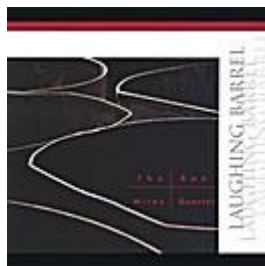


## Mp3 The Ron Miles Quartet - Laughing Barrel



[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

The music is clearly rooted in the African-American experience, it reflects a variety of influences besides swing and bop-- everything from the blues of Jimi Hendrix and Robert Johnson, to roots gospel and country sources. 7 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo Details: TRUMPETER/COMPOSER RON MILES RELEASES QUARTET CD LAUGHING BARREL ON MARCH 25, 2003 Ron Miles talks about the music on Laughing Barrel.... A serene, reverential glow passes over Ginger Baker's weathered countenance when the rhythmic catalyst of the renowned electric blues trio Cream discusses his musical director and chief soloist, trumpeter Ron Miles. "Ron Miles is a gentle genius, a quiet and unassuming man who becomes a giant when he plays his horn-he's been a pleasure to know and a joy to work with." "Ron has his own sound," enthuses long time collaborator, Bill Frisell, who features Miles prominently in his working ensembles (and on such acclaimed Nonesuch recordings as 1996's Quartet, and the 2001 release Blues Dream), and teamed with Ron for an intimate series of lyric duets on the trumpeter's first Sterling Circle recital, Heaven. "He knows the history, but he's not a copycat," the guitar innovator observes. "He can play anything but he always sounds like Ron Miles." With his warm, richly nuanced sound, a broad pallet of sweet and sassy brass articulations, an exploratory harmonic sensibility and a provocative rhythmic approach, Ron Miles is every inch the musical giant and musical collaborator Ginger Baker makes him out to be. Yet for many listeners outside the Denver area, Ron Miles is still something of an unknown quality. This leads one to wonder why cutting edge musicians like Baker, Frisell and clarinetist Don Byron hold Ron Miles in such high esteem? It is because for this gifted trumpeter-composer, jazz is a state of mind, a matter of conviction-a design for living-deeply rooted in the sundry traditions that make up our common musical heritage-what Duke Ellington characterized as black, brown and beige. Jazz, as represented by Ron Miles and his new band on his second Sterling Circle

release *Laughing Barrel*, does not necessarily signify any one style of music, but rather a great tent, where he and his exciting new band (guitarist Brandon Ross, bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Rudy Royston) are defining a distinctive contemporary approach to compositional long forms and song forms-animated by their very personal strain of collective improvisation. And while Miles' warm, burnished tone and the trumpet-guitar-bass-drums instrumentation he employs throughout *Laughing Barrel* recalls the classic Art Farmer Quartet of *Live at The Half Note* (with Jim Hall, Steve Swallow and Walter Perkins), Ron's new quartet is not defined by their hard boy lineage. Because while the music they fashion on *Laughing Barrel* is clearly rooted in the African-American experience, it reflects a variety of influences besides swing and bop: everything from the blues of Jimi Hendrix and Robert Johnson, to roots gospel and country sources. Lyrical and song-like by turns, *Laughing Barrel* nevertheless bristles with supple harmonic touches, bold textural strokes and the kind of ever shifting poly-metric canvas that has long distinguished Ron Miles' rhythmic conception on his critically acclaimed outings as a leader-*Distance For Safety* (Eye Witness, 1986), *Witness* (Capri, 1990), *My Cruel Heart* (Gramavision, 1996), *Woman's Day* (Gramavision, 1997) and *Ron Miles Trio* (Capri, 1999)-and throughout his breakout performances with Baker and Frisell. "With *Coward of the County*, Ginger was such a powerful rhythmic force that we needed a collection of pieces to showcase his considerable talents as a drummer, soloist, accompanist and spontaneous orchestrator," Ron explains, by way of illustrating his own evolution as a writer and soloist. "And if my own playing seems particularly intense on that album, well, that's because Ginger was back there kicking our butts," he laughs. "You can't help but stretch out when a great drummer like Ginger keeps upping the intensity and inspiring you to go for broke." "In fact," Stephen Thomas Erlewine writes in his *All-Music Guide* review of this 1999 Atlantic Jazz release, "it's a testimony to Baker's skills as a leader that he never dominates, preferring to let all the parts weave together to create a full, rich sound. And by doing so, he has made *Coward of the County*, in a way, a showcase for [Ron] Miles, since his compositions become the focal point. They signal a young writer of considerable skill, ambition and talent..." "With *Bill*," Ron continues, "the idea behind *Heaven* was simply to fashion a collection of songs; like two old friends getting together after hours to kick back, share some old stories and sing some of our favorite tunes...without too much fuss. On *Heaven* I was functioning more like a singer, whereas with Ginger's band, I was very much a featured soloist in the modern jazz sense. And of course Bill is so musically gifted and spiritually open, that there were never any limitations on the materials," a daring

