# Life

# A MAN AND HIS PIANO:
## CAMERON WINTER'S 'LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL'

**by Elijah Polance**
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/THEY/THEM
elijah.polance@uconn.edu

In online spaces, it felt like the buzz surrounding Cameron Winter, the New York singer-songwriter and frontman of the indie rock band Geese, reached its peak before his Carnegie Hall show even happened.

Occurring on Dec. 15, 2025, the performance came almost exactly a year after Winter's solo debut "Heavy Metal." Winter, who was 23-years-old at the time of the show, joined the ranks of an exclusive few musicians to headline the venue at such a young age (The Beatles were 20-23 years old, Bob Dylan 22, Joni Mitchell 25).

A bootleg audio quickly circulated on YouTube, gaining over 120,000 views, but it wasn't until Friday, Oct. 9 when "Live at Carnegie Hall" received a proper release, almost a year after it was filmed.

During the performance, sightings of celebrities in attendance and a film crew headed by Paul Thomas Anderson and assisted by Benny Safdie seemed to elevate the show to mythic status.

The set is over an hour long and includes seven of the 10 tracks off "Heavy Metal," two tracks released by Winter as "Singles" and three previously unreleased songs. Featuring just Winter singing and playing piano, the record depends on Winter's fluctuating and unconventional singing style, vibrant lyricism and piano flourishes to stave off monotony.

Thirty seconds of audience cheering preface the opener, "It All Fell in the River," one of the new songs Winter has been performing live. Winter pieces together bodily imagery, none of which seems to survive the surrounding river. His voice takes on a lilting unlike anything in his prior solo work when he sings "I didn't ooh then / But I'm ooh-ing now," immediately cementing the record as something new.

The third track, "Emperor XIII in Shades," unravels in a slow, brooding progression, with some of Winter's most surreal writing yet. It's hard to imagine how "The beach ball cathedral swam like a sea-fly swarming" connects with the overarching narrative about a connection with Jesus, yet it doesn't feel out of place. When Winter ends by proclaiming "I don't like what happened to Jesus / But I sure do like Saturday morning," he sends the track off with an unexpected piano jaunt.

It's this very same, often unpredictable, energy from the piano that gives these songs tension and makes them feel fresh, especially for the tracks with studio releases. Take "Drinking Age," whose "Heavy Metal" form is already stripped back, for example. When Winter executes the staggered piano notes that sustain the second verse, he juxtaposes the slightest high-pitched key press with an immediate slam of bass notes. Between these soft-loud cycles, Winter lets silence absolutely fill the hall. It would be hilarious if it weren't for Winter's downtrodden singing; a near-groan pressed closely to the microphone.

"The Rolling Stones" is another track elevated by live piano flourishes. It features a new piano solo halfway through, which starts with a rushing arpeggio that culminates in key tinkling. Winter holds the rapid play at bay before the melody comes back dynamically in the third verse, his voice exploding when he reflects on a "good sense doesn't win me any wars" and retreating into tender falsettos for the end.

Of the new tracks, "If You Turn Back Now" is both the most straightforward and undeniably resonant. With a cascading, overwhelming piano that channels some of the Robbie Basho comparisons Winter receives, he unfolds verse after verse capturing a nuanced love for someone, singing of his commitment that only strengthens with neglect.

It's a whirlwind of irresolvable pining, with the devil's presence hanging around the edges. With achy warbling, Winter concludes with lyrics, "You're trying to win back my heart, but you won't / My heart is for those who leave me alone."

The effectiveness of "If You Turn Back Now" almost takes away from the following "Nina + Field of Cops," which features a similar piano approach. The layered vocals and pounding piano that links abstract non sequiturs in the studio form of "Nina" doesn't fully translate when performed live by one person, making the track feel somewhat shrunken. Still, Winter transfuses all the emotion and frenetic volume possible for the ending, tapping into bits of the manic energy that made the original so special in the first place.

But the greatest moment is the new rendition of "$0." Fully realized in solo-form, the 8-minute masterpiece sees Winter pushing his vocals to the limit. In the middle sequence, where the studio version features backing vocals overlapping with the main lyrics, Winter sounds even better on his own, belting, "I had my hand over my mouth, and I watched the moon over New Jersey" with intense clarity.

