



Two for the Show Media
Chris DiGirolamo
PO Box 534
Mattituck, New York 11952
tel: 631-298-7823 cell: 718-669-0752
www.Twofortheshowmedia.com
Email: Chris@Twofortheshowmedia.com

For Immediate Release:
Greenleaf Records

Release Date: February 4th, 2013

**In-Demand Drummer Rudy Royston Steps Out as a Leader with *303*.
Greenleaf Music debut scheduled for February 4th, 2014 release features ten
Royston originals plus interpretations of Mozart and Radiohead.**

Since moving to New York City in 2006 from his home base in Denver, Rudy Royston has emerged as one of the most exciting and in-demand young drummers on the jazz scene. Having already racked up a list of impressive credits as a sideman with the likes of rising star of the tenor sax, J.D. Allen, alto saxophonist Tia Fuller, bassist Ben Allison, guitarist Bill Frisell and trumpeter Dave Douglas, Royston was ready to step out as a leader in his own right. His debut on Greenleaf Music, *303* (named for Denver's area code), not only features his brilliant and versatile playing on the kit but also showcases his considerable skills as a composer on ten originals. With a stellar crew of some of the brightest young lights on the New York scene -- guitarist Nir Felder, pianist Sam Harris, saxophonist Jon Irabagon, trumpeter Nadja Noordhuis and the two-bass tandem of Mimi Jones and Yasushi Nakamura -- Royston and company also turn in dramatic interpretations of Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus" and Radiohead's "High and Dry" on this outstanding debut.

"Rudy is such a dynamic drummer, intensely polyrhythmic, both subtle and explosive," says trumpeter-composer-bandleader and Greenleaf Music founder Dave Douglas. "I was delighted when he announced he was working on a record of his own music with a brilliant and eager cast of musicians."

The collective chemistry on *303* is apparent from the opening track, "Mimi Sunrise," which opens with an evocative rubato soundscape before settling into an insinuating groove. The rhythmically-charged "Play on Words" opens with some intricate, tightly executed harmony lines upfront from the horns and a flowing guitar solo from Felder, eventually building to an ecstatic crescendo with saxophonist Irabagon and pianist Harris exchanging bristling solos on top of the churning pulse. The thoughtful "Prayer (for the People)" is one of two such peaceful prayers on *303*, the other being the evocative closer, "Prayer (for the Earth)."

"Good Night Kinyah" is a gentle lullaby written by Royston for his daughter. This restful waltz is highlighted with some remarkably soulful and lyrical playing by guitarist Felder and saxophonist Irabagon along with a lovely flugelhorn solo from Noordhuis. "Gangs of New York" is a piece that travels to a lot of places in the course of just under seven minutes. It opens with a buoyant and breezy theme underscored by Royston's insistent brushwork then builds to a powerful crescendo fueled by Rudy's muscular and melodic drum solo and is further tweaked by Felder's distortion-laced skronking and full-out power chords. "I like that tune," says Rudy. "It turned out how I wanted it to, even though I kind of wanted to rock out even more at the end." Adds the composer, "My approach to writing is more stream-of-conscious than about theory. I'm not into the AABA kind of thing, I don't really feel that kind of material. I just like the freedom of being able to just go from one place to a different place. I may like this vibe or that and I'll go for it when I'm putting together tunes. So they may not end the way they begin."

One of the many drumming highlights on *303* comes on the group's dreamy take on Radiohead's "High and Dry," which has Royston essentially soloing throughout the piece without regard for barlines. "Miles to Go (Sunset Road)" is a simple vamp that remains unchanged throughout the piece while being adorned in subtle ways. "I don't really want anything to 'happen' on that piece," says Rudy. "That's the number one thing I learned from Ron Miles: nothing *has* to be. Do whatever you should, it doesn't have to be any certain way. Nothing *has* to happen in that tune because something already *is* happening. It's just the beauty of those little moments in music where you're playing a tune and then in one second someone plays something and it just sort of touches you deeply and you keep going. So we play it for four minutes or so and along the way there are those special moments."