cross-section of instrumental classics by composers and song writers as different as Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Hank Williams and Bob Dylan. Or as Chip Stern put it in his Amazonreview, "[Miles] sees connections between fellow travelers on the byways of American music that more doctrinaire colleagues might overlook." "Now with Laughing Barrel, the idea was quite different than on Coward of the County and Heaven-that is to present a band as the basis for long-term development and growth. I really feel, that with few exceptions, bands are what move the music forward. So we want to do our part." Why a Laughing Barrel? "The first time I ever saw that expression was in the writings of Ralph Ellison," Ron explains. "He related how when the slaves felt the urge to laugh, they didn't dare laugh outwardly, so they literally had to put their head into a barrel, and let their laughter out that way. If there's a connecting thread between Heaven and Laughing Barrel it's that once again I'm functioning more as a singer than as the featured soloist-I chose to leave a lot of room for [guitarist] Brandon Ross to really stretch out, because he's a such a dynamic soloist, and can reference an incredibly wide range of sounds and stylistic expressions. "These songs are really hard to improvise on, because jazz players have developed a very extensive chromatic vocabulary, and when approaching such decidedly diatonic song forms, it's a challenge to play melodically over those structures. It's like listening to Charles Rouse's playing with Monk: he is always refashioning the melody-he's never just running changes. Monk, Herbie Nichols and Sonny Rollins all have a very strong thematic component to their music; it's almost like a subtractive approach, with a strong emphasis on the melody, rather than an additive approach which many guys take in blowing long chromatic passages over chord changes." Two of the most beguiling examples of this approach may be found on Ron's arrangements of "Parade" and "Sunday Best," both of which extend a long sinuous melodic line over an ever-morphing mlang of metric shifts and harmonic changes. Ron and the band mine this golden vein of Americana with a folksy, storytelling touch that recalls such rustic anthems as Ornette Coleman's "Ramblin'," Oliver Nelson's "Hoe Down," Steve Swallow's "The Green Mountains," John McLaughlin's "Open Country Joy," Dave Holland's "Back Woods Song," Pat Metheny's "Bright Size Life," Bill Frisell's "Rambler" and Bela Fleck's "Big Country." "I really feel a kinship with Americana and what that word represents-music with a really heartfelt heartland feeling elicits a strong emotional response in me. It's not something conscious on my part-those songs just kind of come out. And I have a real feeling for those harmonies and melodies." Which of course raises the inevitable question: drawing as it does upon such a disparate set of stylistic reference points, how is the

music on *Laughing Barrel* relevant to jazz listeners whose favorite music all derives from the mainstream jazz tradition? "Well," Miles reasons, "we're certainly a part of that tradition, but it's true that there really aren't any head-solo-head type arrangements on *Laughing Barrel*, where a certain level of improvisation will suffice to get you by. To me, much of what is charming about so-called jazz music is the sense of possibility. And one of the things I've learned about writing and collective improvisation is that if you place too many limitations upon players, you limit the potential of the performance. If you write the song well, pick the right players, and loosen the reins, then you have the makings of a really exciting collective experience." And Miles' choice of players is part of the enduring appeal of *Laughing Barrel*. Guitarist Brandon Ross is a fearless instrumentalist and cutting edge conceptualist, who emerged from the edgy Brooklyn music scene of the '80s-90s. He can hold his own in any musical setting, but excels in open forms where his lovely acoustic touch and driving electric sound convey a sense of possibility and danger that master composers such as Henry Threadgill covet. Brandon and Ron first hooked up in the guitarist's own band, Harriet Tubman, and you can hear how Ross has distilled elements from the Jimi Hendrix-John McLaughlin-Allan Holdsworth school of jazz guitar into something very personal on his intro to the bluesy swamp thang "Psychedelic Black Man" and his explosive solo spot on "New Breed Leader". With its tried and true vamp and release structure, "New Breed Leader" is perhaps the most swinging-inside tune on *Laughing Barrel* in terms of the mainstream post-bop tradition. Miles patiently crafts his story from the horn's bottom register on up, engaging the rhythm section in bluesy anecdotal exchanges, calmly allowing the collective pot to reach a boil before launching into some electrifying phrases in the trumpet's upper register-striking a chord somewhere between the Lester Bowie *I Hate To Cook Book* and the Don Cherry *Home Companion*-with spiky, convoluted rhythmic contrasts which set the stage for Brandon Ross' fervent, exploratory outbursts. "'New Breed Leader' is really a tribute to Wayne Shorter. When I wrote that tune I had just bought Wayne's recording *Etcetera*. Prince said we need a new breed leader in his song 'Sexuality,' and for me Wayne's concept of collective playing marks him as a radical man and a new breed leader. "That's why I sought out players with such strong individual voices as Brandon, Anthony [Cox] and Rudy Royston, and why I was very conscious about structuring the music on *Laughing Barrel* so that they could connect the dots, so to speak. When Rudy and I worked together on *My Cruel Heart*, the music was much more tightly structured, and more self-consciously complex-I was trying to exert much more control over every aspect of the music. But on *Laughing Barrel* I

