

= Bobby Timmons =

Robert Henry " Bobby " Timmons (December 19 , 1935 ? March 1 , 1974) was an American jazz pianist and composer . He was a sideman in Art Blakey 's Jazz Messengers for two periods (July 1958 to September 1959 ; February 1960 to June 1961) , between which he was part of Cannonball Adderley 's band . Several of Timmons ' compositions written when part of these bands ? including " Moanin ' " , " Dat Dere " , and " This Here " ? enjoyed commercial success and brought him more attention . In the early and mid @-@ 1960s he led a series of piano trios that toured and recorded extensively .

Timmons was strongly associated with the soul jazz style that he helped initiate ; this link to apparently simple writing and playing , coupled with drug and alcohol addiction , led to a decline in his career . Timmons died , aged 38 , from cirrhosis . His contribution to jazz remains undervalued .

= = Early life = =

Timmons was born in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , the son of a minister . He had a sister , Eleanor . Both of his parents , and several aunts and uncles , played the piano . From an early age Timmons studied music with an uncle , Robert Habershaw , who also taught McCoy Tyner . Timmons first played at the church where his grandfather was minister ; this influenced his later jazz playing . He grew up in the same area as other future musicians , including the Heath brothers , Jimmy , Percy , and Tootie . Timmons ' first professional performances were in his local area , often as a trio that included Tootie Heath on drums . After graduating from high school Timmons was awarded a scholarship to study at the Philadelphia Musical Academy .

= = 1954 to spring 1961 = =

Timmons moved to New York in 1954 . He played with Kenny Dorham in 1956 , making his recording debut with the trumpeter in a live set in May of that year . He went on to play and record with Chet Baker in 1956 ? 57 (bassist Scott LaFaro was part of this band for a time) , Sonny Stitt in 1957 , and Maynard Ferguson in 1957 ? 58 . He also recorded as a sideman with hornmen Curtis Fuller , Hank Mobley , and Lee Morgan , all for Blue Note Records in 1957 .

Timmons became best known as a member of Art Blakey 's band the Jazz Messengers , which he was first part of from July 1958 to September 1959 , including for a tour of Europe . He was recruited for the Messengers by saxophonist Benny Golson , who said that " He was inventive , [...] He could play bebop and he could play funky ? he could play a lot of things , and I thought it was the element that Art needed . He hadn 't had anybody quite like Bobby , who could go here or go there , rather than walking in a single corridor . " By late 1958 Timmons was sharing bandmate Morgan 's East Sixth Street apartment and the pair had bought a piano , allowing Timmons to practice and Morgan to work on composing . From around the time he joined Blakey , Timmons , along with some of his fellow band members , was a heroin user . After leaving Blakey , Timmons joined Cannonball Adderley 's band , in October 1959 .

Timmons was also known as a composer during this period : The Encyclopedia of Jazz states that his compositions " Moanin ' " (from the 1958 album of the same title) , " This Here " , and " Dat Dere " " helped generate the gospel @-@ tinged ' soul jazz ' style of [the] late ' 50s and early ' 60s . " The first was written when Timmons was first with Blakey ; the others were composed when he was with Adderley . " This Here " (sometimes " Dis Here ") was a surprise commercial success for Adderley : recorded in concert in 1959 , it was released as part of the The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco album while the band was still on tour , and they discovered its popularity only when they arrived back in New York and found crowds outside the Village Gate , where they were due to play .

Timmons was reported to be dissatisfied with the money he had received from " This Here " , and was enticed in February 1960 into leaving Adderley and returning to Blakey 's band by the offer of more pay . Timmons then appeared on further well @-@ known albums with the drummer ,

including A Night in Tunisia , The Freedom Rider and The Witch Doctor . His own recording debut as sole leader was This Here Is Bobby Timmons in 1960 , which contained his first versions of his best @-@ known compositions . In the same year , he played on recordings led by Nat Adderley , Arnett Cobb , and Johnny Griffin , among others ; on the first of these , Work Song , Timmons did not appear on all of the tracks , because he had been drinking heavily .

= = Summer 1961 to 1974 = =

Timmons left Blakey for the second time in June 1961 , encouraged by the success of his compositions , including jukebox plays of " Dat Dere " , which Oscar Brown had recorded after adding lyrics . Timmons then formed his own bands , initially with Ron Carter on bass and Tootie Heath on drums . They toured around the US , including the West Coast , but played most in and around New York . In the initial stages of this trio , Timmons liked the group sounds of the trios led by Red Garland and Ahmad Jamal . According to Tootie Heath , Timmons was at the peak of his fame at that point , but was addicted to heroin , and used a lot of the money that the band was paid maintaining his habit .

