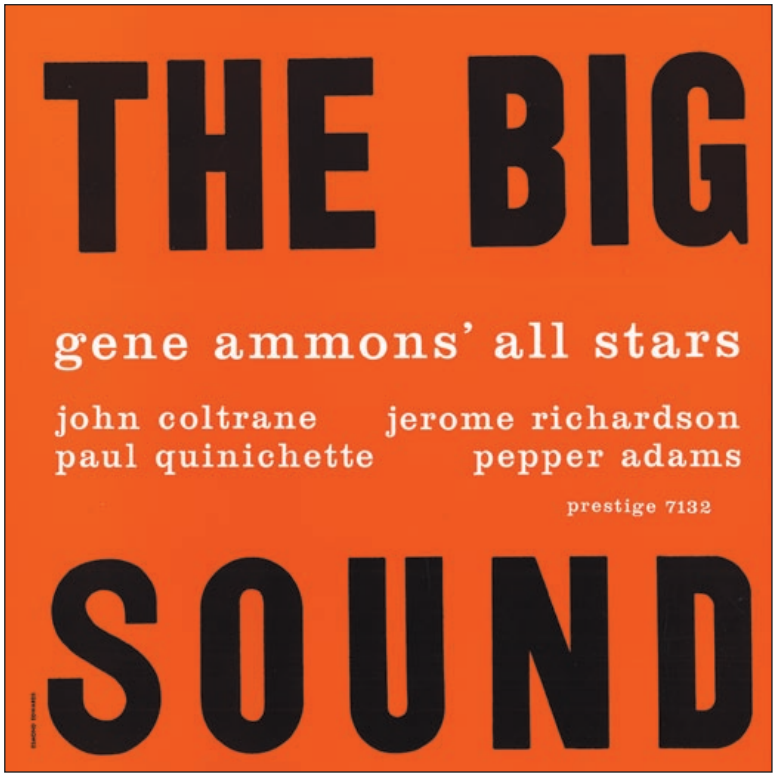
SIDE ONE

BLUE HYMN
CHEEK TO CHEEK

[5/8]

SIDE TWO

THE REAL McCOY
THAT'S ALL



Since Gene Ammons makes his home base Chicago, a plane trip for the express purpose of recording is involved any time he is summoned by Prestige. On the particular day that the above numbers were taped, Gene was supposed to arrive at Prestige before noon but he hadn't gotten there by the time the rest of the group was assembled to leave for Van Gelder's in New Jersey. As Mal Waldron had written charts for tenor, alto, baritone, and flute, Bob Weinstock felt that it would be a good thing to go ahead with the date if a suitable replacement for Gene could be located on short notice. Paul Quinichette was available and reported immediately. Shortly thereafter Gene appeared on the scene. It was then decided that Paul should be incorporated into the proceedings anyway.

Two sessions were taped. The rhythm section of Waldron, George Joyner, and Arthur Taylor backed a front line of Ammons, Pepper Adams, John Coltrane, and Jerome Richardson in the first with Quinichette heard in solo but not in the ensemble. The second date, done immediately after, had just Gene and Jerome combining their diverse sounds in front of the same rhythm section. "The Real McCoy" and "That's All" are from session one; "Blue Hymn" and "Cheek to Cheek" from the second. The other tunes will be issued in subsequent albums.

In reference to diverse sounds, this LP runs the sound range from baritone to flute with alto and tenor saxophones in between. Of course you could pit Charlie Ventura's bass sax against Paul Horn's piccolo (darn, I've gone and given some A&R man a dandy idea) but the range here is wide enough.

At the bottom end of the sound ladder is Pepper Adams, a jazzman from Detroit who captured the attention of critics on both coasts in 1957 (sufficiently so to win the new star award on his instrument in the *Down Beat* Critics' Poll) while with the bands of Stan Kenton and Maynard Ferguson. Pepper believes in playing the baritone as a baritone. This and his swinging approach to modern themes has brought him further acceptance from a growing audience in 1958 including the one which enjoyed his own quintet at the Five Spot in lower Manhattan.

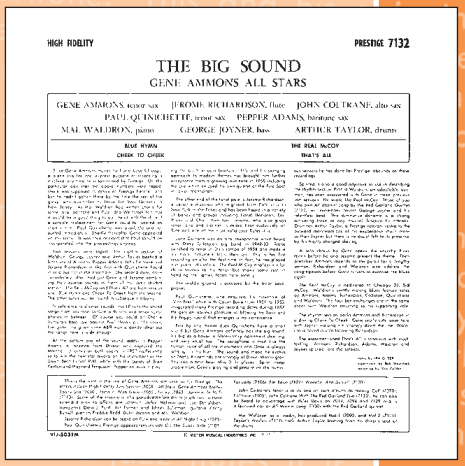
The other end of the tonal pole is Jerome Richardson, a versatile musician who migrated from California to New York in the Fifties and has been heard in a variety of bands and groups including Lionel Hampton, Earl Hines, and Chico Hamilton. Jerome, who also plays tenor, alto, and clarinet, is heard here exclusively on flute and one of the most valid jazz flutes it is.

John Coltrane was an alto saxophonist when heard with Dizzy Gillespie's big band in 1949-50. Trane switched to tenor in Diz's combo of 1951 and made it his main instrument from then on. This is his first recording on alto, the first time, in fact, he has played it in years. His solo on "The Real McCoy" displays similar characteristics to his tenor but shows some rust in handling the lighter, faster horn tonally.

The middle ground is occupied by the tenor saxophones.

