

CULTURE

Don't Call It a Comeback — A Sit Down Conversation with Singer/Songwriter Vivian Green

Interview **BRIANNA CARTER**

Award-winning singer-songwriter and pianist Vivian Green has been sharing her music with us for the past 20 years, as she has released seven albums to date.

Well-known for her chart-topping singles, "Emotional Rollercoaster," "Gotta Go Gotta Leave," and "Gotta Get Back to My Baby," Green proves that staying true to who you are will never lead you astray. Taking it back to how her music career began, Green chose to write her latest album, "Love Absolute," in its entirety at the piano. Produced by Kwamé Holland, "Love Absolute" features appearances by Ghostface Killah, saxophonist Mike Phillips, her sister, and her son Jordan.

Photographer: **KEITH MAJOR**
Wardrobe Stylist: **ARNOLD MILFORT**
Hair & Makeup Artist: **CATANDA JAMES**

For your seventh album, "Love Absolute," how did your writing process differ from your previous albums?

This time, I gave myself the freedom to see what I was going to come up with. It's my favorite way to write and allows me to go where I want to go musically. I've always preferred that, but I've never done it for an entire published album. I like to have the freedom to go where I want to go musically, instead of having to follow what's already out, which is what I've done most of my career.

What's a piece of advice that you wish someone would have given you?

I wish that someone would have told me that whatever you do first, whatever image or music you publish first, is what a lot of people are going to hold you to, even if that isn't who you really are. Even if others contrived the image or you were pushed to write to trendy music, people will hold you to that and stick you in whatever box that is.

Make sure whatever you do initially is 100% you and be strong enough to fight for what you want to do. Don't let anybody subtly push something on you. That's what I wish someone told me – then this whole thing would've gone a different way.

I have been writing since the age of 11, and what was published wasn't a reflection of what I did ten years before. I didn't know it was going to have a long-term effect that I would loathe. I wish someone would've told me that. I would've had a stronger voice and stood up for the things that were true to what I do at the piano. I don't like to have regrets, but it might have changed a lot for me if I could have received that advice.

Which one of your albums do you feel was a turning point in your career?

My fifth album *'Vivid'*, which was released in 2015, was definitely a turning point for me. The release of the lead up-tempo single, "Gotta Get Back to My Baby," was the first time I felt like I started chipping away from what people were used to. I didn't think people would even accept an up-tempo record from me because I never released one before that. People loved it and embraced it.

"Gotta Get to My Baby" was the highest performing single since "Gotta Go Gotta Leave." It opened the door to perform at more club dates. I never did club dates before 2015 because I didn't have any club records. No one really calls you to sing a ballad at the club. So that year, I probably had as many club dates as I had full concert shows. I was nominated for a Soul Train Centric Certified Award that year, and I performed at the Trumpet Awards and Black Music Honors. So there were a lot of things that happened that hadn't happened in a while.

My first two albums were on a major label, so I did get many opportunities at that time. I went all over the world. So that album and song changed things. Some people thought I hadn't put anything out since 2005, which is crazy, but everybody's not a diehard, faithful fan, you know? You have fans that are fans when you have a hot song out, and they may not have known.

It's possible that two or three albums could have gone by, and they never knew about them. But I never stopped singing. This has been my job for the last 20 years. I've never done anything else.

One theme conveyed in 'Love Absolute' is self-love. How do you incorporate self-love into your daily life?

I don't overextend myself. It is one of the things I like about myself because I wasn't always that way. Now, if I can't do it, I'm just not going to do it. Deciding not to overextend myself physically or emotionally contributes to my peace of mind. Sometimes you have to do that unapologetically, even if someone may feel slighted. That's something I've come to grips with at this point in my life. I try to keep things as simple as I can.

I love to laugh and keep things light and fun as often as possible. This is coming from the mom of a special needs kid, so laughter is one of my keys for sure. Laughter is fantastic. I love running and working out. They're both a huge part of my peace of mind, and time that I get to just spend with myself. I think, I pray. Sometimes I write a hook in my head and hope I remember it until I get to the piano and really get it down. It's good for my health, good for my heart, amazing for peace of mind, and something I hope I can continue to do for the next 20 years. It's really kept me going in a lot of ways.

“**I love to laugh and keep things light and fun as often as possible.**”

What do you want fans and new listeners to take away from 'Love Absolute'?

I think every time I make an album, I want it to be remembered. I want whoever bought the album to live with it. I don't want it to be an album they purchased in 2020 and they never listen to again. It is always my hope that there's something there that keeps them listening far from the release date. What I'm doing is writing and sharing my truth, whatever it is at that moment. When you are sharing in a vulnerable way, you hope that someone will relate to it, understand it, and see themselves in it somehow and connect to it.

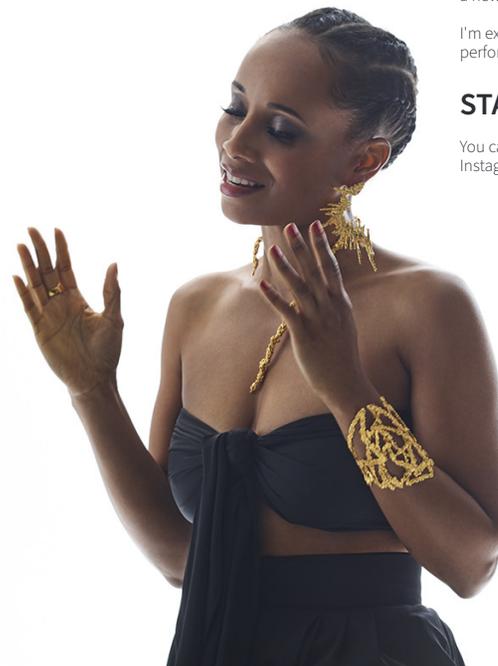
What is next for you? Do you have any upcoming tours scheduled? And where can fans find out more?

We just shot the video for "Where You Are." I feel that it's going to turn out beautifully, so I'm excited about it! We're also trying to shoot another video or two this summer, so that'll be fun! Look out for me coming to a city near you! Now that things are opening up, dates are getting back on the calendar, for sure. I have three or four at the end of this month, and then we're filling up into July. Then it will just continue into August and September as things are getting back to normal. Some are makeup dates, and some are new dates. It's always interesting coming up with a new show when you have a new album and a 20-year catalog.

I'm excited to see how it will all turn out because I enjoy performing.

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You can find upcoming tour dates at viviangreenmusic.com; Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter at [@iamviviangreen](https://www.instagram.com/iamviviangreen).



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