And then there's the build into Winter singing "God is real," where he stretches every vowel into an eternity. You can feel the tension in his voice, the immensity of this epiphany and how it filled the room. The measured 3-minute piano is thoughtful, as if Winter needed to sit and consider this newfound revelation.

The final two tracks are singles released before "Heavy Metal" that didn't end up on the record. Both "Take It With You" and "Vines" progress slowly but feature new falsetto moments that wrap the performance up with delicate vulnerability.

Anyone who detested Winter's musical style will likely find little value in the performance. But for those who left Winter's prior material feeling disconnected, but still eager to understand the hype, these songs might show what makes his work so appealing.

A filmed production of the show, directed by Anderson, will begin touring U.S. theaters on Nov. 20, 2026.

Rating: 4.5/5



**Cameron Winter's performs at Carnegie Hall in December, 2025. The performance was recorded live and released on October 6, 2026.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF @QBERTPLAYA ON INSTAGRAM

# THE AVATAR RETURNS CAPTIVATINGLY

**by Suhayl Ahmed**
CONTRIBUTER
HE/HIM/HIS
suhayl.ahmed@uconn.edu

**Water. Earth. Fire. Air.**

For many years, the "Avatar" franchise has captivated audiences with its rich worldbuilding, memorable characters and powerful stories. "Avatar: Seven Havens" was released on Friday, Oct. 9, as the franchise's latest installment, with an entirely new world full of surprises.

The story is set in a post-apocalyptic world where the remnants of humanity are sheltered in seven havens. Everyone believes that the great cataclysm was caused by Avatar Korra, a stark contrast to the optimistic note on which "The Legend of Korra" ended. The Avatar, once the hero of humanity, is now regarded as its destroyer. The wasteland is utterly inhospitable due to constant sandstorms and harsh weather.

In this story, we enter Ellora, a city modeled after the real-life Ellora Caves in India. The citizens follow the uncompromising motto: "For the survival of Ellora," which justifies their conscription of all non-benders into a defensive brigade. Audiences follow the young twin Avatars (yes, Avatars plural), Pavi and Nisha, as they reckon with their tarnished reputation and the enormous responsibility of saving the world.

To be honest, I did not have high hopes for this show. By the third installment, many beloved franchises lose what makes them special, relying on nostalgia to drive sales rather than introducing anything new. "Avatar: Seven Havens" is anything but that, delivering a captivating story that makes it hard to look away.

The story is reminiscent of the first episodes of "Avatar: The Last Airbender," where we are dropped into a world in which the Avatar seems powerless against the threats facing humanity. Pavi and Nisha also mirror Aang and Korra, respectively. Pavi does not believe fighting will solve their problems, while Nisha is a go-getter who wants to use her power to fight off whatever caused the cataclysm. I am already curious about how their contrasting beliefs will either complement each other or bring them into conflict.

The thing I loved most about this show was the mysteries surrounding every aspect of the world. We only know as much as the characters in the show — next to nothing. We do not know what caused the cataclysm, why Korra is claimed to be responsible or why there are two Avatars. The cliffhanger at the end of the third episode has me eagerly awaiting the next episodes.

The one thing I hope they include is the close-knit friend group that made the first two series so special. I wonder how Pavi and Nisha will assemble their own Gaang or Krew (the fandom nicknames for the first two Team Avatar groups). Some viewers have criticized the animation in the trailer, but I found no glaring issues with it while watching the show. That being said, the animation does feel more like a traditional American cartoon compared to the anime-inspired style of the original series.

"Avatar: Seven Havens" exceeded every expectation I had going into it. It is a compelling, fresh series that is willing to take the franchise in a new direction. If these first three episodes are any indication of the rest of the series, I have no doubt that the best is yet to come.

Rating: 5/5



**Avatar Pavi in a scene from the new Avatar series "Avatar: Seven Havens." The series was released on Oct. 9.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAPAMILYA ONLINE WORLD ON FACEBOOK

## SUBOG Weekly Events:

### October 12th - October 18th

Mason Jar Sundae – 10.13 @ 2pm on the SU Mall

Comedy Magic Show – 10.14 @ 7:30 pm in the SU Theater

Capture the Flag – 10.15 @ 7:00 pm on Fairfield Way

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu and check out @subogatuconn on Instagram for updates on our events!