



## **WILLIE JONES III ENTERS THE NEXT PHASE CD Available Now on WJ3 Records**

New York, NY - **Willie Jones III**, one of the most celebrated drummers in jazz, releases *The Next Phase* on July 20 on the artist's own WJ3 Records. On his fourth album, Jones leads a group that features the modern jazz scene's most innovative musicians: Steve Davis on trombone, Greg Tardy on saxophone, Eric Reed on piano, Dezron Douglas on bass, Warren Wolf on vibes and vocalists Claudia Acuña and Renee Neufville.

"I wanted this album to have a soulful and deep sound with a focus on hard bop and swinging," says Jones. "And this great group of musicians personifies that vibe on the album."

*The Next Phase* consists of an original tune by Jones as well as new and unreleased songs by Reed, Douglas and Davis. "Until It's Time for You To Go," originally recorded by Roberta Flack, has been translated to the jazz medium by vocalist Renee Neufville. "Renee and I worked together on the RH Factor projects," says Jones. "She's a great singer and very soulful. I've always loved Roberta Flack's version of this song and I thought it would be a great musical vehicle for Renee." Claudia Acuña is featured on "Melancholy Mind," written by pianist Anthony Wonsey. "Claudia and I originally recorded this tune on one of Anthony's sessions. It's a beautiful tune but was never released so it was great to go back to the studio to record it nearly 12 years later."

Jones continues to work consistently with venerable artists Cedar Walton, Hank Jones, Ernestine Anderson, the Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars and others but the album's title reflects the changes in the drummer's life, both personally and professionally. "Since the release of my last CD, I've become more focused on what I want to do with my career," he says. "I've been releasing my own and other jazz musicians' CDs for the past 10 years and with each new title, the quality of the recordings and the audience response evolves." He looks forward to producing and releasing more titles under the WJ3 banner despite a hectic performance schedule. As his production skills and career goals ramp up, it's Jones' philosophy about jazz that remains constant. "Jazz," he simply states, "should always be swingin'."

*The Next Phase* track listing:

1. "The Thorn"

*solos: Greg Tardy, Warren Wolf, Steve Davis, Eric Reed and Willie Jones III; composed by Eric Reed*

2. "Changing the Game"

*solos: Warren Wolf, Greg Tardy, Eric Reed, Dezron Douglas; composed by Willie Jones III*

3. "Melancholy Mind"

*solos: Claudia Acuña, Steve Davis; composed by Anthony Wonsey*

4. "Family"

*solos: Eric Reed, Steve Davis, Warren Wolf, Greg Tardy, Dezron Douglas composed by Kamasi Washington*

5. "Kosin Rufu"

*solos: Warren Wolf, Eric Reed, composed by Dezron Douglas*

6. "Another Time"

*solos: Eric Reed, Warren Wolf, Dezron Douglas, Willie Jones III, composed by Eric Reed*

7. "Until It's Time For You To Go"

*solos: Renee Neufville on vocals; composed by Buffy St. Marie*

8. "Up The Middle"

*solos: Steve Davis, Warren Wolf, Eric Reed, composed by Steve Davis*

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