

COCO ELYSSES

Executive Director | Educator | Actress | Musician | Writer | Producer | Conductor | Visual Artist
Beat Maker | DJ | Film Scorer | Doula | Composer | Vocalist | Social Media Manager

cocoelysses@gmail.com

EDUCATION

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

NOTABLE TEACHERS AND MENTORS

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

NOTABLE INSTALLATIONS | FEATURED INTERVIEWS | BOOKS

2024 **Faith Ringgold: American People**, (voice-over) Museum of Contemporary Art,
Chicago, IL
2024 **Permission I**, (visual art exhibit), Cultural Connection, Chicago, IL
Permission II, (visual art exhibit) 345 Art Gallery, Chicago, IL
2015 **Free at First- The Audacious Journey of the Association for the
Advancement of Creative Musician 50th Anniversary** (featured musician exhibit)
DuSable Museum of African American History Chicago, IL
2015 **The Freedom Principle** (featured musician exhibit) the Museum of Contemporary
Art- Chicago, IL
2010 **99 New Poems - A Contemporary Anthology** (featured poet)
2010 **America Is... Personal Essays for Social Justice** (featured writer)
2006 **Jazz - A documentary**, (musician)
2004 **A Doula Story - Documentary** (voice-over) Healthconnect One, Chicago, IL
2001 **Skywatchers of Africa**, Adler Planetarium, Chicago, IL (voice-over)
1999 **Black Women and Music - More than the Blues**, University of Illinois Press

AWARDS & HONORS

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

FILM SCORES

- 2022 **Dr. Dominatrix**, Starchild Lovechild Productions
- 2022 **Thee Debauchery Ball**, The Director's Cut, City Vanguard Productions
- 2021 **...looking for Elysses**, Starchild Lovechild Productions

DISCOGRAPHY

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

LEADERSHIP & ENSEMBLE DIRECTORSHIP

- 2025 **Coco Elysses Elixir Trio**, Bronzeville Winery, Chicago, IL
- 2019-2024 **Osun's Water**, Music Director, Thee Debauchery Ball
- 2021-2024 Chair (President) **AACM**, Chicago, IL
- 2021 **Coco Elysses' Elixir Ensemble** -(virtual) Havana Jazz Festival
- 2021 **Coco Elysses' Elixir Ensemble** Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL
- 2007-2008 **Sambatico** , Afro-Brazilian jazz ensemble, Chicago, IL
- 2005-2009 **El Corazon Negro** Afro-Latin music ensemble, Negro League Café, Chicago, IL

MAJOR COLLABORATIONS & PRODUCED CONCERTS

- 2024 **AACM Presents: The Afro Duster Suite**, Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago, IL
- 2023 **AACM New Members Concert/Pre Kwanzaa**, First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2023 **HaRaSaJo: Honoring Saalik Ziyad**, Harrison Bankhead and Kidd Jordon First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2023 **AACM Summer Concert Series** – (collaboration) AACM/Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago, IL
- 2022 **AACM New Composer's Concert Series** - Elastic Arts Foundation, Chicago, IL
- 2022 **Afrofuturism Festival** Carnegie Hall (Producer) AACM - Ancient to the Future, New York, NY
- 2021 **AACM at 55 Anniversary 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 **Crow's Nest Band** – Stiletto Entertainment, Holland America Cruise line
- 2006-present **KRC Ensemble** (All female Jazz/Blue/Swing) ensemble, Chicago, IL
- 2006-present **AACM's Great Black Music Ensemble**, Chicago, IL
- 2005-2012 **Hip-Chicks Jazz** (All female Jazz Big Band), Chicago, IL

MAJOR PERFORMANCES & INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES

- 2025 Black Earth Sway, Panama Jazz Festival, Panama City, Panama
- 2025 DJ in Residence, Black Cat Lounge, Chicago, IL
- 2024 Osun's Water, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL
- 2024 Miyumi Project, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL
- 2023 Thee Debauchery Ball, Music Director, Chicago, IL
- 2023 The Bridge – Paris, France
- 2023 Theatre Ste-Marie d'en Bas, CIMN, Grenoble, France 2023 Le Moulin a Jazz, Vitrolles, France
- 2023 AJMI, Avignon, France
- 2023 Le Periscope, Lyon, France
- 2023 Panmonica, Nantes, France
- 2023 Clous, Plages Magnetiques/fest. Decadanse, Brest, France
- 2023 Le Petit Fauchoux, Tours, France
- 2023 Opera de Dijon/Chicago District/ Dijon, France
- 2023 Le Taquin, Un Pave dans le Jazz, Toulouse, France
- 2023 Le Confort Moderne, Jazz a Poitiers, Poitiers, France
- 2023 Le Fridge, Albi, France
- 2023 Maison Joe Bousquet, Carcassonne, Carcassonne, France
- 2023 La Malterie, Lille, France
- 2023 Fosse'-des-Treize, Jazzdor, Strasbourg, France
- 2023 La Dynamo, Pantin Paris, France
- 2023 Robbins Juke Joint, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
- 2023 Dee Alexander's Ancestor's Reign, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL

