

# JAI<sup>i</sup>RUS Talks About His New Single Groove & How He Got Here

Los Angeles by way of Maryland native JAI<sup>i</sup>RUS is proudly representing for the funk with his newly released single “Groove.” The classically trained singer’s DC roots more than prepared him for the next stage of his creativity. As a student at the legendary Duke Ellington School of the Arts he started learning from the masters. The learning included all the sounds the city is known for including the warm conga funk of Go-go. Jazz guru Patrice Rushen started mentoring JAI<sup>i</sup>RUS in DC and would continue during his time in college. Those sessions were extremely important to his emergence as an artist.

JAI<sup>i</sup>RUS pulled the elements of “Groove” together and started planning for his EP after it seemed like we were heading for a post pandemic world with the reopening of businesses. His pure vocals within the scheme of rhythm from a blaxploitation soundtrack produced by Cole Mitchell comes across as a renewed flavor from a different time. He shared with me how he got this far on his journey and the source of his inspiration.

**How did “Groove” come together?**

“Groove” took about a year total to make. I was working with a producer and at the time we were just trying to write something new. I had the drum groove which is inspired by the sounds of my hometown Go-go music. We got as far as adding drums and guitar, but I ended up setting the song aside with the pandemic and my last year of college it wasn’t quite time. So months later, now working with a new producer I hit up my good friend Cole Mitchell and showed him my idea and we

went to work! Reached out to my friends Eliza Petrosyan and Rani Adi to add guitar and bass and weâ€™ve been grooving ever since!

### **How long have you been singing and how to decide to sing professionally?**

Iâ€™ve been singing since I was a little kid. I grew up in church and sang on the youth choir which wasnâ€™t enough so as a pre-teen and teenager I was singing on the adult choir. I did community theatre because I love musicals and was in choir at school. It wasnâ€™t until my sophomore year of high school I decided to do it professionally. I transferred to the local performing arts school Duke Ellington School of the Arts where they classically trained my voice, my artistry, and musicianship. I fell in love with creating and the stories they could tell and the affect they can have on people and thatâ€™s when I knew I just had to do this.

### **Who or what are your muses?**

My biggest muses are God, universe, nature, and my family, friends: community. They inspire me, ground me, and motivate me to be my best self! I always feel most connected with myself when these things are in my presence or on my mind. Good music also is a muse of mine. I listen to a ton of music from jazz to pop to rock to hip hop and more but a good song can transport me to the unknown and really just inspire me to the fullest.

### **Were you mentored by Ledisi, Patrice Rushen and Bobby McFerrin and what did you take away from being around them?**

So in high school I was blessed enough to experience master classes from great artist like Ledisi (a few) so I was able to hear directly from her about the voice and music and her approach to artistry. As for Bobby McFerrin I was given the opportunity to perform in, what we call a Legends concert, with my choir and to hear what he does with music and what he

had to say was incredible something I'll never forget. My biggest takeaway from him is improvisation. He's a master at it and the sounds he's able to create are breathtaking which inspired my improv journey. Now Patrice Rushen is a direct mentor of mine. I first met her at a show in highschool the jazz choir I was in opened for her and Ledisi at the Kennedy Center. What I didn't know is I'd meet her again at USC and she'd change my life forever. To be able to have multiple classes with her as my professor and getting direct feedback on my music changed everything for me. She gave me so many different things to think about and ways to go about creating and executing my ideas! She also was teaching me piano and arranging which is her expertise, so to learn that on a one on one kind of setting is honestly once in a lifetime kind of thing. I could go on and on about the things she taught me but that be too long for this but she really took my foundation my seed and watered it and I can say now I'm beginning to bloom!

**What can you tell me about your forthcoming EP?**

I'll say get ready! When I do things I give it my all and then some. So this being my first collection of songs I wanted to release something timeless, almost nostalgic, and different but fresh! Some real deal music. And that's all I'll say.

**Will you be doing all the writing and producing?**

I do all the writing myself and my friend Cole Mitchell does the producing! I am a believer the more creatives on the project the better it'll be. So though I do all the writing I'm open to co-writes and collaborating but there's no way in hell I could do any of this by myself it really takes a village.

**What's next?**

I've got a lot in store for the near future! Without giving too much away I'll be back in August with a song that's so

special to me and one Iâ€™m really excited to share with the world.

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Credit: Caleb Griffin and Domia Edwards