

BIO - Jua

Seven years ago, Jua Howard was making something of a name for himself in neo-soul circles, crooning in velvety tenor tones reminiscent of Luther Vandross and Donny Hathaway in clubs from New York City to London. *Anticipation*, his 2007 self-released debut CD of mostly original ballads, was picking up play on smooth-jazz and R&B stations.

Yet Jua, who uses only his first name professionally (it's Swahili for "sun"), was having second thoughts about his musical direction. "I got tired of what I was doing," the Chicago-born singer says. "With the neo-soul scene, everything started sounding the same."

During the summer of 2009, after quitting a nine-to-five job with a nonprofit scholarship program in Washington, D.C., Jua moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and enrolled at Berkeley's Jazzschool Institute, which is now known as the California Jazz Conservatory. During his year there he became the first recipient of the school's Mark Murphy Vocal Jazz Scholarship, named for veteran poll-winning singer Murphy. He also studied privately with vocal coach Raz Kennedy, formerly of Bobby McFerrin's Voicestra.

Currently dividing his residence between NYC and Raleigh, North Carolina, Jua now emerges as a unique and highly emotive jazz vocal stylist with a remarkable sophomore 10-song CD *Colors of Life* released on June 24, 2014.