2022 THE NEXT 100 YEARS - Black Earth Sway, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

2022 Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, Ebert Film Festival - Josephine Baker's Siren of the Tropics, Urbana, IL

2022 Nicole Mitchell's Black Earth Sway, SF Jazz, San Francisco, CA

2022 avery. r. young n da deacon board - Jazz at the Lincoln Center - New York, NY

2022 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

2022 Black Earth SWAY, SESC Jazz, Pompeia, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2021 Havana Jazz Festival, Coco Elysses Elixir Ensemble, Havana, Cuba

2021 Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Coco Elysses Elixir Ensemble, Chicago, IL

2021 The Great Black Music Ensemble, Conductor, AACM at 55, Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago, IL

2021 Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, Baldwin's Chronicles, Chicago Fringe Opera, Chicago, IL

2021 Oshun's Water, Music Director, Thee Debauchery Ball - Chicago, IL

2019 Antigone, Music Composer, 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

2018 Tilikum, Musical Director, Sideshow Theatre, Chicago, IL

2017 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble | Gorillaz, Northerly Island, Chicago, IL

2016 Voices Heard - Black Women in Creative Music Festival, The Promontory, Chicago IL

2016 The Startled Fraction, Film, Catherine Sullivan Films, Chicago, IL

2015 AACM 50th Anniversary Concert, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

2015 Women of the AACM - Concert and Panel discussion, DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago, IL

2015 Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, Sunyata: Towards Absolute Emptiness, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Chicago, IL

2015 AACM 50th Anniversary Concert, Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

2015 AFTERWORD via Fantasia, Film Instillation, An Opera by George Lewis

2015 AFTERWORD, Opera, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

2015 EMPIRE (Television Series)

2015 Generation NOW Ensemble of the AACM, Frankfurt, Germany Jazz Festival,

2015 Made in Chicago Poznan Jazz Festival, Voices Heard Ensemble

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

2013 JBM-Images Beyond - a theatrical concert works by Joan Beard Mitchell and Nicole Mitchell, Chicago, IL

2012 You Can't Hide (one woman show) MPAACT, Chicago, IL

2011 Miyumi Project, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL
 2011 Taiko Legacy 8, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
 2009 Great Black Music Ensemble, Insolent Noise Festival, Pisa, Italy
 2008 Great Black Music Ensemble, Chicago Jazz Festival, Chicago, IL
 2007 Samana, Navy Pier's African American History Concert Series, Chicago, IL
 2007 Samana, Institute for Positive Living Annual Gala Concert, Chicago, IL
 2000 Samana, Chicago State University's Honors Convocation, Chicago, IL
 1999 Samana, Two Harbors Folk Festival, Two Harbors, MN
 1999 Samana, Venetian Festival, St. Joseph, MN
 1999 Samana, Chicago Music Awards, Chicago, IL
 1999 Samana, Association for the Advancement of Creative Musician's 30th Anniversary Concert, Chicago, IL
 1999 Samana, World Islamic Conference, Chicago, IL
 1998 Samana, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's 50th Birthday Celebration, Chicago, IL
 1998 Samana, African Festival of the Arts, Chicago, IL
 1996 Samana, Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI
 1995-1996 Samana, Black Writers Conference, Chicago State University, Chicago, IL

UNIVERSITY LECTURES & MASTERCLASSES

2023 Creative Music Masterclass, University of Paris, Paris, France
 2023 Afrofuturism: centering the African-Diasporic Imagination, University of Paris, Paris, France
 1997 Creative Music, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
 1997 Creative Music and the Future, University of Illinois at Champaign, Urbana, IL
 1997 Creative Music and Women, Menomonie, WI Trinity Christian College, Palos Hills, IL
 1996 Black Women and Music, University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2007-2011 **DuSable Leadership Academy**, Lead Teacher, DuSable High School, Chicago, IL
 2008-2011 **DJ WHPK Radio 88.5**-Host of *Pushing the Envelope*, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

VOLUNTEER WORK

2006-2011 Dean, School of Music, Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians
 2010 DuSable Museum of African American History-Advisory Committee-*The African Presence in Mexico*
 2013-present Chicago Volunteer Doulas, Full Spectrum Doula, Chicago, IL
 2021-2023 Chair - The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Chicago, IL

VIDEO GAMES

SAINTS ROW
 EVERQUEST II
 WATCHDOGS

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English & Spanish

TECH & SOFTWARE SKILLS

Ableton, Canva, Discord, Capcut, Inshot

LINKS TO PRESS

AACM at 55

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/music/ct-ent-aacm-concert-uchicago-20211028-4mkbspb7irfapktjg5gexbb3qa-story.html>

In Conversation with Multidisciplinary Artist Coco Elysses

https://occhimagazine.com/in-conversation-with-multidisciplinary-artist-coco-elysses/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Performer uses her upbringing to inspire Art

<https://citizennewspapergroup.com/news/2023/jul/05/performer-uses-her-upbringing-inspire-art/>

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

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

1996-present **AFTRA- SAG**

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

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