In 1963 Timmons ' playing , with Lewis Powers on bass and Ron McCurdy on drums , was described by a Washington Post reviewer as " flexible and adventuresome [...] Glossing over everything is an undeniable sheen of church music and spirituals . " In 1965 the same reviewer commented that Timmons was employing musicians who were of much lower ability : " Timmons lacks a certain passion but I wonder if this is not the fault of his sidemen . " Timmons started playing vibes in the mid @-@ 1960s . He occasionally played organ , but recorded only one track on that instrument ? a 1964 version of " Moanin ' " on From the Bottom . Recordings as a leader continued , usually as part of a trio or quartet , but , after joining Milestone Records around 1967 , Timmons ' album Got to Get It ! featured him as part of a nonet , playing arrangements by Tom McIntosh .

Timmons ' career declined quickly in the 1960s , in part because of drug abuse and alcoholism and partly as a result of frustration at being typecast as a composer and player of seemingly simple pieces of music . In 1968 he made his second , final , recording for Milestone , Do You Know the Way ? In the following year he played in a quartet led by Sonny Red , with Dexter Gordon on one of the saxophonist 's temporary returns to the US from Europe , and in a trio backing vocalist Etta Jones . Timmons continued to play in the early 1970s , mostly in small groups or in combination with other pianists , and mainly in the New York area .

According to saxophonist Jimmy Heath , Timmons joined Clark Terry 's big band for a tour of Europe in 1974 . He was unwell and drank on the plane to Sweden , and fell while drinking at the bar before the band 's first concert , in Malmö . Susceptible to blood clotting , he was flown back to the US . On March 1 , 1974 , he died from cirrhosis , at the age of 38 , at St Vincent 's Hospital in New York . He had been in hospital for a month . He was buried in Philadelphia , and was survived by his wife , Estelle , and son , also Bobby .

= = Playing style and influence = =

Timmons was known for using block chords , " a style in which the right hand creates the melody and the left hand moves with the rhythm of the right hand , but does not change voicing except to accommodate the chord changes . " His use of them was more aggressive , and less melodic , than that of Garland . The Penguin Guide to Jazz suggested that " Timmons ' characteristic style was a rolling , gospelly funk , perhaps longer on sheer energy than on harmonic sophistication . " In the opinion of Scott Yanow , stylistically , " somehow Bobby Timmons never grew beyond where he was in 1960 . " Gary Giddins , however , highlighted other facets of Timmons ' playing : the " lush [Bud] Powell @-@ inspired ballads , his clear , sharp , unsentimental long lines . " Carter also identified Powell as a primary influence on Timmons , and commented that his partner in the trio " was very giving , very loyal , played every night like it was his last chance to get it right . "

The funky aspects of Timmons ' playing influenced fellow pianists , including Les McCann , Ramsey Lewis , and Benny Green . Timmons is often mentioned as being under @-@ rated ; jazz writer

Marc Myers commented in 2008 that " today , Timmons ' contribution to jazz ? as an accompanist , writer , leader and innovator of a new sound ? is vastly overlooked and undervalued . "

= = Compositions = =

Timmons wrote " a steady stream of infectious funky tunes " , stated Giddins . Timmons dismissed the idea that he was deliberately a composer : " I 'm a dilettante as a composer . I have never consciously sat down and tried to write a song . " He stated that his method of composing a new song might involve " whistling , playing around with the notes , or at a club . I 'll tell one musician to play this note , another that note , and we kick it around . " One account of the creation of " Moanin ' " was given by Golson : Timmons had the opening eight bars , which he often played between tunes , but formed the complete song only after Golson encouraged him to add a bridge .

= = Personality = =

Tootie Heath reported that , when they were on tour and Timmons was addicted to heroin , the pianist would routinely lie and sometimes pull out a knife to threaten people with . Carter , the bassist from that tour , stated that Timmons offered his bandmates a lot of encouragement to experiment and improve from performance to performance , and that he " was a really multi @-@ talented person and he was just a real sweetheart , a sweetheart of a man . " In Golson 's words , Timmons " had no ego about him , [...] He was always upbeat , never downbeat , and he never maligned anybody unless it was in a humorous way . "

= = Discography = =

= = = As leader / co @-@ leader = = =

= = = As sideman = = =

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