

Dreams close the distance between cultures and countries.

A dream brought Juke Ross approximately 2,537 miles from his home of Guyana in South America to the New York Borough of Brooklyn. One of 14 siblings, the self-described *“med school dropout*,*”* singer, songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist touched down stateside in 2017 after his independent single “Colour Me” caught fire on Spotify. Acoustic guitar in hand, his effortless take on pop soul organically emanated Caribbean flavor and quietly attracted upwards of 80 million cumulative streams within two years. Written in his birthplace, the *Grey* EP detailed the initial phase as he went from a tiny country to one of the biggest cities in the world.

However, his 2019 full-length debut for Palm Tree Records and RCA Records shines a light on not only where he is now, but where he’s ultimately headed.

“I’m writing what I’m going through at the moment,” he affirms. “I put the past aside and started a whole story of where I am and how life is unfolding. That’s this new chapter of music. I left home, came to the states, figured it out, and learned the culture. I went from seeing this world on television to assimilating into it. It was a pretty intense experience to accomplish. I had a lot of fun doing so though.”

By 2018, he enjoyed a series of firsts in North America. He sold out *“cool venues like Arlene’s”* and tried his hand at composing in the states, delivering the one-offs “Hey Lil’ Mama” and “Fresh Roses.” The latter racked up 17.5 million Spotify streams in under six months. At the end of the year, he landed a deal with Palm Tree Records as Kygo’s second signing to the label. He dove back into writing.

For the first time, Juke invited collaborators into the creative process. After penning all of his own tunes prior, he welcomed the opportunity to co-write and co-produce, fueling sonic expansion as a result.

“I’m very introverted, so I tend to do things alone,” he admits. “Getting to New York, meeting other musicians, and becoming exposed to more genres and styles, I felt like the next step was to start co-writing and co-producing. It was curiosity. I decided to challenge myself to be creative in a different way. I wasn’t just by myself in Guyana anymore.”

Teaming up with Petey Martin in the studio, he crafted his 2019 single “Burned By The Love.” Over gently finger-picked acoustic and sparse piano, his soulful delivery takes hold. His voice builds from soft verses into towering falsetto on the bridge and a sweeping, cinematic hook, *“Learned how to fly so high, we got burned by the sun—and burned by the love*.*”*

“It’s about having a hard time,” he goes on. “In the verse, I’m trying to hold my head above water, going through life and juggling many things. You end up facing your past and considering another heart in a relationship. We deal with the struggle of chasing our hearts. It can be so difficult to do that. I wanted to speak on it.”

The song sets the stage for the record and illuminates his seamless union of pop, soul, reggae, and calypso. *“My ultimate goal has always been to make an album,”* he smiles. *“It’s crazy how this has gone. Some days I wake up, and I think, ‘I’m a songwriter. What the hell is that?”*

In the end, Juke fulfills his dream and formally introduces himself by way of this music.

“I’m still discovering who I am, but I’m chronicling that process in these songs,” he leaves off. “I’m a music-head. I’m so passionate about this, and I’m still just following my heart. If somebody can feel something or be moved, there would be nothing better for me.”

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