



Photo by Tony Smith

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Coco Elysses

Cultural Executive · Creative Strategist · Institution Builder

cocoelysses@gmail.com · cocoelysses.com · Chicago, Illinois

Biography

Short Bio (50 words)

Coco Elysses is a cultural executive, creative strategist, and multidisciplinary artist. A former Chair of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, she builds institutions that preserve culture, cultivate artists, and inspire future generations across music, film, education, instrument building, and visual art.

Full Bio

Coco Elysses is a cultural executive, creative strategist, multidisciplinary artist, educator, composer, instrument builder, filmmaker, and institution builder whose work connects artistic innovation, cultural preservation, education, and community transformation.

A former Chair of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Coco brings more than three decades of experience across executive leadership, arts administration, performance, education, production, cultural programming, and creative entrepreneurship.

Her practice moves between executive leadership and artistic creation, bringing the vision of an artist, the discipline of an institution builder, and the cultural memory of a community steward to every project she leads.

Fast Facts

757%	Organizational budget growth, AACM
1,051%	Audience growth, AACM
30+	Years of leadership
40+	Major artistic productions
2019	Jeff Award — Best Original Music in a Play
2018	ALTA Award — Best Original Music in a Play
10	Countries of international presentation

Selected Works

One String: The Story of the Diddley Bow

2025 · Producer, Narrator, Subject, Co Director, Scorer

From rural porches to global stages, One String maps how the Diddley Bow shaped the DNA of American music.

The Learning Prism

2025 – Present · Founder

Sensory based learning tools that make music education more engaging, accessible, and effective for neurodivergent and diverse learners.

Diddley Bow Construction Class

2025 – Present · Teaching Artist, Instrument Builder

An experiential public arts program with the Chicago Public Library Renaissance Project, supported by the Mellon Foundation.

Book of Elysses: Volume I, Chapter VII

2024 · Composer, Performer, Poet

An Afro Futuristic sonic memoir where the Diddley Bow, House Music, Mbira, and poetry converge.

AACM: Ancient to the Future

2022 · Producer

Produced for Carnegie Hall's Afrofuturism Festival.

AACM at 55

2021 · Chair, Curator, Performer

Anniversary curation marking fifty five years of the AACM.

The Multi Genre Artist Creativity Tool Workbook™

2021 · Author, Framework Designer

A framework supporting multidisciplinary artists and neurodivergent creatives.

Osun's Water

2018 – Present · Music Director, Composer

Music direction and original composition for Disco Poet Khari B.

The Diddley Bow Empress™

Ongoing · Instrument Builder, Luthier, Designer

Handcrafted custom Diddley Bows, each a professional instrument and a one of a kind work of art.

ELYTHIA™ Vinyl Art

Ongoing · Visual Artist

Original artwork on vinyl, leather and other textures using a distinctive dot based technique.

Starchild Lovechild Productions

2012 – Present · Founder & Creative Director

A production house developing culturally rooted work for stage, screen, and the public sphere.

Photographs & Credits

High resolution files are included in the accompanying ZIP archive under /photos. All images must be reproduced with the credit line listed below.



Primary press portrait — Coco Elysses with handcrafted Diddley Bow
Photo by Tony Smith · file: photos/coco-elysses-tony-smith.jpg



AACM 55th Anniversary Concert, performing percussion
Photo by Dr. Traci Lombre · file: photos/aacm-55th.jpg



Conducting on stage, Osun's Water

Photo by Dr. Traci Lombre · file: photos/coco-cond-light.jpg



Conducting an AACM ensemble

Courtesy of the artist · file: photos/aacm-first-church.jpg



The Diddley Bow Empress™ — handcrafted instrument

Photo by Erica Ruth · file: photos/diddley-bow-empress-2026.png



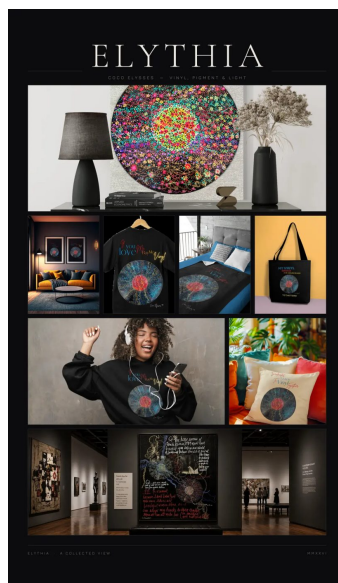
One String: The Story of the Diddley Bow — film key art

Photo by Raymond Mays · file: photos/one-string-deck.png



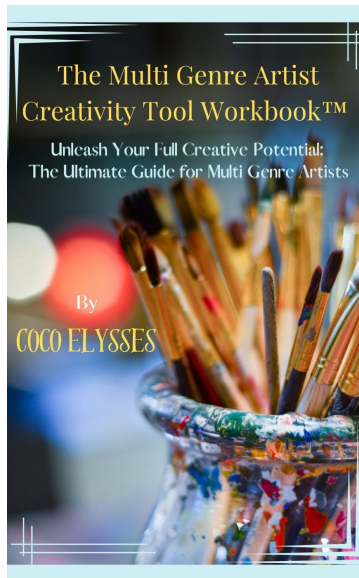
Book of Elysses: Vol. I, Chapter VII — album cover

Photo by Sutchu-Eamah · file: photos/book-of-elysses-vol1.jpg



ELYTHIA™ vinyl artwork collage

Courtesy of the artist · file: photos/elythia-collage.png



The Multi Genre Artist Creativity Tool Workbook™ — cover

Courtesy of the artist · file: photos/multi-genre-artist-workbook.jpg



Starchild Lovechild Productions — logo

Courtesy of the artist · file: photos/starchild-lovechild-logo.jpg

Contact & Usage

Press, booking, and speaking inquiries: cocoelysses@gmail.com

Website: cocoelysses.com · Instagram: [@cocoelysses_conga_diddley_bow](https://www.instagram.com/cocoelysses_conga_diddley_bow) · YouTube: [@cocoelyssesofficial](https://www.youtube.com/cocoelyssesofficial) · LinkedIn: [coco-elysses](https://www.linkedin.com/company/coco-elysses)

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