

Soul Food

Bobby Timmons



PRESTIGE 7483

BOBBY TIMMONS, piano
LEE ODDIS BASS, bass
BILLY HIGGINS, drums

Side A

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 1. SOUCE MEAT | 4:00 |
| 2. TURKEY WINGS | 5:30 |
| 3. CRACKLIN' BREAD | 4:50 |
| 4. MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY | 6:20 |

Side B

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 1. GIBLETS | 6:00 |
| 2. ANGEL EYES | 5:35 |
| 3. STOLEN SWEETS | 5:45 |

Bobby Timmons is about as close as any one man can come to being a living definition of what **soul** music is all about—particularly in that especially appealing area where the rhythmic fervor and warmth of soul merges with the inventive fire of jazz. Bobby has demonstrated this many times before, but very possibly never more convincingly than on this record. And in referring to this album, I guess I might as well bow to the inevitable pun and describe it right at the start as . . . a heaping platter of **soul food**.

"Soul" is really a difficult thing to describe—partly because it is of course a matter of emotion and feeling, and not some tangible thing you can hold in your hand and evaluate physically. But an even larger part of the difficulty these days is that soul has become such a terribly "in" musical commodity that just about every performer of any kind would like to convince you that he has it. Everybody talking about soul certainly doesn't have it, but the value of even seeming to is **so** widespread, and getting wider all the time. By now it really wouldn't surprise me **too** much to turn on the radio some evening and hear, let's say, Kate Smith singing **Moanin'** (which, incidentally, is a Bobby Timmons composition). I realize that so far-out an example would be spotted as artificial by almost everyone, but there are lots of only slightly more

subtle pseudo-soulful recordings that can and do fool more than a few people.

So it's always a reassuring pleasure to be able to turn to the guaranteed genuine article, such as (of course) Mr. Timmons. The pianist is still a young man, just barely into his thirties, but he is actually one of the founding fathers of modern-day soul music. For even though the old blues and Negro church music that are the direct ancestors of today's soul sounds go back to the turn of the century or earlier, the present wave of soulfulness got its start in the jazz of the late 1950's. It was at about that time that an extra feeling of 'churchiness' began to become noticeable in the music of the outstanding hard-bop quintets. The pendulum of jazz popularity was in the process of swinging back from the coolness of the West Coast groups to the earthy intensity of the Easterners. First and foremost, to be sure, there was Horace Silver, writing and playing superb examples of a music that was down to earth and blues-filled and gospel-sounding, that was sometimes known as "funk" but more and more often was called by the more respectable label of "soul".

But in addition to the Silver group, there definitely were the Jazz Messengers of Art Blakey, a unit whose ranks had included a vast number of stars-to-be (including, at one time, Horace Silver). In 1958, Timmons, who had started as a boy organist in his grandfather's church in Philadelphia and had grown up to play with such as Kenny Dorham and Sonny Stitt, joined Blakey. Almost immediately there was the tune called **Moanin'**, one of the most unforgettable examples of jazz-and-soul ever created. A little more than a year later the writer of that hit was invited to become the pianist in a newly-forming band, that of Cannonball Adderley. Almost immediately, there was the tune called **This Here**, which has to get a great deal of the credit for skyrocketing Adderley to lasting success.

After composing these two prime examples of soul, and the only slightly less celebrated **Dat Dere**, Timmons inevitably took the big plunge and formed his own trio. Like about 90% of all jazz musicians who take such a step, Bobby has seen good days and bad ones since then. The critics and public **do** have a frightening habit of speeding on to the next new sensation. But for those performers who stick to their path and continue to play as they

know they can or feel they must, there is very often the reward of seeing things swing around in their direction again. That, too, has been Bobby's experience. While there certainly are those who have reaped more fame and fortune than he out of the soul bag, a pretty fair number of today's listeners **do** know where it's at and know that it's right here with Timmons. And there's reason to believe that the number is increasing all the time . . .

Soul Food, as already noted, is of course a pun. It refers both to that style of home cooking that soul brothers and sisters in particular are partial to, and to the fact that this album is full of music that is good nourishment for the soul. Nobody is going to claim that the food-based titles of the four Timmons originals here have any necessary connection with the tunes themselves—but they do serve to point up the solidly down-home feeling and good-time atmosphere of the record as a whole. Nobody can safely predict whether there might be another **Moanin'** here—but it wouldn't be startling if it turned out that there was. For all the right finger-popping, blues-drenched, soulful ingredients are here: it's just a matter of how people react to them, which is always what separates a hit from an almost hit.

If anyone needs to learn that there is more than just soul in Bobby's bag of performing tricks, he can pay special attention to the treatment of two standard ballads—**Make Someone Happy** and Matt Dennis' **Angel Eyes**. And for dessert there is the joyful swinging of **Stolen Sweets**.

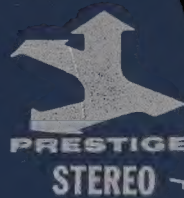
In firm support of Timmons are Lee Bass, a bassist with whom Bobby is able to get into a groove of remarkable teamwork, and drummer Billy Higgins. Ever since he first came to New York with Ornette Coleman, Billy has been a constant source of surprise. Whenever you hear him, he sounds so good that you're sure you've caught him in his favorite kind of setting. The only trouble is that he sounds that good in **all** sorts of groups: from Ornette to Jackie McLean to this very soulful trio.

But that's enough conversation for now. The **soul food** is on the turntable—dig in and enjoy!

Notes: Peter Drew (Dec. 1966)
 Recording: Rudy Van Gelder
 Produced by Cal Lampley

SOUL FOOD
Bobby Timmons

PRST 7483
SIDE 1



1. SOUCE MEAT
(Timmons-Prestige Music-BMI) 4:00
2. TURKEY WINGS
(Timmons-Prestige Music-BMI) 5:30
3. CRACKLIN' BREAD
(Timmons-Prestige Music-BMI) 4:50
4. MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY
(Camden/Green/Styne-Stratford Music-ASCAP) 6:20

PRESTIGE RECORDS INC., 203 S. WASHINGTON AVE., BERGENFIELD, N. J.

SOUL FOOD
Bobby Timmons

PRST 7483
SIDE 2



1. GIBLETS
(Timmons-Prestige Music-BMI) 6:00
2. ANGEL EYES
(Dennis Bradshaw Music-BMI) 5:35
3. STOLEN SWEETS
(Davis-Strethen Publ. Co.-BMI) 5:45

PRESTIGE RECORDS INC., 203 S. WASHINGTON AVE., BERGENFIELD, N. J.