wanted to give Rudy more room to stretch out and interpret the music, which is also why I sought out Anthony Cox on bass. I met Anthony when I was on the road with Bill [Frisell] in Minneapolis, and I got to hear him there, and was very impressed by his musicianship. Anthony has a wonderful sound, with a big flexible beat and a very subtle sense of melodic intuition. And he isn't hung up on any one style of music-he has the flexibility to play any kind of music with authority-which is what inspired me to pursue him when I decided to assemble a working band. "You see, I like the sense of things where you don't really know what is going to happen next. Where each song has a melody and set of changes that are totally different in the background, and then the next song is something else again. You feel like you don't get everything there is to know in the first 30 seconds of a tune, so it's not just staying in one mode over and over and over again. I feel like if I'm bored with that, how must the listener feel? When you put out a recording it should mean something-not just putting out a record for the sake of having some product out there. It should have something to say, so that people can feel strongly enough about it to want to explore it over and over. "For instance, on 'Jesus Loves Me', which is updated from Ginger's record, the melodies dictated a very complex set of rhythm changes. My songs all tend to follow that basic rhythmic template because when I first set out to write a piece, initially I don't employ any bar lines-I just sort of let the melody determine where those demarcations will eventually fall. This practice actually derives from my experience of listening to people like the Carter Family and Robert Johnson, where they employ all of these odd rhythmic groupings, and many people would dismiss them as somehow being very primitive, you know-like they don't really have a very good sense of time. Yet when you go back and really analyze their music, every verse has that 5/8 bar in the same spot; in a sense the lyrics dictate the manner in which they stretch the time. So once I peeped that, I really didn't worry about it any more, and began incorporating all sorts of metric movement in my music. And now I rarely ever write songs that are just a straight four without any variation. Even on a song like 'Sunday Best' where it sounds like it's moving into an odd meter, it's really just a different form of syncopation. "Of course, then another challenge remains-which is learning to play over that stuff and making it flow. Each song on Laughing Barrel has a unique melodic content, which lends itself to soloing over different rhythmic permutations, which has become something of a trademark in my writing. And all of these songs have a deep harmonic element so that people have to reference the thematic structures and come up with fresh improvisational material, not simply go on auto pilot with all the patterns and hot licks they've practiced-which don't add anything to the

music. Because we've all been there and done that. Don't get me wrong-I'm not reacting against the tradition. I played two years with Mercer Ellington's Orchestra, and that was a fantastic experience dealing with that vocabulary in its actual context night after night-getting to interpret the whole body of work by an authentic American genius. And I feel blessed that people with such deep roots in American music, such as Clark Terry and Benny Carter, Sonny Rollins and Wayne Shorter, are still out here carrying on the traditions of contemporary music as they defined it when they were coming of age. "We can't play everything we know or have heard in one recording or one recital-it would sound incoherent. I'm just reflecting on what I've known and heard and experienced, and hope that it moves people. There's something to be said for playing in the tradition, and something to be said for creating your own canon, and in my life as a musician I've done both. You see, the thing about Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker was that they employed material at that time which sounded like their improvisations-Charlie Parker's music sounded like Charlie Parker's solos. If you put on Bird or Louis's music, it is very much of its time and place. And that's one of the reasons why we have so much trouble getting out from under their shadows, because they were playing contemporary music for their time, and we endeavor to do that as well. And that's the challenge we've set for ourselves as a band on Laughing Barrel." Ron Miles Bio

Denver trumpeter Ron Miles's resume includes time with Bill Frisell, Don Byron, the Ellington Orchestra, and Fred Hess' Boulder Creative Music Ensemble. Besides being solicited all over the world for his unique sound, Ron is a staple of the Denver jazz scene and his recent releases as band leader show off his skills as a composer and arranger as well as a "phenomenally gifted trumpeter" (Bill Milkowski). A resident of Denver since he was 11, he began playing the trumpet seriously in junior high school and studied music at the University of Denver (1981-1985) and the Manhattan School of Music (1986). Miles says that living in Denver has given him an appreciation for a broad array of musical styles that he might not have acquired elsewhere. "Country and Western music, Latin, jazz, and rock are all popular here, so you find yourself trying out a lot of ideas with other musicians and gaining a healthy respect for the music," he explains. Ron Miles was widely recognized as a musical director and arranger with the release of Ginger Baker's *Coward of the County* (Atlantic 1999). His compositions anchor that record and highlight the varied influences from which Ron draws inspiration. Hailed as an inventive composer and gifted trumpeter on his solo releases, Ron cruised through the 1990s with a series of well-received releases on Gramavision (*My Cruel Heart*, *Woman's Day*) and Capri (*Witness*, *Ron Miles Trio*). In 2002

Ron slowed it down for a quiet, intimate recording with friend and master jazz guitarist Bill Frisell. Heaven again showcases Ron's talent as an arranger, particularly on Hank Williams' "Your Cheatin' Heart" and Bob Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (which Ron heard for the first time in the sessions!) According to Bill Frisell, "What is so exciting about Ron is that he really has his own voice. It seems like everything that is going on right now is either very conservative or it rejects everything. Ron has found a way to include everything and not reject things, and still be his own person." Miles said of his playing with Bill, "I think we share a fondness for striking melody, patience and the importance of individual timbre." Ron's newest record from Sterling Circle is Laughing Barrel a quartet recording featuring 7 of Ron's original tunes.

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

Similar manuals: