

THE DO LIST

# Faye Carol Celebrates the Diversity of Black Music with Virtual Concerts

By [Nastia Voynovskaya](#)

Feb 3

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Featured performer Faye Carol singing during a Living Jazz livestream. *(Noah Hendricks)*

**The Dynamic Miss Faye Carol** believes that she was put here to sing. And it's this conviction that's propelled an independent music career that's spanned more than six decades.

She's seen enormous triumphs, like when the City of Oakland tapped her to perform for Nelson Mandela after his release from prison. And she's also had her share of hurdles. In the 1960s, for instance, various government infrastructure projects decimated the Black-owned jazz and blues clubs that were Carol's bread and butter. She nonetheless found a way forward and became a sought-after live performer who toured with Marvin Gaye.

In the '70s and '80s, Carol found an audience in the Castro's cabaret scene, but in the ensuing years the community was hit hard by the AIDS epidemic. She found new ways to thrive again in the '90s, 2000s and 2010s, performing with the likes of Pharoah Sanders and Ray Charles, recording an album and launching her own music school. Then, in 2020, just as she launched a new concert series at Geoffrey's Inner Circle, COVID-19 shut everything down.

Still, Carol remains undeterred. She and her pianist, Joe Warner, have kept busy all year with virtual concerts at venues like Piedmont Piano Company and Freight & Salvage, and, thanks to a grant

**The Dynamic  
Miss Faye Carol  
is the East Bay's  
Hardest-  
Working Live  
Musician**

from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, even created their own livestreaming studio complete with a professional camera and sound set-up, Chez Carol.

“It’s all just a new frontier, and I’m up for it, and we’ve been having fun doing it,” she says. “As James Brown would say, I have to stay on the good foot. Because other than that, it’s too depressing. If you look at really what’s going on in the world, it’s pretty depressing knowing how many people don’t have their life, and how many families don’t have their loved ones. And art—being such a healer of people—is so away from people.”

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Though she misses interacting in person with her fans—or, as she calls them warmly, her babies—Carol and Warner’s livestreams have been attracting viewers from all over the country and the world, some of whom have even commissioned them to do private virtual concerts in lieu of in-person private parties. In celebration of Black History Month, Carol has an

upcoming online concert program that showcases one of the things she does best: connecting the threads between various forms of Black music and celebrating the diaspora's diverse forms of creativity.

“This is one thing that's dear to me because I think all of the music should be united. In our world, everything is really polarized,” she says. “You have young people's music, you have the old people's music. You have cool jazz, soul jazz, hip-hop, R&B, country—labels. And to me, it's all music. And one time in Black music history it was just like that, it was one big thing.”

On Feb. 4, Carol and Warner are doing a livestream from Geoffrey's Inner Circle for Oakland public school students with



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**freestyle king of the U** who has an uncanny ability to rhyme from off the top of his head for miles. They'll be joined by drummer Aaron Green and bassist James Wiley; the project is backed by the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program. Carol and Warner perform for Berkeley public school students on Feb. 25 with a concert titled Black Music Through the Ages. The show with Mistah F.A.B. will

stream again for the general public on Carol's [Facebook page](#) on Feb. 27.

On Valentine's Day, Carol and Warner will be streaming from Chez Carol as the Dynamic Duo. "I like to say, for lovers and others. Valentine's Day is just an excuse to sing some more good songs. And if you have somebody to cuddle up with, all the better," Carol says.

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As much as all of us miss in-person concerts right now, Carol looks at the bright side, and says that her busy schedule of livestreaming is challenging her to stay creative and keep developing new material.

"I don't see nothin' short of you burying me that's going to keep me from doing this," she says with a twinkle in her eye. "So, hey, let the good times roll—we're doing it. If it's streaming that's happening, let the streaming begin."

*Faye Carol's complete upcoming concert schedule can be found [here](#).*