

## **COCO ELYSSES**

**Director/Educator/Actress/Musician/Writer/Producer/Conductor  
Artist/Beat Maker/DJ/Film Scorer/Doula/Composer**

[cocoelysses@gmail.com](mailto:cocoelysses@gmail.com)

### **EDUCATION**

2012 National University, MFA Creative Writing (screenwriting)  
1991 Saint Augustine's University, B.A. English, minor, Spanish

### **NOTABLE TEACHERS AND MENTORS**

Music Juan Fuentes, Clifton Robinson, Carlos Pride, Robert Fernandez,  
Charles Brown (classical percussion), John Santos (Master Class),  
Giovanni Hildago (Master Class), Carlos Pride, Nicole Mitchell-Gantt,  
Renee Baker, Maia the Artiste  
Acting Ron O.J. Parson, Rick Plastina, Robin Stanton,  
Dance Tommy Gomez  
Martial Arts Tony Roberts (Pa Qua & Hsing-I)  
Writing Paul Carter Harrison

### **NOTABLE INSTALLATIONS/FEATURED INTERVIEWS/BOOKS**

1999 ***Black Women and Music- More than the Blues, University of Illinois Press***  
2001 ***Skywatchers of Africa***, Adler Planetarium, Chicago (voice-over)  
2004 ***A Doula Story***-documentary (voice-over)  
2006 ***Jazz- A documentary***, (musician)  
2010 ***99 New Poems- A Contemporary Anthology*** (featured poet)  
2010 ***America Is...Personal Essays for Social Justice*** (featured writer)  
2015 ***Free at First- The Audacious Journey of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musician 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*** (exhibit)  
DuSable Museum of African American History Chicago, IL  
2015 ***The Freedom Principle*** (exhibit) the Museum of Contemporary Art-  
Chicago, IL

### **AWARDS/CONTEST**

2019 **Jeff Award**- Best Original Music in a Play  
Musical Director/**Tilikum**  
2018 **ALTA Award** - Outstanding Original Music in a Play  
Musical Director/**Tilikum**  
2014 Semifinalist NYTVF/**Lifetime Television Unscripted Show Pipeline**  
1999 **Jeff Award Nomination**, Best Ensemble, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, Chicago Theatre Company  
1999 **Black Theatre Alliance Award**, Best Ensemble, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, Chicago Theatre Company  
1999 **Black Theatre Alliance Award Nomination**, Best Featured Actress, *The Old Settler*

## FILM SCORES

- 2021 **...looking for Elysses** – Starchild Lovechild Productions  
2022 **Dr. Dominatrix** – Starchild Lovechild Productions

## DISCOGRAPHY

- 1995 **Samana**, *Samana* Storywiz Records  
1999 **Tracy King & the Cushities**- *Looking through a mirror darkly*, Halal Music  
2002 **Black Earth Ensemble**, *Africa Rising*, Dreamtime Records  
2002 **Coco Elysses**, *Wildflower*, Starchild Lovechild Publishing  
2002 **Hector Silveira**, *The Young Voice of Cuban Music*, Salsa Asé Publishing  
2004 **Raiza**, *Latino Soul*, EMI  
2016 **Skylanding**- *The Music of Yoko Ono* – Miyumi Project, Asian Improv aRts Midwest  
2016 **The Miyumi Project**- *Raw & Alive*, Asian Improv aRts Midwest  
2018 **Raw & Alive I & II** - The Miyumi Project, Asian Improv aRts Midwest  
2019 **Resurrection Suite** - Ben Lamar Gay, Carlos Pride, & Coco Elysses, Rhythm Testament Records  
2020 **The Best of Miyumi Project**, FPE Records  
2021 **Bass Dreams minus B**, FPE Records  
2023 **Book of Elysses - Chapter 7 - Quantum Leaps- Electric Coco**, Black Earth Music

## LEADER/ FOUNDER

- 2021 Music Director - **Osun's Water** - Thee Debauchery Ball 2021 & 2022  
2021 President **AACM** – The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians  
2021-present **Coco Elysses' Elixir Ensemble** - Havana Jazz Festival 2021  
**Coco Elysses' Elixir Ensemble** Hyde Park Jazz Festival 2021  
2005-2009 **El Corazon Negro**  
Afro-Latin music ensemble combining South and Central American folk music with Latin Jazz and World music concepts.  
2006-present **Coco Elysses Quintet**  
Latin Jazz Ensemble with a multi-cultural and creative compositional twist  
2007-2008 **Sambatico**  
Afro-Brazilian jazz ensemble

## MUSIC COLLABORATIONS/PRODUCER

- 2022 AACM New Composer's Concert Series - Elastic Arts Foundation  
2022 Afrofuturism Festival 2022 **Carnegie Hall** (Producer) AACM - Ancient to the Future  
2021 **AACM at 55 Concert** (collaboration with The American Composer's Forum) featuring compositions by **Steve Adegoke Colson**, **Rudresh Mahanthappa** and **The Honorable Elizabeth A. Baker** University of Chicago's Logan Center for the Arts – Chicago, IL

- 2007           **Stiletto Entertainment** Crow's Nest Band-Holland America Cruise  
line  
 2006-present **KRC Ensemble** (All female Jazz/Blue/Swing) ensemble  
 2006-present **AACM Great Black Music Ensemble**  
 2005-present **Hip-Chicks Jazz** (All female Jazz Big Band)

