

CIRCUIT RIDER TRIO | RON MILES – BILL FRISELL – BRIAN BLADE



Named after the title of its second album, *Circuit Rider* features the trio's founder, cornetist **Ron Miles**, guitarist **Bill Frisell**, and drummer **Brian Blade**. A logical evolution from the debut album *Quiver* (2012), *Circuit Rider* (2014) epitomizes Miles' signature lyricism and spiritually aware compositions. The group's repertoire spans American folk traditions and vibrant gospel infused with progressive jazz forms. Confident, elegant, and never overstated, Miles hits just the right balance of grace and rhythm as he quietly makes his mark as a cornetist, composer, and storyteller. His unique lustrous timbre and poignant harmonic sensibility make Ron Miles not only a leading light in the Denver jazz scene but a sought-after collaborator by artists such as Frisell, Ginger Baker, Madeleine Peyroux, Don Byron, Myra Melford, Ben Goldberg, The Bad Plus, Jason Moran, and Joshua Redman.

"I like to think that musicians are the messengers of today," explains Ron Miles. Known for writing songs that possess religious overtones, Miles embarked on this new album with the Circuit Riders of old serving as his inspiration. The Circuit Riders, traveling clergy who took the gospel to remote corners of America's frontier on horseback beginning 250 years ago, were forerunners in their day. According to Miles, *Circuit Rider* is a post-modern nod to these leaders who lived for a cause greater than themselves. "We, as musicians, are traveling Circuit Riders preaching every day at any place available and are always on the move."

Comprising five original compositions on this eight-track disc, *Circuit Rider* marks the first time Miles recorded an album with the same group twice. This time around, Miles could hear the band in the songwriting process. "We discovered songs together," says Miles. "Their astounding capacity for playing impacted how I approached the music. When you have musicians as perceptive and responsive as Bill Frisell and Brian Blade, the music just takes off!"

Like its predecessor *Quiver*, *Circuit Rider* also showcases a selection of carefully chosen cover songs. Synthesizing the past are rearrangements of Jimmy Giuffre's "Two Kinds of Blues," as well as both "Jive Five Floor Four," and "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird" by the trio's hero Charles Mingus.

Sharing a fondness for striking melody, musical economy, and the importance of individual timbre, these three genre defying musical masters are highly respected leaders with expansive discographies and projects covering a wide spectrum of contemporary music. Their collective playing reflects the landscape that is implicit in *Circuit Rider*; all three giving a certain folk-like context to Ron's original compositions. Denver-based Ron Miles and Denver-raised Bill Frisell (a partnership that dates back to the mid-90s) both exude the Old West, while Brian Blade's breezy sophistication and jagged rhythms salute his native Louisiana.

PRESS:

“It’s hard to describe just how music so simple can be so effective, so moving, and so soulful. Miles takes all the vibrato out of his horn, blows at times so gently it’s a wonder he summons such beauty from such an unforgiving instrument. Yet he can also play with a marching band precision, or in the turn of a bar, heat a blue note that makes your hair stand on end.”

– **Jazzwise, UK**

“Mr. Miles, a natural melodist with an openhearted style, has a long-running history with Mr. Frisell, as well as an easy bond with the drummer Brian Blade. Together they pursue earthy elasticity and a dawning sort of lyricism. Mr. Miles has a knack for pairing strong melodies with stealth convolutions of form... What’s always striking about his music is a sense of possibility that rings of the American frontier. – **The New York Times**

BIOGRAPHIES:

Ron Miles is a songwriter and cornet player based in Denver, Colorado. He was born in Indianapolis in 1963 and moved to Colorado with his family in 1974. Ron Miles has recorded as a leader for Prolific, Capri, Gramavision, Sterling Circle, and most recently, for Enja/yellowbird. One of the finest improvisers and composers of his generation, he is revered by his fellow musicians and has been heralded by critics around the world. In addition to leading his own bands, Ron Miles has performed in the ensembles of Bill Frisell, Mercer Ellington, Don Byron, Ginger Baker, Myra Melford, Joe Henry, Madeleine Peyroux, Jason Moran, Matt Wilson, The Bad Plus, Harriet Tubman, Ben Goldberg, and Joshua Redman. Also a gifted and experienced educator, Miles has been a music professor at the Denver Metropolitan State University since 1998. His newest recording, *I AM A MAN*, released in November 2017 on yellowbird, features again Bill Frisell and Brian Blade, along with pianist Jason Moran and bassist Thomas Morgan.

Bill Frisell’s prolific career as guitarist, composer, and arranger demonstrates extraordinary range and depth, with work rooted in jazz but incorporating elements of blues and other popular American music traditions. Immediately recognizable for his unique sound, he has transformed the modern guitar landscape, steadily expanding his sonic purview and claiming an ever-greater range of musical traditions, media, and repertoire. From Charles Ives and Aaron Copland to Buster Keaton and Bob Dylan, from Sonny Rollins and American Songbook ballads to country blues and Nashville twang, Frisell distills the essence of the American experience. He has collaborated with a wide range of musicians, filmmakers, painters, and has appeared on over 250 recordings, including 40 albums of his own. He is a Grammy winner, USA Fellow and Doris Duke Artist, and received a Letter of Distinction from the American Music Center. Most recently, he was a Guest Curator for the Roots of Americana series at Jazz at Lincoln Center and Resident Artistic Director at the San Francisco Jazz Center.

A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, **Brian Blade** established himself as a versatile and highly creative and musical drummer early in his career, appearing on albums by Kenny Garrett and Joshua Redman, followed by recordings with countless others. Making his mark as a bandleader and original composer, Blade released his first album, *Brian Blade Fellowship*, at the age of 27 in 1998 and followed two years later with *Perceptual*, both on Blue Note. Always an in-demand sideman and collaborator, Blade continued to work with a wide range of artists, including Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Bill Frisell, and Wayne Shorter whose quartet he’s been a member of for 15 years. Ten years after releasing his first album as the *Brian Blade Fellowship*, Blade returned with *Season of Changes* in 2008, followed by the solo Americana, singer/songwriter effort *Mama Rosa*. The Fellowship’s fourth album together, *Landmarks*, was released in 2014.