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## CURTIS HAYWOOD

### Artist Profile

A recipe designed to feed the heart, body, mind and spirit. Long in touch with the healing power of music, Curtis has shared the stage most recently with smooth jazz Pioneer Chieli Minucci/Special EFX, and Current Smooth jazz contemporaries Will Donato, Elan Trotman, and JJ Sansaverino – “Smooth Ingredients” stirs up a wild swirl of rhythmic energy that artfully blends Jazz, R&B, Latin, Reggae and even some colorful tropical funk. Haywood provides SMOOTH INGREDIENTS for the perfect musical listening experience. ~JONATHAN WIDRAN (Smoothjazz.com)

**“My sole intent, when I play, is for my voice to resonate to the core of your soul. I want the music to penetrate your body, your mind, and your spirit. I want my music to be a sacred blessing and for you on some level to come away whole”**

Saxophonist Curtis Haywood has always been in touch with the healing spirit of music. His earliest memory of his attachment to music is an anecdote his mother shares with everyone. “When I was about 5 or 6 years old, I received my first instrument - a trumpet. When it was bedtime I absolutely refused to go to bed without it. Now being of West-Indian descent, my parents were obviously not trying to have any *'back mout' from dis here little child!* Finally, convinced that they had lost the battle, they allowed me to sleep with my trumpet.”

From that day forward, music has played an integral role in Haywood's life. And on his self-titled debut as a solo artist, the former member of 1990's band Joshua has found a strong voice of his own. “It's been a journey since my band broke up more than ten years ago, and it took a while for me to rebound, adjust and confront my fears of being alone and to face the challenges this industry throws at you, but it was always a non negotiable burning call on my life,” says Haywood of his decision to finally release his CD.

Joining Haywood on the CD are a collection of some stalwart players in the jazz, gospel and R&B worlds, among them bassist Artie Reynolds (Kirk Whalum, Alicia Keys, Keith Sweat, Alex Bugnon.) Also on board are Ainsley Taylor on drums, Chris Fischer on keys, Willie Brown on guitar, and Paul Aponte on percussion. But it is Haywood's haunting soprano saxophone that gives the CD its voice and passion throughout a collection of 12 tracks that include sultry contemporary jazz originals and fresh arrangements of R&B favorites.

The three songs by other artists that Haywood selected to interpret come straight from his heart. "What can I say? I'm a hopeless romantic, so each song that I covered has to do with a different aspect of love." The CD's opening track, "Anytime," says Haywood, "just screams heartbreak," and speaks volumes of Haywood's musical affinity for his namesake, the legendary R&B saxophonist King Curtis. Moving across the romantic spectrum, his rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Creepin'," conveys a sense of "deep passion," and the well-known "Sunny" resonates with the light-hearted fun of friendship.

Haywood's original compositions also speak eloquently of the man behind the music. The lyrical, buoyant "*Heal Our Land*" was, says Haywood, originally written in response to 9/11, but fully coalesced into a song of hope, expressed by the voices of a children's chorus, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. However, it's in the rhythmic and soulful "*Rain Song*," that Haywood's dedication to music as a healing force is fully expressed. "There is overwhelming evidence of Ethiopia being the cradle of all mankind. Simply put, all human life could very well have begun from this region of the earth. However, it is ravaged with famine and considered one of the world's poorest countries, where people struggle daily for their most basic of needs," he explains. "*Rain Song*" is as much about awareness as it is a call to action. Haywood also aligns himself with Feed the Children, which helps supply food for the people of Ethiopia and around the globe, donating portions of album proceeds to both charities.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Haywood's early love for music eventually led to his being chosen from some 5,000 candidates to attend New York's prestigious High School for the Performing Arts. He went on to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied audio engineering. He counts among his musical influences Grover Washington Jr., David Sanborn, Bob Mintzer, Kenny Garrett, and his aforementioned namesake, 'King Curtis'.

Haywood's work with his former jazz fusion group, Joshua has lead him to perform at the New Artist showcase at Capital Jazz Festival in Washington D.C., on the Christmas Holiday Tour with Grammy Award Winners "Take 6" at the International African Arts Festival NYC and at B. Smith's Rooftop Café, for their CD release and several shows. In addition, he has performed on the stage or on the same bill with the following: Melissa Morgan, Melba Moore, Ray Goodman and Brown, Harold Melvin's Blue Notes & The Intruders, The Temptations Review ( with Dennis Edwards), and The Temptations (with Otis Redding) Kirk Franklin, Sounds of Blackness and The Noel Pointer Band in concert with Dave Valentine.

Now, with the release of his self-titled debut solo CD, Curtis Haywood hopes to touch as many people as possible with the positive power of his music. "It may be a cliché, but I believe that music is truly a universal language, in that it transcends physical boundaries. That's what I seek to do in my work as a musician, to speak to people spirit to spirit."

#### **Jazz Performance Experience-**

- 2023 Brass City Jazz festival
- 2022 Mattituck Museum, CT
- 2020 Heckscher Park (Huntington NY)
- 2019 Branford Jazz festival, CT
- 2018 Springfield Stone Soul jazz Festival, Springfield Ma
- 2015 Springfield Stone Soul jazz Festival, Springfield Ma
- 2015 Barbados Laughter and jazz Festival
- 2015 Pieces of a Dream Concert, Qns NY
- 2014 Long Island Winterfest- Raphael's Vineyard
- 2013 "Sinbad" (comedian) "Intruders" NJ
- 2012 107.5 WBLS New Years Eve Cruise, NY, NY,
- 2012 Voted Long Island's Best by Huntington Arts Council (Dix Hills performing arts)
- 2012 Chieli Minucci (Special EFX) Heckscher Park (Huntington NY)
- 2012 CNY Jazz Festival, Syracuse NY
- 2011 Hartford jazz Festival, Hartford CT
- 2011 Vistancia Wine and Music Festival, Vistancia AZ
- Previously Toured with: Take 6, Melissa Morgan, Melba Moore, Temptations, Blue Magic, Harold Melvin's Blue Notes, Ray Goodman and Brown, Stylistics,

#### **Recording projects.**

- 2022 City Lights
- 2021 Mary did you know
- 2018 "Summer Breeze"
- 2017 Hark the Herald Angel Sing
- 2015 release "Smooth Ingredients"

- Self titled CD 2007