



**THE BEST OF  
TROY RAMEY  
& THE SOUL SEARCHERS**

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**L**ead tenor Troy Ramey & The Soul Searchers of Atlanta, Georgia have a bad reputation for wrecking churches and sending the sisters to happy places. The group has been active on the recording scene for some forty years and has played St. John's Cathedral and The Apollo Theatre in New York. Touring has taken them the length and breadth of the nation. The Soul Searchers have played churches, civic clubs, and concert halls, as well as guesting on radio and television shows. They also starred in their own PBS documentary. All this and the guys still find time to work day jobs painting houses and doing general carpentry.

It all began in 1949 when the group, billed simply as The Soul Searchers, recorded once for two tiny labels, Strip and Sacred. The records did little except generate a few local gigs. The Soul Searchers were always "home boys" and

preferred to stay at home to work and raise families as opposed to the uncertain survival on the road as professional minstrels in the service of the Lord. This might explain their lack of recorded output during the fifties.

In 1965, The Soul Searchers took aboard Dr. Robert Washington, founder and former baritone powerhouse of the famous Gospelairees of Dayton, Ohio. Washington's voice and intense delivery was very similar to Ramey's. However, Washington's tenure was short. After one single with the group on Don Robey's Song Bird label out of Houston, Washington was back with The Gospelairees in time for European commitments.

The Soul Searchers continued to record for Song Bird throughout the sixties. The group joined the Nashboro roster in 1972, and their first release, "Great change," took off and became a major hit for them. Key members of the group included Troy Ramey, lead, Russell Wright, Kenny Williams, John Carter, and Edward

Malcomb. In 1974 the quintet signed briefly with Musicor which put out one album of material cut at the group's local Master Sound Studios in Atlanta. The work included on this compilation is from three Nashboro albums, "The Best of Troy Ramey & The Soul Searchers" (1981), "Pickin' 'em up and layin' 'em down" (1976), and "Try being born again" (1977.) The set starts with their big hit "Great change" with its sermon intro and joyous conclusion augmented with fancy guitar runs. "A charge to keep" is interpreted in little church lining hymn fashion, a base for testimony from the moaners' bench.

"I've done what you told me" is a bluesy rendition in the spirit of The Pilgrim Jubilees. "Lord, I want you to touch me" is a soulful slow tempo vehicle for prayer and testimony. "I've got heaven on my mind is of the same stripe. "Since I've laid my burden down" is an uplifting song sung in blithe camaraderie. "It's Jesus y'all" is yet another soulful declaration of conviction.

"By the power of God,"

"He's coming again," and "I've been born again" get the church on its feet and the sisters strutting their holiness steps. "Standing in the need of prayer," "He will wash you whiter than snow," and "Live so God can use you" with their repetitious rhythmic harmonies and decisive beat ably support Ramey's vocal persuasiveness.

"Thank you, Lord" is yet another testimonial deposition supported with sweet sweeping harmonies and soft guitar accompaniment. The Soul Searchers are a hard singing squad of sanctified soldiers whose music both moves and excites the soul.

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Executive Producer:  
Patti Drosins

Reissue produced by:  
Bob Perry - Rob Santos

Compiled by: Bob Perry -  
Matt Starr - Skippy White

Art Direction/Design by:  
Mitchell Kanner

Liner notes by:  
Opal Louis Nations

Project Assistants:  
Robert Y. Kim -  
Michael Russell

Special Thanks:  
David Sanjek -  
B.M.I. Archives

Mastered by:  
Jonathan Wyner at  
M-Works Cambridge MA.