Paul Quinichette, who acquired his nickname of "Vice-Pres" while with Count Basie from 1951 to 1953, invigorated many Prestige recording dates during 1957. He gets an obvious pleasure in blowing his horn and the happy sound that emerges is no coincidence.

Not by any means does Quinichette have a small sound but Gene Ammons definitely has the big sound. It's big as a house, a fifteen story apartment dwelling, and very vocal too. The saxophone is most like the human voice of all the instruments and Gene is always singing on his horn. The sound and mood he evokes on "That's All" reminds one strongly of Dinah Washington. You can almost hear Miss D. in places. Spirit, inseparable from Gene's playing and present on the numerous sessions he has done for Prestige, abounds on these recordings.


HIGH FIDELITY PRESTIGE 7132

THE BIG SOUND
GENE AMMONS ALL STARS

GENE AMMONS, tenor sax JEROME RICHARDSON, flute JOHN COLTRANE, alto sax
PAUL QUINICHETTE, tenor sax PEPPER ADAMS, baritone sax
MAL WALDRON, piano GEORGE JOYNER, bass ARTHUR TAYLOR, drums

BLUE HYMN
CHEEK TO CHEEK

THE REAL McCOY
THAT'S ALL

Spirited is also a good adjective to use in describing the rhythm section. Pianist Waldron, an adaptable jazzman, has been associated with Gene in three previous jam sessions. He wrote "The Real McCoy." Those of you who own *All Mornin' Long* by the Red Garland Quintet (7130) will remember bassist George Joyner and his relentless beat. This diminutive dynamo is a strong activating force at any musical function he attends. Drummer Arthur Taylor, a Prestige veteran, restrains the outward manifestations of his exuberance much more so than Joyner but there is no doubt left to its presence by his highly charged playing.

A solo chorus by Gene opens the churchy "Blues Hymn" before he and Jerome present the theme. Then preacher Ammons ascends to the pulpit for a lengthy ser-

mon, Richardson and Waldron also address the congregation before Gene returns to exorcise the blues again.

"The Real McCoy" is dedicated to Chicago DJ, Sid McCoy. Waldron's swiftly moving blues feature solos by Ammons, Adams, Richardson, Coltrane, Quinichette, and Waldron. The four-bar exchanges are in the same order with Waldron returning to his supporting role.

The rhythm section backs Ammons and Richardson in a driving "Cheek to Cheek." Gene really cuts loose here with Joyner walking him strongly down the line. Waldron is heard in solo following Richardson.

The aforementioned "That's All" is rendered with much feeling. Ammons, Richardson, Adams, Waldron, and Joyner (picked) are the soloists.

—Ira Gitler
These notes appeared on the original album The Big Sound.

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

GENE AMMONS

THE RED GARLAND QUINTET: SOUL JUNCTION

Prestige 7181
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[3/6] **SOUL JUNCTION**
[3/3] **WOODY'N YOU**

SIDE TWO

[3/8] **BIRK'S WORKS**
[3/4] **I'VE GOT IT BAD**
[3/9] **HALLELUJAH**

In the early Fifties, Luckey Roberts ran an after-hours club in Harlem. Luckey had been the dean of New York ragtime 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 Marmaroso 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.


HIGH FIDELITY PRESTIGE 7181

SOUL JUNCTION
RED GARLAND QUINTET
featuring
JOHN COLTRANE AND DONALD BYRD

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

DONALD BYRD

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

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.

"Birk's Works" is a favorite of Red. "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 Soul Junction.

GENE AMMONS AND HIS ALL STARS: GROOVE BLUES

Prestige 7201
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[5/6] **AMMON JOY**
[5/7] **GROOVE BLUES**

SIDE TWO

JUG HANDLE
[5/9] **IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING**

By now, it's a cliché to state that the recorded jam session has largely superseded those which once took place before the public. But a fact that has not been noticed is that these recorded sessions sometimes serve similar purposes to their more romanticized predecessors. You can, on occasion, hear nostalgic moldy fig types talking about the old days at Condon's—"Remember all the guys who jammed there"—and of course, there is Minton's, and the sessions there that gave birth to a new music.

No matter what future course jazz should take, it is very possible that no one will ever wax nostalgic over his beer late at night and say, "Remember those Gene Ammons jam sessions at Van Gelder's? Remember all the guys who came up that way?" But even though that may never happen, there would be a good deal of justice if it did.

There is a certain valuable comparison between sessions such as the Ammons ones for Prestige and a development that has recently occurred in motion pictures. In the old days, young actors would tour in summer stock companies, or work in local repertory theaters. But now the young actors, like the young musicians, know that, if they ever hope to make it, they have to be in New York. So the repertory companies have largely been replaced by such television dramatic shows employing meaty parts for bit players as *Naked City*, and the "two week quickies" such as *Mad Dog Call* that are shot on location in the New York streets. Whatever their ultimate dramatic value, these productions will someday serve as an invaluable source of insight into the early work of several young performers who may someday be among our finest and most important actors.

In his notes for the earlier album to be released from this session (*The Big Sound*, Prestige 7132), Ira Gitler remarked, "Some of the musicians who paraded before the microphones in these extended blowing affairs are altomen Jackie McLean and Lou Donaldson; trumpeters Donald Byrd, Art Farmer, and Idrees Sulieman; guitarist Kenny Burrell; pianists Freddie Redd, Duke Jordan, and Mal Waldron." The list is impressive enough. It might be even more impressive if it included such unassailable names as Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and Milt Jackson, but it should be remembered that they jammed at Van Gelder's themselves, one day in 1954 when their worth was still largely suspect.


