

Biography

Carl and Carol Jacobs

Carl and Carol Jacobs stand as one of Trinidad and Tobago's most enduring musical power couples. Across more than five decades, their partnership spanned the golden eras of Caribbean pop, soca, and jazz fusion, leaving an indelible mark as performers, hit songwriters, and cultural mentors.

Early Roots and Formation (1960s–1970s)

- **First Connection:** Carl and Carol met as teenagers in Belmont, Port of Spain, in the mid-1960s, quickly bonding over a shared love for soul, R&B, and local calypso.
- **Early Ensembles:** Both honed their vocal craft performing with local pop, soul, and dance bands around Port of Spain, including early stints with groups like the **Charlies Roots** musical network and various hotel circuit outfits.
- **Developing a Signature Sound:** Their vocal dynamic blended Carl's deep, gravelly tone and charismatic stage presence with Carol's soulful harmony, range, and fluid vocal arrangement abilities.



The Peak Years and Soca Legacy (1980s–1990s)

- **Hit Recordings:** Together and individually, the duo produced and performed on some of the defining soca and Caribbean pop anthems of the 1980s and 1990s.
- **Key Tracks:**
 - **"Savage" (Carl Jacobs):** A massive soca crossover hit that solidified Carl's reputation as a solo frontman.
 - **"Bend Down and Rock":** A staple duet that demonstrated their infectious stage chemistry.
 - **"Luv Up":** Another classic release highlighting their fusion of reggae, pop, and soca grooves.

- **"From Now On":** A cherished romantic duet showcasing their softer, pop-ballad sensibilities.
- **Studio & Session Work:** Carol became one of the most sought-after backing vocalists and vocal arrangers in the Caribbean, contributing to studio albums for calypso icons like Lord Kitchener, Mighty Sparrow, David Rudder, and Machel Montano.

Live Performance & Cultural Venues (2000s–Present)

- **Kaiso Blues Café:** In the mid-2010s, Carl and Carol (along with partners) opened **Kaiso Blues Café** on Newtown/Woodbrook, Port of Spain. The venue became an iconic sanctuary for live music, nurturing emerging artists in Caribbean jazz, neo-soca, spoken word, and acoustic music.
- **Generational Legacy:** Their musical legacy continues through their children—most notably singer-songwriter **Carla Jacobs** and musician **Carni Jacobs**—maintaining a family tradition deeply rooted in Trinidadian musical culture.

Influence on live music scene

Carl and Carol Jacobs have played a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining Trinidad and Tobago's live music ecosystem. Beyond their accomplishments as recording artists, their contribution as venue owners, curators, and mentors transformed how non-Carnival music is experienced, performed, and nurtured in Port of Spain.

1. Reclaiming Space for Small-Venue, Intimate Performances

During the height of the large-stage soca, fete, and stadium-style concerts in the late 1990s and 2000s, opportunities for intimate, listening-focused live music in Trinidad were limited. Carl and Carol recognized that Trinidadian musicians—especially those outside the mainstream Carnival circuit—needed dedicated performance spaces to test material, hone their stagecraft, and perform year-round. Through their establishment of venues—most notably Kaiso Blues Cafe—they created a sanctuary for live music that prioritized acoustic quality, audience intimacy, and artistic expression.



Kaiso Blues Cafe

Live Music Venue

Kaiso Blues Cafe became a landmark standard for intimate live performance venues in Port of Spain, providing sound engineering and lighting designed specifically around live instruments and small-ensemble configurations.

2. Championing Genre Diversity and Fusion

Carl and Carol actively expanded what audiences expected from local live shows by encouraging genre-blending and cross-pollination.

- **Anthony's Cari-Jazz & Caribbean Fusion:** They consistently showcased artists who merged traditional calypso/kaiso rhythms with jazz harmonies, funk, and R&B.
- **Eclectic Programming:** Their stage welcomed everything from acoustic folk, neo-soca, and reggae to blues jams, open-mic poetry, and theatrical readings.
- **Elevating Kaiso:** They provided a year-round home for Kaiso music, proving that calypso and storytelling did not need to be restricted solely to the Carnival season or traditional calypso tents.

3. Mentorship and Nurturing Emerging Talent

As veteran performers with decades of experience in vocal arrangement, touring, and studio production, Carl and Carol acted as informal mentors to younger generations of Trinidadian musicians.

- **Platform for Young Bands:** Emerging local bands, vocalists, and instrumentalists were given regular slots to build their fanbases and polish their stage presentation in front of attentive audiences.
- **Vocal & Musical Coaching:** Carol's expertise as a premier backing vocalist and arranger allowed her to guide young singers on harmony work, mic technique, and vocal health.
- **Collaborative Environment:** Their venues served as a casual meeting ground where seasoned veterans and emerging talent could share a stage, jammed together, and exchange ideas.

4. Sustaining a Year-Round Live Music Culture

Prior to the movement spearheaded by the Jacobs family and like-minded venue operators, live music outside of the January-to-March Carnival season faced significant seasonal lulls. By maintaining consistent weekly schedules of live bands, jam sessions, and acoustic showcases, Carl and Carol helped establish a culture of year-round live entertainment for locals and tourists alike.

Bio & Press Materials curated for Caribbean Arts Forum / Anthony's Cari-Jazz Publishing Ltd.

Photo Credit: Anthony Maillard / Courtesy of Carl and Carol Jacobs