

Mp3 James Reams & The Barnstormers - Troubled Times



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"The band's music straddles and bridges seamlessly the subtle nuances between Monroe-style bluegrass, the raw-hewed edges of the Stanley tradition and the old-time country sounds of James' native Kentucky." -from Stephanie P. Ledgin's liner notes

14 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Bluegrass, COUNTRY: Traditional Country Details: * 2 DISCS INCLUDED: CD PLUS BONUS, DOUBLE-FEATURE DVD *

James Reams The Barnstormers play "old-school" bluegrass music - traditional, raw, "take-no-prisoners" music - not pretty, just full of drive and plenty of soul. Originally from southeastern Kentucky, James Reams has been in NYC since the early 1980s, where he has been making bluegrass music the old-fashioned way. James Reams The Barnstormers is a crowd-pleaser wherever they go. The band gives exciting, soulful performances with powerful three-part harmonies. Stephanie P. Ledgin writes in her new book, *Homegrown Music: Discovering Bluegrass* (Praeger Publishers, 2004): "A plentiful selection of younger, emerging artists continues to grow in both traditional as well as progressive bluegrass camps. James Reams The Barnstormers rely on early country material and originals written in authentic style. The results are a virtual history of the music and its roots, played in a clean, heartfelt manner that is somewhere between Monroe's and the Stanleys'." The band was nominated by the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) for its 2003 Emerging Artist of the Year Award. The newest album by James Reams The Barnstormers - *Troubled Times* - was released in February 2005. Included in the package is a bonus, double-feature DVD. The CD includes 14 tracks, including original songs and many under-recorded gems. The first of the two films on the DVD is *Rollin' On*, which takes the viewer on a ride on the Redbird Express (the band's red van, named after a retired NYC subway line) - from NYC's Lincoln Center, to a bluegrass festival in a small town, to a live radio show, to a square dance in Brooklyn, to a church on Sunday morning, to an old-time and bluegrass music Jamboree. Directed by award-winning

film director Joe Coppa, along with bluegrass musician and producer James Reams, this 80-minute feature will put to rest the oft-repeated misconception that old-school bluegrass music can't possibly be made in New York City. The second DVD feature, *Pioneers of Bluegrass Music*, is a 20-minute preview of a feature-length documentary of the same name, still in production, in which members of the first generation of bluegrass talk frankly about the early days of the music and life on the road, in interviews conducted at the opening of the International Bluegrass Music Museum, backstage at festivals and on the buses of these pioneers. The preview was directed by David Fasano, along with Coppa and Reams. Interviews are still ongoing for the full-length *Pioneers of Bluegrass Music* documentary, and there is no release date yet set for that. You can view four clips from the DVD by visiting the James Reams The Barnstormers page on YouTube: youtube.com/user/ReamsAndBarnstormers Here are some reviews of *Troubled Times*: Raleigh (NC) News Observer (Jack Bernhardt): "James Reams and the Barnstormers are among the Northeast's most passionate ambassadors of bluegrass. With its solid performances and savvy production, 'Troubled Times' should extend their reach to the rest of the bluegrass-loving world." Country Standard Time (Brad San Martin): "The bonus DVD program cements Reams' reputation as a bluegrass goodwill ambassador. ...Like the album, it's a winning portrait of a persistent, engaging talent delighting in maintaining bluegrass's noble legacy." No Depression magazine (Katy June-Friesen): "The Barnstormers move deftly between old-time, bluegrass, and country with a sound that leans toward the first half of the 20th century a la Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers and Roy Acuff. ...What makes the album so appealing is the energy, fullness, and occasional roughness of the Barnstormers' sound. Reams' rich lead voice delivers a commanding ballad, but it's most at home with the rowdier swing of faster numbers. ...The Barnstormers deliver an edge that's missing from a lot of watered-down bluegrass being made today." Sing Out (John Lupton): "...Reams and his band have earned a reputation for tight instrumental excellence and hard-edged vocals straight from the Kentucky coal country of Reams' youth.... among the album's more interesting and rewarding efforts is 'The Hills of My County,' written by Reams and his partner Tina Aridas, a searing indictment of the coal industry that fans of Merle Travis, Hazel Dickens and Jean Ritchie will appreciate. ...uncompromising, hard-core bluegrass...." Bluegrass Unlimited (Aaron K. Harris): "... delightfully unadorned 1950s-style bluegrass that draws heavily on, yet doesn't mimic, the best-loved bands of that era,... a 14-track playlist that never gets boring,... a sixty-minute DVD film entitled 'Rollin' On,' which documents the band as they serve as engaging