HIGH FIDELITY PRESTIGE 7201

GROOVE BLUES
GENE AMMONS
With
THE ALL STARS

Of all the musicians on this LP, perhaps the one who has gone farthest is John Coltrane. This year, 1961, is Coltrane's year. In the *Down Beat* critics' poll just out, Coltrane picked up three first place trophies: Tenor Sax; New Star Combo; and New Star Miscellaneous Instrument (soprano sax). On this LP, he performs a fourth, and rarely-heard function: he plays alto sax. To my knowledge, the two albums resulting from this session are the only recorded examples of his work on the instrument. A few days ago, pianist Mal Waldron recalled the date, and noted that unlike many men who play several horns and tend to allow the instrument to shape their conceptions so that their ideas vary from instrument to instrument, Coltrane on tenor equals Coltrane on soprano equals Coltrane on alto. John's conviction in his conception is so strong that it carries through identically no matter what horn he chooses. These solos are, I think, some of his very best on any horn: the by now well-known Colrane fury and intensity is present throughout most of the record, and "It Might as Well Be Spring," made at a time when most critics felt he did not know how to play ballads, is one of his more moving efforts in that area. (Historical note: Coltrane recorded on an instrument belonging to amateur altoist Ira Gitler, who would probably not quarrel with the opinion that no better use has ever been made of his horn.)

The organizing force behind this session was Waldron, who plays so well and, often, as unobtrusively, that his unusually high degree of logical flow tends to be overlooked. He is at present, one of jazz's utility outfielders; he can be depended upon to contribute greatly to any musical situation, and has pulled many out of the mud when they might otherwise have been a shambles. The musicians themselves know just how valuable a man he is, and it is to be hoped that the recognition which has somehow, until now, never been widespread, will come to Mal, as it has to Coltrane. Three of four tracks here are Waldron originals; at least one of them, "Ammon Joy," which Mal now uses as a trio piece, is an exceptional composition, deserving to enter the books of several groups.

One could go on at length about the other musicians, but there are limitations of space. Jerome Richardson, another "utility man" because of his skill on several instruments; Paul Quinichette, best of the Lester Young styled tenors; Pepper Adams, one of the few to make any modern contribution to the baritone. And,

JEROME RICHARDSON

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

since we are playing "Where Are They Now?," bassist George Joyner is in Africa, and drummer Arthur Taylor is in Europe.

But this is, after all, a Gene Ammons album, and even though countless words have been written about him, a few are in order. In the minds of many critics and fans, Ammons is neither fish nor fowl. Some people consider him to be far and away the best of the rhythm-and-blues tenormen. If there is guilt by association, which unfortunately there is, there should also be innocence by association, and the musicians with whom Ammons has surrounded himself on this date should be enough to dispel the rhythm-and-blues label. As far as the other part of the indictment goes, labels are to be detested anyway, but it is observable that if more fashionable tenormen play occasionally what Ammons plays all the time, they are praised for their extraordinary "soul." So much I think, for that.

But, whatever one's preference in musical styles, there is one aspect of Ammons's music that is very difficult to fault; his way of playing a ballad. "Soulful" is, I suppose, the word, and that is unfortunate, because of some of the adverse connotations that word has come to have, but Ammons is not responsible for what the word has come to mean (and neither, thank God, am I), so let it stand. This particular performance of "It Might as Well Be Spring" is one of his best ballads, and one small bit is of special interest: Ammons's paraphrase of Charlie Parker's paraphrase of "Embraceable You." The two other musicians singled out for special mention, Coltrane and Waldron, also turn in some of their best work to contribute to the success of the track. Mal also, is a ballad player to contend with.

Most of the rest of the album is concerned with "cooking." Musicians like to "get in there and cook," and not all of them can do it, but it should also be recognized that rhythm is only one of the three elements of music, and cooking alone is never enough. The highest temperature on the set is probably that generated by Pepper Adams over the background riffs in "Ammon Joy," but there are several purely musical moments of considerable value to be found throughout the set. Not all of it is of uniform excellence, of course; such albums never are. But there are enough excellent moments to make the set worth anyone's while; enough to take it out of the historical category into which I have perhaps unjustly forced it and make it enjoyable for what it was intended to be at the time it was made. Either way, everyone involved can be satisfied.

—Joe Goldberg
These notes appeared on the original album Groove Blues.

THE RED GARLAND QUINTET: HIGH PRESSURE

Prestige 7209
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[4/5] **SOFT WINDS**
[4/3] **SOLITUDE**

SIDE TWO

[3/5] **UNDECIDED**
[3/7] **WHAT IS THERE TO SAY**
[4/4] **TWO BASS HIT**

Recordings have come to loom as so great a part of the jazz business that it is possible that, at some future time, the greatest praise might be reserved for groups which have never actually worked together on an on-the-job basis in clubs. One still treasures, however, the jazz aphorism about the indefinable chemistry which a unit assembled purely for recording purposes is likely to lack. There have, though, been notable exceptions. The great Louis Armstrong Hot Five was primarily a recording band. And, to take an example much closer to the men on this album, was the legendary nine piece group led by Miles Davis in the late Forties, even though it did work for two weeks at the Royal Roost. Those recordings, to bolster the point, have been given a disproportionately important position in Miles's total work by some European critics who do not have the opportunity to follow Davis's career in public performance. And the classic example of a successful recording unit is, of course, the Davis-Monk-Jackson session for Prestige.

Often, in a recording situation such as this one, the designation of leader is a purely arbitrary one to be proven most conclusively by who takes the leader's check home at the end of the day. Red Garland, the leader here, is not accustomed to being at the helm of a post-bop quintet. His closest approximation to the circumstances here was the time spent in the greatest of the Miles Davis quintets, when the other horn was, of course, the tenor saxophonist featured here, John Coltrane. He has, however, recorded on several occasions with bassist George Joyner and drummer Arthur Taylor, so the vital rhythm section rapport which is the basis of any good jazz record does exist. The greatest deference paid to Garland as leader here is in the matter of routining. It is customary in such groups, for the piano solo to follow the horns, but on all numbers here except "Two Bass Hit," Garland solos first. This is not as simple a switch as, on first thought, it appears to be. If musicians have any kind of empathy at all, they will react to one another, so that the man who takes the initial solo, and thereby sets the groove, has the job of establishing the tone of the piece. On the Miles quintet records, Red, in almost all instances, played cleanup man for two of the most searingly original of contemporary horns, Davis and Coltrane. Here, it is his somewhat more difficult job to set the pace for Coltrane and Donald Byrd. If the shadow of Davis lies over this record, as it inevitably will whenever any of his past or present sidemen record, the man who gives this record its unique, non-Davis flavor is Donald Byrd.

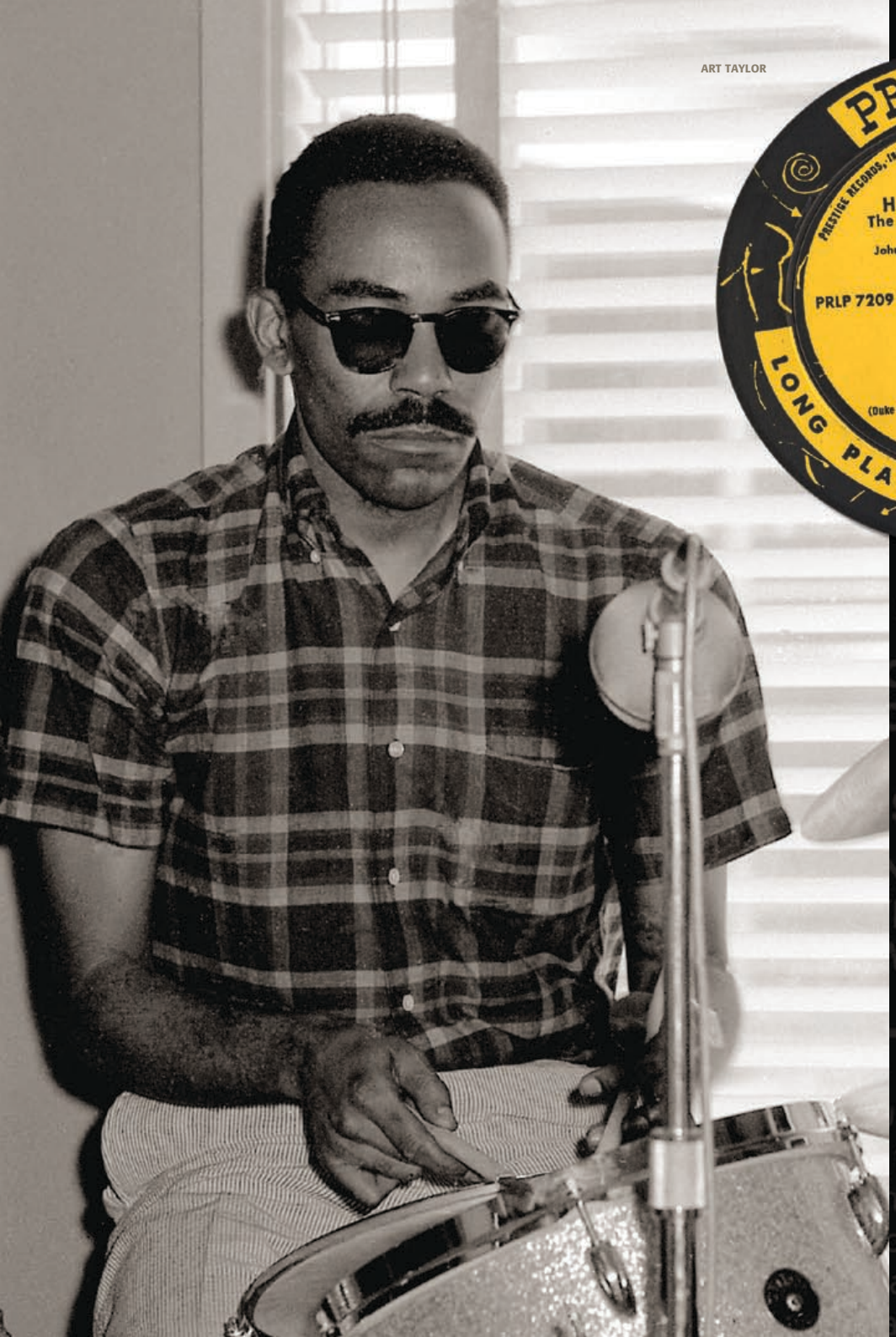
Some writers have ventured the opinion that the present style of trumpet playing dominated by Davis was originally the result of players, overpowered by the pervasive influence of Charlie Parker, trying to get a closer approximation of a saxophone sound on their horns. Whether or not the reason is accurate, the tendency exists, and it is a tendency shared less by Donald Byrd every time he is heard. On this album, he has a full, open brass sound which Richard Williams is one of the few younger trumpeters to share, and gives the entire set a much less introspective cast than it might otherwise have had. Byrd, when he first came to New York as part of the general emigration from Detroit that took place in the mid-Fifties, was probably touted much more highly than he deserved at the time. Such premature attention has been the near-disaster of many good jazzmen, but the aural evidence is that Byrd took it in his stride—as well as the almost inevitable second and correlative phase, when he was largely ignored—and has simply gone about his own business maturing in ability, and, it seems to me. Playing much better than he was when there was so much noise about him. Neither of the two critical attitudes were his fault, of course, and it speaks very well for him that he has gone about his work in the way that he has.


PRESTIGE 7209

prestige

HIGH PRESSURE / THE RED GARLAND QUINTET

Since this recording was made, the member of the quintet who has received the highest acclaim and greatest notoriety has been John Coltrane. From a beginning in which his work was misjudged and misunderstood, his career has gone on until now he is one of the few undisputed giants of the modern idiom. As such, any example of his work has intrinsic value, as well as use, for more scholastically-bent fans, as historical comparison. The present record displays Coltrane both in the full fury of the period which Ira Gitler has probably irrevocably characterized as "sheets of sound," as well as showing a far less highly publicized aspect of his work, the haunted ballad style. It is almost to be expected that an Ellington tune will bring out the best in a musician, and "Solitude" fills that role for Coltrane's ballad artistry here. It does the same for Garland. Red once said something to Nat Hentoff which certainly bears repetition here, in connection with the Ellington piece. "It seems to me," Red told Hentoff, "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



Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

losing of it. Maybe some of these youngsters have never really been in love. You have to play this kind of song out of your life." That, it seems to me, is exactly the way "Solitude" is played here.

Since I have included a quote given to Hentoff, I might as well add that the quote appeared on the back of a previous Red Garland quintet album, *Soul Junction* (Prestige 7181). The present collection was recorded at the same session as *Soul Junction*, which was one of the more highly praised jazz sets of last year, receiving four stars in *Down Beat*. Don DeMicheal, now but not then, the editor of that magazine, said in reviewing it, "Usually blowing sessions—and this is certainly such a session—degenerate into musical meanderings with the principals groping and hoping for something of substance. Such sessions appeal to jazzmen; they're easy to play. But rarely does a recording date produce much of any lasting value. This one does . . . Oh, if all blowing dates would come off like this one . . . ."

As long as there are blowing sessions, which I suspect is equivalent to saying as long as there is jazz, there will be arguments pro and con about just the kind of points DeMicheal made. Certainly, as DeMicheal said, they are easy to play. But in another, and I think more important sense, they place the burden of creativity and, if you will, integrity more squarely on the musicians involved than any other kind of recording. If a man wants to shuck and regard the situation as one in which he simply turns up and delivers a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, he can, very easily. And as far too many jazz records attest, the product will reflect the attitude. On the other hand, if he wants to put himself out, if it is a good day for him, he is then free to play at the top of his form in the most unrestricted recording situation possible, and can, provided the music and the other musicians are compatible, show the extent of his talent. Since jazz has become the big business it now is, we are not likely to come much closer to the traditional jam session than this kind of record. And the opportunities for pleasure and study that a record such as this one affords us should make us grateful that the blowing session—stigma of the name and all—is still being produced.

—Joe Goldberg

These notes appeared on the original album High Pressure.

THE RED GARLAND QUINTET: DIG IT!

Prestige 7229
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[4/2] **BILLIE'S BOUNCE**
CRAZY RHYTHM (Trio)
CTA*

SIDE TWO

[4/6] **LAZY MAE**

* Note: "CTA" was originally released on Art Taylor *Taylor's Wailers* and appears in the John Coltrane *Interplay* boxed set.

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 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*, one 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

PAUL CHAMBERS

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

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 who's 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, "CTA," was recorded at a session for which Taylor was the leader. The album, *Taylor's Wailers*, 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
These notes appeared on the original album Dig It!

THE RAY DRAPER QUINTET FEATURING JOHN COLTRANE

New Jazz 8228
Released: 1957

SIDE ONE

[5/2] **CLIFFORD'S KAPPA**
[5/3] **FILIDE**
[5/4] **TWO SONS**

SIDE TWO

[5/5] **PAUL'S PAL**
[5/1] **UNDER PARIS SKIES**
I HADN'T ANYONE TIL YOU

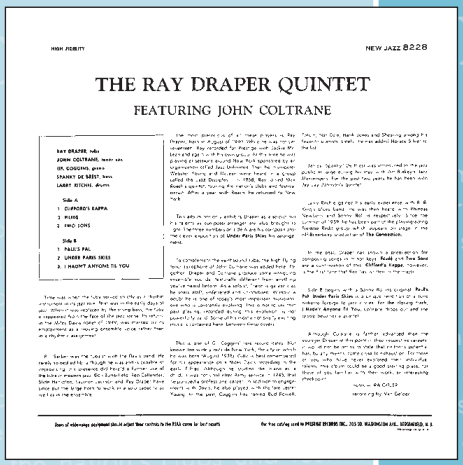
Time was when the tuba served strictly as a rhythm instrument in its jazz role. That was in the early days of jazz. When it was replaced by the string bass, the tuba disappeared from the face of the jazz scene. Its return, in the Miles Davis nonet of 1949, was marked by its employment as a moving ensemble voice rather than in a rhythmic assignment.