The suite-like title track is another one of those Royston compositions that travels to several places throughout the course of the tune. Opening on a calming note with a warm theme expressed by the horns, it heads into an introspective piano trio section that showcases Harris' sensitivity and lyricism before shifting abruptly to more kinetic mode full of angular lines and urgent backbeats. From there it segues to a freewheeling section marked by Irabagon's intensely soaring soprano work and Royston's explosive free drumming over a formidable ostinato. They take Mozart's great choral work "Ave Verum Corpus" at the appropriate stately tempo with Royston on brushes and Irabagon on tenor improvising in the unhurried manner of John Coltrane's "Naima."

"Bownze" is another whirlwind drum showcase for Royston, who says he was thinking about Elvin Jones in composing this piece. "I wanted to give some tribute to Elvin on that," he says. "It's something where I can just open up and swing a little and play the drums." An uptempo burner, it has several stop-time statements built in to maximize drama and let the piece breathe. Pianist Harris offers a stirring solo here while saxophonist Irabagon rages on tenor, going toe-to-toe with Royston at the breakneck pace. Following that intense romp, the closing "Prayer (for the Earth)" is a cleansing breath to put a bow on the proceedings, but not before the 'hidden track' (a reprise of the album's opener "Mimi Sunrise" to perfectly book-end the collection).

The gifted drummer (born in Fort Worth, Texas and raised in Denver) studied early on with Duffy Jackson and Ed Soph. He first gained critical notice for his playing on a pair of acclaimed recordings in the late '90s by his Denver mentor, trumpeter Ron Miles -- 1996's *My Cruel Heart* and 1997's *Woman's Day*, the latter featuring guitarist-composer Bill Frisell, who was also Miles' employer at the time. "With Ron I would ask him what to play on a tune and he would tell me to play whatever I felt the music was asking for," recalls Royston. "He very rarely ever told me what to play. with Ron I learned how to play what I wanted to play."

Rudy made the leap to New York in 2006, though he admits that he wasn't instantly in-demand when he came to town. "It was rough that first year," he says of his transition to the Big Apple. "I had no gigs. I just hit up a bunch of jam sessions and waited for people to call. After a while I started thinking that I had made a mistake, that maybe I should go back to Denver. But I kept playing and eventually people did call." His big break came when he got the call from J.D. Allen. "That was like the heaven gig because I found a cat in J.D. who actually wanted me to play the way I wanted to play, where I could totally be myself. So it made me feel, 'Oh man, there is hope!'" Royston drew raves for his fearlessly interactive playing in Allen's powerhouse trio (first documented on 2008's *I Am I Am*) and eventually began developing a following in New York. That fan base expanded internationally when he began touring with Frisell's *Beautiful Dreamers* trio (with violist Eyvind Kang). Playing in that more chamber-like setting also allowed Royston to explore a more sensitive side of his musicality. "I'm playing with strings in his band so it forces me to play at a different dynamic than I played with J.D. Allen. I can really play with colors on the drums, and you really have to use the cymbals very differently in that band. I didn't want to be thought of as one kind of a cat who just played one kind of thing, which is why I enjoy playing with Bill."

Royston is currently a member of Frisell's *Big Sur* quintet (the Beautiful Dreamers trio augmented by cellist Hank Roberts and violinist Jenny Scheinman) and the Dave Douglas Quintet (he appears on 2011's *Be Still* and 2012's *Time Travel*). And now, with the release of **303**, he is poised to make the next leap in his very promising career. "The music on **303** has complete vision," says Dave Douglas. "It's really Rudy from the first note to the last. Profound grooves, soulful melodies and soloing come directly out of Rudy's compositions into the band. It is a true pleasure to hear the inner musical thoughts of this great drummer. I look forward to hearing this music hit the stage and to see Rudy take off as a leader."

Rudy Royston is Currently Available for Interview.

For more information on Greenleaf Releases go to: www.greenleafmusic.com

For More Information on Rudy Royston go to: www.rudyroyston.com

Press Contact for Rudy Royston:

Two for the Show Media Chris DiGirolamo

tel: 631-298-7823 cell: 718-669-0752

www.Twofortheshowmedia.com

Email: Chris@Twofortheshowmedia.com