bluegrass ambassadors in such venues as a Lincoln Center music festival and a community square dance." Red Deer Advocate (Donald Teplyske): "On what will surely be considered one of the premier hardcore bluegrass discs of the year, if not the decade, James Reams takes his interpretation of classic sounds to a significantly impressive level. Few bluegrass bands hail from NYC, fewer still fronted by native Kentuckians raised on the music of the hills and hollows of the bluegrass state. James Reams the Barnstormers play acoustic music with passion and energy." Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer (Keith Lawrence): "Reams, who grew up in London, Kentucky, near the foothills of Appalachia, creates a music that straddles the border between bluegrass and old-time country. The strength of a band is in its original material, and they offer plenty of good original material. James Reams The Barnstormers is definitely a band to keep an eye - and an ear - on." Adirondack Bluegrass Association's March newsletter (Bill Healy): "With its songs from the dark side of bluegrass, it has a haunting quality that draws the listener in. The situations in these songs are all a part of life, and James Reams The Barnstormers have put together an intriguing and well-crafted album." Cybergrass (Bob Cherry): "'Troubled Times' is an album that should shake up the bluegrass music community. This is an album that will probably find its way into many bluegrass collections." Rik James, DJ, Bluegrass Traditions / Americana Backroads, KGLT FM, Bozeman, MT: "I think James Reams The Barnstormers are bringing us bluegrass fans the sounds we long for... solid bluegrass timing, great pickin' and singin'. And original material that is so good that any of the first generation pickers could have done 'em.!" Billy J. Ivers, DJ, WLUW 88.7, Chicago "'Troubled Times' is a bluegrass album not to be missed. Chicago has fallen for the bluegrass of James Reams." Glenn Lightner, DJ, WPHB 1260 AM, Phillipsburg, PA "This one of James' best yet. Usually a song jumps out that you especially like, but these are all good ... I really like the DVD, too - it is great. Thank you, James, for something different." James' powerful singing, guitar-playing and songwriting have caught the attention of reviewers and DJs. SINGING: Bill Monroe biographer Richard D. Smith in Bluegrass Unlimited: "There are few vocalists as natural as Reams. He doesn't have to try to sound down-home, he's there at each turn in the song." Stephanie P. Ledgin in Sing Out: "Reams' commanding voice takes the listener all the way back to Kentucky, with an unaffected Monroe-style quality that bends to capture the mood of each selection." Jerry Paul, WJCP, IN, and former editor of Acoustica: "James is such an inspiration to watch. He truly feels his music, and sings from his very soul....If James is ever within your area, he is a 'must see' bluegrass icon." Donald Nitchie, in "The Callous Thumb" column in Banjo

Newsletter: "His southern-tinged vocals sound as smoky as his heroes - Lester, Carter and Red. James and the Barnstormers play classic bluegrass." GUITAR PLAYING: Flatpicking Guitar magazine chose James to profile in its Masters of Rhythm Guitar series of articles. SONGWRITING: John Lupton, Country Standard Time: "The originals, like 'Buffalo Creek Flood' and 'The Cincinnati Southern,' are story-telling songs in the classic country mold." Stephanie Ledgin in Sing Out: "The authentic nature of both words and melody nail the style." Barnstormin', the band's debut CD on Copper Creek Records, released in 2001, contains 15 traditional and original bluegrass songs and tunes. Dirty Linen's Jim Lee says Barnstormin' is "sure to delight any bluegrass fan looking for something out of the mainstream." And John Lupton, in Country Standard Time, writes, "This isn't citified, ersatz bluegrass, it's the real stuff....the music on this new Copper Creek disc features elements reminiscent of the sophisticated stylings of fellow Kentuckian Bill Monroe mixed with the old time, deep-hollow sound of the Stanley Brothers.....This is hard-core bluegrass from down home." The CD was picked by WKCR as one of the top 12 of 2001. The band's next album, released in 2003 - James Reams, Walter Hensley The Barons of Bluegrass - marked the return of legendary banjo player Walter Hensley - the "Banjo Baron of Baltimore" - in his first studio recording in 25 years, and his driving, inventive banjo playing is joined by James' hard-charging rhythm guitar and soulful vocals. That album was nominated by the International Bluegrass Music Association as a 2003 Recorded Event of the Year and named by WKCR-FM as one of the top 12 bluegrass CDs of 2003. James Reams has played both old-time and bluegrass music since he was a child. There were traditional singers on both sides of his family. James also has a critically acclaimed old-time CD, The Mysterious Redbirds 1992-1998, which he recorded with New Lost City Ramblers founding member Tom Paley and old-time fiddler Bill Christophersen. James' earlier solo albums, Kentucky Songbird and The Blackest Crow also received excellent reviews. Reviews of all these albums can be found at jamesreams.com. The Barnstormers now include the following musicians: Mark Farrell has played bluegrass and old-time music for many years, recording with Major Contay The Canebrake Rattlers, a well-respected old-time string band. He joined the Barnstormers in 1998 and is a triple-threat, contributing great mountain-style fiddling, mandolin and harmony vocals. Doug Nicolaisen has been playing banjo with bluegrass bands in the NY tri-state area for the past 17 years. His music incorporates many of the best elements of all the major banjo players yet his style reflects an individuality of its own and adds to the hard-driving energy of the band. The newest member of the Barnstormers, Michael Penque, plays

rock-solid upright bass and sings harmony. He was a founding member of Cletus the Burners, a bluegrass band from Ithaca, NY, with whom he recorded four albums and toured extensively.

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