Bill Barber was the tubaist with the Davis band. He rarely soloed ad lib, although he was and is capable of improvising. His presence did herald a further use of the tuba in modern jazz. Don Butterfield, Red Callender, Slide Hampton, Laymon Jackson, and Ray Draper have since put the large horn to work in a solo capacity as well as in the ensemble.

The most precocious of all these players is Ray Draper, born in August of 1940. While he was not yet seventeen, Ray recorded for Prestige with Jackie McLean and again with his own group. At this time he was playing at sessions around New York sponsored by an organization called Jazz Unlimited. Then he, trumpeter Webster Young, and McLean were heard in a group called the Jazz Disciples. In 1958, Ray joined Max Roach's quintet, touring the nation's clubs and festival circuit. After a year with Roach, he returned to New York.

This album not only exhibits Draper as a soloist but his talents as composer-arranger are also brought to light. The three numbers on side A are his compositions; the clever exposition of "Under Paris Skies" his arrangement.

To complement the earthbound tuba, the high-flying tenor saxophone of John Coltrane was added here. Together, Draper and Coltrane produce some intriguing ensemble sounds, texturally different from anything you've heard before. As a soloist, Trane is galvanic as he soars aloft, unfettered and uninhibited. Without a doubt he is one of today's most important musicians, one who is constantly evolving. This is not to say that past playing, recorded during this evolution, is not powerfully valid. Some of his most emotionally exciting music is contained here, between these covers.


HIGH FIDELITY NEW JAZZ 8228

THE RAY DRAPER QUINTET
FEATURING JOHN COLTRANE

This is one of Gil Coggins's rare record dates. Not known too widely outside New York, the city in which he was born (August 1928), Gilly is best remembered for his appearance on a Miles Davis recording in the early Fifties. Although he studied the piano as a child, it was not until after Army service in 1945 that he pursued a professional career. In addition to engagements with Davis, he also played with the late Lester Young. In the past, Coggins has named Bud Powell, Tatum, Nat Cole, Hank Jones, and Shearing among his favorite pianists. Lately, he has added Horace Silver to the list.

James "Spanky" De Brest was introduced to the jazz public at large during his stay with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. For the past two years he has been with J.J. Johnson's quintet.

Larry Ritchie gained his early experience with B.B. King's blues band. He was then heard with Phineas Newborn and Sonny Rollins respectively. Since the summer of 1959, he has been part of the playing-acting Freddie Redd group which appears on stage in the off-Broadway production of *The Connection*.

In the past, Draper has shown a predilection for composing songs in minor keys. "Filidia" and "Two Sons" are a continuation of this. "Clifford's Kappa," however, is the first tune that Ray has written in the major.

Side B begins with a Sonny Rollins original, "Paul's Pal," and "Under Paris Skies" is a unique rendition of a tune hitherto foreign to jazz circles. For the closing track, "I Hadn't Anyone Till You," Coltrane drops out and the group becomes a quartet.

Although Coltrane is farther advanced than the younger Draper at this point in their respective careers, it would not be amiss to state that neither's potential has, by any means, come close to exhaustion. For those of you who have never explored their individual talents, this album could be a good starting place; for those of you familiar with their work, an interesting checkpoint.

—Ira Gitler
These notes appeared on the original album The Ray Draper Quintet Featuring John Coltrane.

MAL WALDRON: THE DEALERS

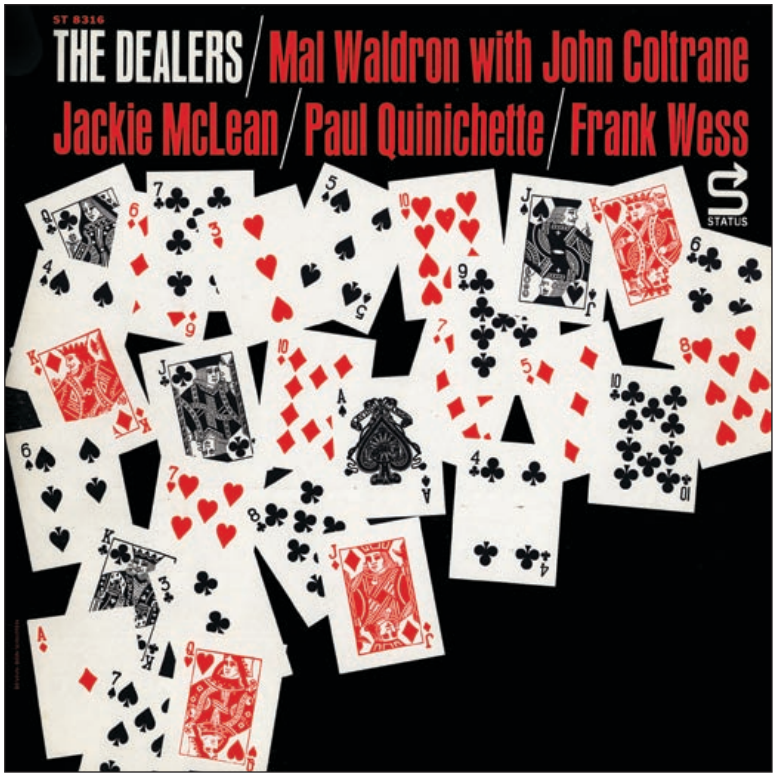
Status 8316
Released: 1965

SIDE ONE

[2/5] **BLUE CALYPSO**
[2/6] **FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE**

SIDE TWO

DEALIN' (ALT. TAKE)
WHEELIN' (ALT. TAKE)



Malcolm Earl Waldron, pianist, composer, and arranger, has organized the two multifaceted groups (an unusual blend of three tenor saxophones and a standard trumpet, tenor, alto, piano, bass, and drum combo) for the purpose of exploring, in a very relaxed fashion, some basic jazz forms: three blues and a seldom-played standard by Rodgers and Hart. Although the tunes and arrangements are solidly sketched by Mal, it is the strong solo power of each musician which creates the uniform interest of each track on this album.