**SELECTED PERFORMANCES**

- 1995-1996   Black Writers Conference, Chicago State University, Chicago, IL  
 1996           Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI  
 1998           First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's 50th Birthday Celebration,  
Chicago, IL  
 1998           African Festival of the Arts, Chicago, IL  
 1999           Two Harbors Folk Festival, Two Harbors, MN  
 1999           Venetian Festival, St. Joseph, MN  
 1999           Chicago Music Awards, Chicago, IL  
 1999           Association for the Advancement of Creative Musician's 30th  
Anniversary Concert, Chicago, IL  
 1999           World Islamic Conference, Chicago, IL  
 2000           Chicago State University's Honors Convocation, Chicago, IL  
 2007           Navy Pier's African American History Concert Series  
 2007           Institute for Positive Living Annual Gala Concert  
 2008           Millennium Park Chicago, Chicago Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL  
 2009           Insolent Noise Festival, Pisa, Italy  
  
 2008           Millennium Park Chicago, Chicago Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL  
 2009           Insolent Noise Festival, Pisa, Italy  
 2011           Miyumi Project, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, I  
 2011           Taiko Legacy 8, Featured Guest Artist, Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Chicago, IL  
 2012           You Can't Hide (one woman show) MPAACT solo jam series  
 2013           JBM-Images Beyond - a theatrical concert works by Joan Beard  
Mitchell and Nicole Mitchell, Chicago, IL  
 2014           Chicago Modern Orchestra, MLK Celebration/AACM Great Black Music  
Ensemble, South Shore Cultural Center  
 2014           Chicago Modern Orchestra, I'm a Soul Man- Celebrating the music of  
Curtis Mayfield, Isaac Hayes & Marvin Gaye, Dominican University,  
Chicago, IL  
 2014           Taiko Legacy 11, Featured Guest Artist, Museum of Contemporary Art.  
Chicago, IL  
 2015           AACM 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 2015           Women of the AACM- Concert and Panel discussion, DuSable Museum  
of African American History  
 2015           Chicago Modern Orchestra, Sunyata: Towards Absolute Emptiness,  
Museum of Contemporary Arts, Chicago, IL  
 2015           AACM 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert, Millennium Park, Chicago, IL  
 2015           AFTERWORD- Film Instillation for George Lewis' Opera

- 2015 AFTERWORD, Opera, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
- 2015 EMPIRE (Television Series) Musician
- 2015 Frankfurt, Germany Jazz Festival, Generation NOW Ensemble, AACM
- 2015 Made in Chicago Poznan Jazz Festival, Voices Heard Ensemble
- 2016 Voices Heard- Black Women in Creative Music Festival, The Promontory, Chicago IL
- 2016 The Startled Fraction/Film Catherine Sullivan Films, Chicago, IL
- 2017 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble/Gorillaz Northerly Island, Chicago, IL
- 2018 Musical Director Tiliikum- Sideshow Theatre Chicago, IL
- 2019 Music Composer Antigone- Baltimore Center Stage Baltimore, MD
- 2019 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble/Roy Ayers Promontory Chicago, IL
- 2019 Thee Debauchery Ball- Film- Black Harvest Film Festival Chicago, IL
- 2021 Havana Jazz Festival, Coco Elysses – Elixir Ensemble, Havana, Cuba
- 2021 Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Coco Elysses – Elixir Ensemble, Chicago, IL
- 2021 Conductor - The Great Black Music Ensemble of the AACM  
AACM at 55 – The Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago, IL
- 2021 Chicago Fringe Opera – Renee Baker’s CMOP – Baldwin’s Chronicles
- 2021 Music Director - Oshun’s Water, Thee Debauchery Ball - Chicago, IL
- 2022 THE NEXT 100 YEARS - Black Earth Sway, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, MA
- 2022 Ebert Film Festival – CMOP Project – Josephine Baker’s Siren of the  
Tropics
- 2022 San Francisco Jazz Festival – Nicole Mitchell’s Black Earth Sway
- 2022 Percussionist – avery. r. young n da deacon board – Jazz at the Lincoln  
Center – New York, NY
- 2022 Percussionist – Hypnotic Brass Ensemble Millennium Park, Chicago, IL
- 2022 Black Earth SWAY – SESC Jazz, Pompeia, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2023 Thee Debauchery Ball, Music Director, Chicago, IL
- 2023 The Bridge – Paris, France

### **UNIVERSITY PRESENTATIONS**

University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL  
University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana  
University of Wisconsin-Stout Menomonie, WI  
Trinity Christian College, Palos Hills, IL

### **TEACHING**

2007-2011 **DuSable Leadership Academy**-Spanish/Acting/Speech Instructor  
2008-2011 **DJ/Mentor** WHPK Radio 88.5-Host of *Pushing the envelope*

### **VOLUNTEER WORK**

2006-2011 **Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians** Dean of  
School/Member  
2010 **DuSable Museum of African American History**-Advisory  
Committee-*The African Presence in Mexico*

2013-present **Chicago Volunteer Doulas**

2020-present **Chair** – The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians

**VIDEO GAMES**

SAINTS ROW

EVERQUEST II

WATCHDOGS

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS**

1998-present **AEA**-Actors Equity Association

1996-present **AFTRA- SAG** American Federation for Radio and Television Artist/  
Screen Actors Guild

2006-present **AACM**-Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians

2011-present **NAST**- National Association of Schools of Theatre