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## Red Garland: The 1956 Trio

Publisher: **Essential Jazz Classics**

Saxophone may be the instrument most people visualize when they think of jazz music, but piano (with organ a close second) is probably the sound most people associate with jazz. You can just hear more music coming out of one piano than any other single instrument, and skilled players like **Red Garland** embodied everything that had come before them, from blues to bop. **The 1956 Trio** referenced in the title of this compilation is made up of Art Taylor on drums and Paul Chambers on bass. Taylor was already a skilled player that went on to even greater heights over the remainder of his career, with giants like John Coltrane and Miles Davis; Chambers was equally skilled, enough to earn a place in the jazz canon as the "PC" in that Coltrane tune, "Mr. PC."



Coltrane drafted **Red Garland** and this trio for a slew of classic albums on Prestige '50s, and it's easy to understand why as you listen to their easy swinging style.

**Red Garland: The 1956 Trio** is primarily a reissue of the album, *A Garland & Company*, which features tracks from *Groovy* and *Red Garland's Piano*, all released that same year. Notable tracks here include "A Foggy Day," "My Romance," and "If I Were a Bell." Garland contributes an original tune and pulls out a pure bop number in Charlie Parker's "Constellation." The range of material shows off the trio's versatility and perfectly captures the transitional '50s jazz. Equally comfortable with bebop, blues, and ballads, capable of turning tunes like "Makin' Whoopee" into something special, this trio creates plenty of contrast against later jazz styles of the '60s and '70s, especially electronic or rock fusion. Even though the material on **Red Garland: The 1956 Trio** can sound a bit staid and traditional, it may not have been breaking the envelope, but he was certainly riding the cutting edge with a new kind of piano playing that emerged in the '50s. Players like Garland, Mal Waldron, Cedar Walton, and Cedar Walton relied less on flurries of notes, stride styles, and rhythmic complexity characteristic of the previous generation. Piano in the '50s brought the ivories up front, often in unison with horn players and singers, showcasing lyrical, single-note solos floating over rich harmonic textures.

Beyond the song selection and the individual musicianship here, the interplay between Paul Chambers, and Taylor is like an education in everything that's good about a jazz piano section. Exchanging rhythmic motifs, staying out of each other's way, and rising to a perfect unison throughout each song, these guys are like a jazz machine. What no one would expect is the loose, organic swinging style that Garland and his bandmates brought to every track. Grab this one, quick.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA M

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