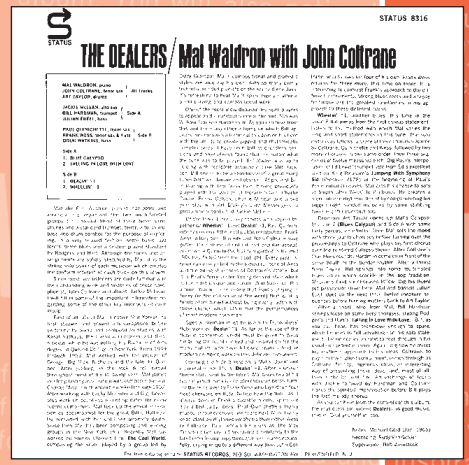
Since most jazz listeners are quite familiar with the outstanding work and histories of tenor saxophonist John Coltrane and altoist Jackie McLean, I will fill in some of the important information regarding some of the other key members of each group.

First of all, about Mal: a native New Yorker, he first studied and played alto saxophone before switching to piano and composition studies with Karol Rathaus, the classical composer and theoretician, while he was getting his Bachelor of Arts degree at Queens College in New York. From 1949 through 1953, Mal worked with the groups of George "Big Nick" Nicholas and the late Ike Quebec. After jobbing on the rock 'n' roll circuit throughout most of the following year, Mal joined in a long-lasting association with composer-bassist Charles Mingus, with whom he worked through 1957. After working with Lucky Millinder and Gigi Gryce, plus work on countless recording dates for many record companies, Mal took up the enviable position as accompanist for the great Billie Holiday. He remained with her until her untimely death. Since then Mal has been composing and leading groups in the New York area. Recently Mal has worked on Shirley Clarke's film, *The Cool World*, composing the score played by a group led by Dizzy Gillespie. Mal's compositional and pianistic styles are uniquely his own. With so many overly technical-minded pianists on the scene these days, it's refreshing to hear Mal's spare, highly rhythmic piano playing and compositional work.

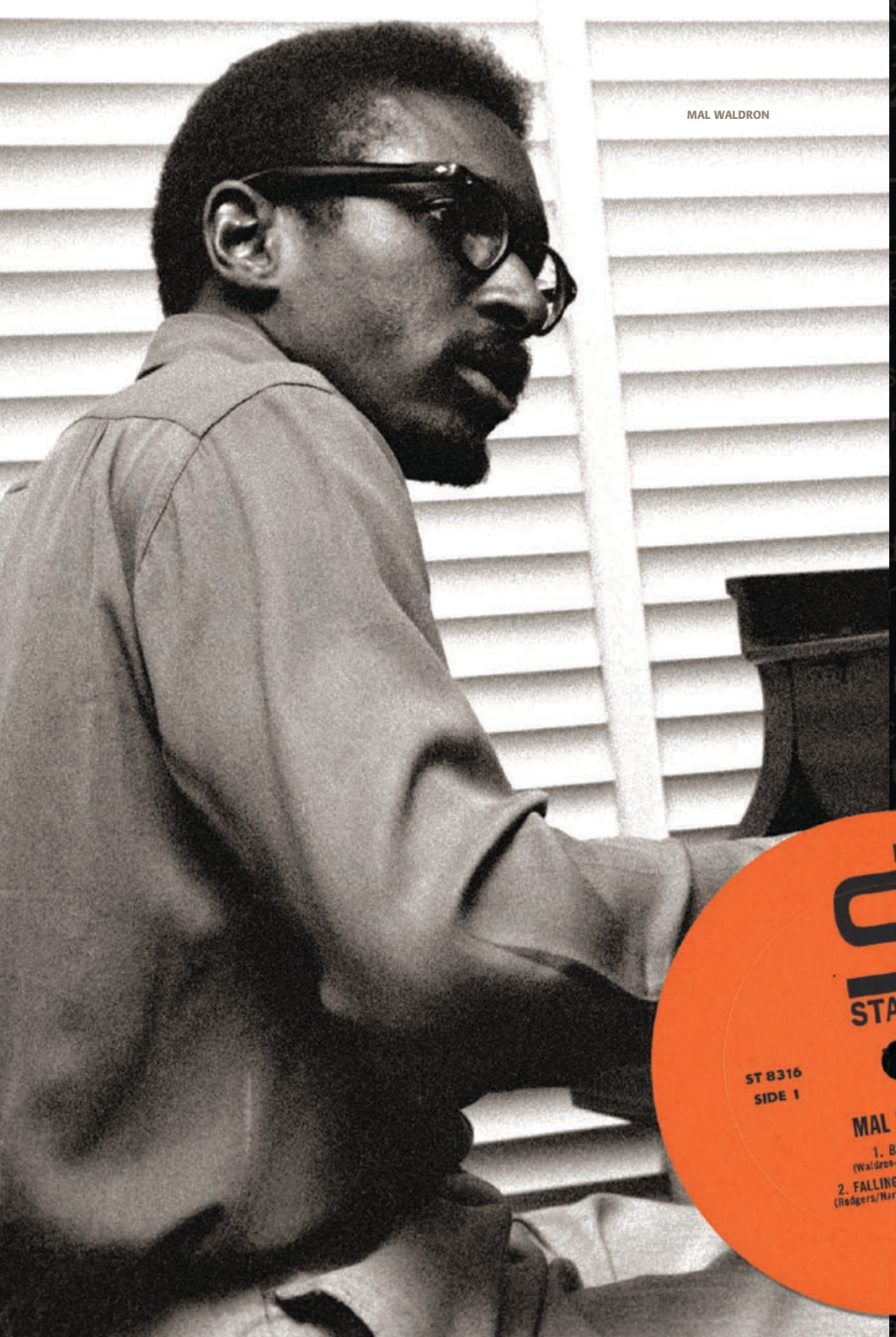
One of the most individualistic trumpet players to appear on the national scene in the mid-Fifties was William Franklin Hardman, Jr. As you can hear from this and the many other albums on which Bill appears, he combines a technical freedom on his horn with the ability to create jagged and rhythmically complex solos. I have seen Bill at countless sessions and have always found that no matter what the tune to be played, Bill always was up to soloing with complete assurance. Like Milt Jackson, Bill seems to be a storehouse of a great many tunes both well-known and obscure. At present Bill is touring with Lou Donaldson, having previously played with the groups of Horace Silver, Charlie Rouse, Benny Golson, Charlie Mingus, and a two-year stay with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, a group which contained Jackie McLean.

