

**WILLIE JONES III HONORS JIMMY HEATH, LARRY WILLIS,  
NDUGU CHANCLER, ROY HARGROVE on  
*FALLEN HEROES***

**Album out on May 21, 2021 on WJ3 Records**

**Brooklyn, NY (DRAFT)**—Jimmy Heath’s personification of jazz history. Larry Willis’ exemplary compositions. Ndugu Chancler’s universal musicality. Roy Hargrove’s embodiment of all that is Black music. On **Willie Jones III**’s new album, *Fallen Heroes*, the leader, drummer, and producer honors the undeniable contributions made by these towering figures the music world has lost in recent years.

To document this celebration of music and spirit, Jones convened long-time colleagues who shared the stage with many of these masters alongside Jones throughout the years: trumpeter **Jeremy Pelt**, saxophonists **Justin Robinson** and **Sherman Irby**, trombonist **Steve Davis**, pianist **George Cables**, bassist **Gerald Cannon**, vocalist **Renee Neufville**; as well as emerging pianist **Isaiah J. Thompson**. Collectively, the personnel on *Fallen Heroes* represents the continuum of jazz, and dedication to uphold the legacies of Heath, Willis, Chancler, and Hargrove.

*Fallen Heroes* was recorded at the legendary Van Gelder Studios in Englewood, New Jersey on January 21, 2020, and while adhering to social distancing protocols on August 29, 2020. Available on CD and digital formats on May 21, 2021, the album is Jones’ eighth release as a leader. *Fallen Heroes*, like all of the drummer’s previous titles, is self-produced and self-released on his WJ3 Records recording label.

The world lost Ndugu Chancler and Roy Hargrove in 2018, then Larry Willis, and Jimmy Heath in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Through *Fallen Heroes*, Jones celebrates his personal history with his musical heroes and the impact of each. “This new album is inspired by and dedicated to these soldiers of the music,” said Jones. “My father played with Ndugu, who became one of my earliest influences as a drummer, and I had the great fortune to work with Jimmy, Larry, and Roy, right up to the end of their lives.”

“Initially, this album was going to be a celebration of Roy’s music,” Jones said. “Then Larry passed, and Jimmy passed soon after. As Roy is the common denominator in my relationships with Larry and Jimmy, *Fallen Heroes* evolved to being about them, and Ndugu, too.”

The opening track on *Fallen Heroes* is a drum solo by Jones, dedicated to Chancler. He has selected compositions by Heath (“CTA”) and Willis (“To Wisdom, the Prize,” “Fallen Hero,” and “Annika’s Lullaby”).

“I’ve played many of these tracks on the bandstand with Roy and Larry, and my brothers and sisters on this recording, too,” he continues. “Trust,” composed by Hargrove, is one of those tunes. On *Fallen Heroes*, the track is recorded—for the first time with lyrics also by the late trumpeter—and sung by Renee Neufville.

*Fallen Heroes* ends with “Jackin’ For Changes,” Jones’ urge to become an agency for change during these challenging times. A take on “Jackin For Beats,” Ice Cube’s song which illustrates the concept of rhyming over another artist’s beat, Jones’ version is perhaps inspired by his dedication to carry the torch for the heroes he honors on this recording. “Everybody is hoping for change: the struggle for equity, to survive the pandemic, or get closer to normalcy. I’m a believer in making the change yourself, take control of what’s around you—your community, the finances around your community, your culture. However you do it, be the vehicle of that change.”

### ***Fallen Heroes***

#### **Track Listing:**

1. Something For Ndugu

Composed and performed by Willie Jones III

2. Fallen Hero

Composed by Larry Willis

Soloist: Sherman Irby, alto saxophone

3. C.T. A.

Composed by Jimmy Heath

Soloists: Willie Jones III, drums; Sherman Irby, Justin Robinson, alto saxophones; George Cables, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass

4. Trust

Music and lyrics by Roy Hargrove

Soloists: Renee Neufville, vocals; Gerald Cannon, bass

5. Truthful Blues

Composed by Jeremy Pelt

Soloists: Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Justin Robinson, alto saxophones; Steve Davis, trombone; George Cables, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass

6. Annika's Lullaby

Composed by Larry Willis

Soloists: Steve Davis, trombone; Sherman Irby, alto saxophone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet

7. To Wisdom, The Prize

Composed by Larry Willis

Soloists: Justin Robinson, alto saxophones; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; George Cables, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass

8. I've Just Seen Her

Composed by Charles Strouse

Soloists: Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Isaiah J. Thompson, Piano

9. Jackin' For Changes

Composed by Willie Jones III

Soloists: Isaiah J. Thompson, Piano; Justin Robinson, alto saxophone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Willie Jones III, drums

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