Of the three tenor saxophonists who appear together on "Wheelin' #1" and "Dealin' #1," Paul Quinichette has received the least public recognition. Frank Wess, a longtime Basieite, and John Coltrane have gotten their share of critical and popular acceptance, while Quinichette, highly regarded in the mid-Fifties, has faded from the spotlight. Every jazz listener can easily identify the robust full tone of Wess and the biting sharpness of Coltrane's attack, but it is Paul's furry Lester Young–derived style which is the most unique and easily identifiable on this album. You will also notice that Paul's playing is funky (in the old sense of the word)—that is, it is firmly blues-based without being overly laden with those clichés which often mar the performances of most modern horn men.

Special mention must be given to Frank Wess's flute work on "Dealin' #1." As far as the use of the flute is concerned, credit must be given to Wess for being the fountainhead and inspiration for the many flutists who have followed Frank's lead in modern swinging work on this delicate instrument.


STATUS 8316
THE DEALERS / Mal Waldron with John Coltrane

Opening the Side B session is Mal's "down" and mournful minor blues, "Dealin' #1." After a unison theme statement by the horns, Mal takes two of his typically rhythmically-complex choruses before turning the reins over to Frank Wess, who lays down four fleet choruses on flute. Notice how the flute, as it always does in Frank's capable hands, spins out airy albeit juicy ideas. Paul Quinichette's highly muscular four choruses are heard next. More highly dependent on rhythmic emphasis than either Wess or Coltrane, Paul, known for years as the Vice President because of his stylistic similarity to the late Lester Young, rips through his choruses mournfully, crying in quite a different way than John Coltrane, who follows for four of his own. Frank Wess returns for three more, this time on tenor. It is interesting to contrast Frank's approach to the different instruments. Strong blues roots and a facile technique are the greatest similarities in his approach to these different horns.



MAL WALDRON

Esmond Edwards/CTS Images

"Wheelin' #1," another blues, this time in the usual B-flat, jumps from the first chorus statement. Listen to the method with which Mal varies the long and short statements in this tune. The solo order is as follows: a brace of three choruses apiece by Coltrane, Quinichette, and Wess, followed by two more choruses in the same order, then three segments of twelve measures each. Dig Paul's interpolation of Ed Lewis's trumpet solo from Ed's excellent spot on King Pleasure's "Jumping with Symphony Sid" (Prestige 7128) at the beginning of Paul's three initial choruses. Mal gets his chance to solo at length after Wess's final chorus. He creates a more intense rhythmic thrust by complementing his jagged right-handed melodies with some stabbing lower-register punctuations.

Drummer Art Taylor opens up Mal's calypso-blues in F ("Blues Calypso") and Side A with some tasty percussion effects. Then Mal sets the mood with three jaunty choruses before turning over the proceedings to Coltrane who plays his first chorus over the restated calypso theme. After Coltrane's four blues rounds, Hardman comes on in front of the same south–of-the-border rhythm. After a thrust from Taylor, Bill springs into some multi-noted blues ideas which crackle in the bop tradition. McLean's fleet six choruses follow. Dig his fluent yet passionate drive here. Mal and bassist Julian Euell duet on the next three twelve-measure sequences before turning matters back to Art Taylor.

After a short intro from Mal, Bill Hardman springs loose on some fiery choruses, stating Rodgers and Hart's "Falling in Love with Love." Bill, as you can hear, has technique enough to spare, which he uses to full advantage on his solo statement. Jackie comes on next to rear through in his usual competent manner. Again, dig how he mixes his rhythmic approach to his ideas. Coltrane, to pay him the highest compliment, comes through as Coltrane: facility, ingenious ideas, an interesting way of presenting these ideas, and—most of all—there's the brilliant fire. An exchange of fours with Jackie followed by Hardman and Coltrane closes the spirited improvisation before Bill plays the last melody chorus.

As you can hear from the contents of this album, the musicians are indeed Dealers—in good music, that is. Deal yourself in too.

—Michael Gold

These notes appeared on the original album The Dealers.

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