



AKENYA

Vocalist | Pianist | Composer | Arranger | Educator
Chicago, IL

www.akenyamusic.com

akenyamgmt@gmail.com

Education

New England Conservatory of Music

Bachelor of Music with Academic Honors

Jazz Studies: Performance (Concentration in Voice)

Boston, MA

May 18, 2014

Selected Solo Performances

As Headliner or Featured Artist

Elastic Arts | “Dark Matter Residency: Afrofuturist Weekend 8”

Headliner, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer

Chicago, IL

Oct. 5, 2023

Sleeping Village | “Slo ‘Mo featuring AKENYA x VITIGRRL”

Headliner, Bandleader, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer

Chicago, IL

Oct. 14, 2022

- 30th Birthday concert and album teaser. Presented by Slo ‘Mo Party

Hideout Inn | “Hooligan Hangouts”

Headliner, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer, Astrologer

Chicago, IL

Mar. 22, 2022

- Hosted by Rivka Yeker of Hooligan Magazine. A variety formatted show including an interview, performance, and live astrology readings of select audience members.

Portland Art Museum, Aux Mute Gallery

Headliner, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer

Portland, OR

Nov. 6, 2021

Qwest TV

Headliner, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer

Paris, FR/Los Angeles, CA

Apr. 21, 2020

- Quincy Jones’s streaming platform’s pandemic concert series on Instagram and Facebook live. In partnership with Total Refreshment Centre based in London, ENG

Thalia Hall | “Red Bull Music Presents: Round Robin”

Vocalist, Pianist

Chicago, IL

Aug. 30, 2018

- Sixteen artists from diverse genres collaborate on unique improvisational duets, including Roscoe Mitchell, Matana Roberts, Makaya McCraven, and more.

Georgetown University Washington, D.C.
Headliner, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer Oct. 21, 2017

- Presented by the *NAACP* and Georgetown's *WGTV* Radio. A podcast interview hosted by *AirGo* radio of Chicago, followed by a live concert.

Oberlin College, The 'Sco Oberlin, OH
Headliner, Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer May 1, 2017

Steppenwolf Theater | "Lookout Series: Akenya in Concert" Chicago, IL
Headliner, Bandleader, Vocalist, Pianist, Composer Oct. 21, 2016

California Clipper Chicago, IL
Artist-in-Residence, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer, Arranger Aug. 2016

- 5 week residency paying tribute to important Black women in music such as Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, Nina Simone, Ella Fitzgerald, and Jill Scott.

Hungry Brain Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Pianist, Composer July 11, 2016

- World premiere of debut music video for single, "Disappear."

Double Door | "The Come Up Series" Chicago, IL
Headliner, Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer Feb. 3, 2016

- Debut headlining performance

Festivals

Postock Albany, WI
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer 2022, 2019

Chi Teen Lit Fest | Harold Washington Library Chicago, IL
Headliner, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Apr. 26, 2019

Winter Jazz Fest | NuBlu New York, NY
Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer Jan. 11, 2019

Chi-Soul Fest | Navy Pier, Lake Stage Chicago, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer June 30, 2018

LUaroo | Lawrence University Appleton, WI
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer May 26, 2018

North Coast Music Festival | Union Park, Skyline Stage Chicago, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer, Co-Choreographer, Dancer Sept. 1, 2017

Chicago Poetry Block Party | National Museum of Mexican Art Chicago, IL
Headliner, Vocalist, Composer July 29, 2017

North Coast Music Festival After Party | Bottom Lounge Chicago, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Sept. 3, 2016

Dillo Day | Northwestern University Evanston, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer May 29, 2016

As Opening Act

Phillip B. Williams | National Sawdust New York, NY
Vocalist, Pianist, Composer Mar. 2, 2024

- Book release show for Phillip B. Williams's debut novel, *Ours*.

JuJu Exchange | Constellation Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Pianist, Composer Mar. 16, 2023

Whitney | Thalia Hall Chicago, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Dec. 4, 2019

Saul Williams | Thalia Hall Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Sept. 12, 2019

Fatai | Rivoli Toronto, ON, CAN
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Apr. 5, 2019

Ezra Collective | Schubas Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Mar. 17, 2019

AlunaGeorge | Bottom Lounge Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Dec. 3, 2018

Moonchild | Chop Shop Chicago, IL
Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer Nov. 8, 2017

Noname | *Telefone* Tour Europe, Middle East: Oct. 24 - Nov. 6, 2016
Bandleader, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer North America: Feb. 8 - Apr. 12, 2017

As Special Guest

"Outside the Shed" Summer Series | The Salt Shed Chicago, IL
Vocalist Aug 3, 2022

- Special guest of Nubya Garcia for the venue's inaugural concert.

Pitchfork Music Festival | Union Park, Red Stage Chicago, IL
Vocalist Jul 17, 2022

- Special guest of Noname

"Marquis Hill: Present and Future" | Green Mill Chicago, IL
Vocalist, Pianist, Composer Nov. 16-17, 2021

Charity Performances

“Noise for Now” | Schubas
Vocalist, Composer
Chicago, IL
Jan. 28, 2023

- In support of Ground Control Touring’s Abortion Funds Benefit Series

“What Belongs to Me” | Subterranean
Headliner, Vocalist, Keyboardist, Composer
Chicago, IL
Nov. 29, 2019

- In support of the Chicago Period Project

Daniel Murphy Scholarship Foundation | City Winery
Vocalist, Pianist, Composer
Chicago, IL
Sept. 27, 2018

Glitter Creeps | Empty Bottle
Headliner, Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer
Chicago, IL
June 21, 2016

- In support of Humans for Hope

Radio Performances

AirGo | Cards Against Humanity Theatre
Interviewee, Vocalist, Composer
Chicago, IL
Sept. 26, 2019

WBEZ Vocalo | “Chi Sounds Like”
Guest Host, Vocalist
Chicago, IL
Oct. 24, 2018

WGN
Interviewee, Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer
Chicago, IL
July 17, 2017

Northwestern’s WNUR | “Airplay”
Bandleader, Vocalist, Composer
Evanston, IL
Jan. 26, 2017

Musical Director

Slo ‘Mo
Bandleader, Arranger, Vocalist, Choreographer, Dancer
Multi-Instrumentalist (Keyboards, Key-Bass, Drums)
Chicago, IL
Oct. 26, 2018 - Aug. 2, 2021
Dec. 31, 2023

- Worked on various shows and events with Kristen Kaza of Slo ‘Mo Party including:
 - “Slo ‘Mo NYE: Pleasure Palace” — reopening of historic venue Ramova Theatre.
 - “Divas through the Decades” — The kickoff show for Millennium Park’s Summer Series.
 - “Coven Classic” — Halloween themed tribute to iconic women in music.
 - “Chicago Reader Pride Block Party” — Janet Jackson tribute concert.

Noname
Creative Director, Bandleader, Arranger,
Keyboardist, Background Vocalist
North America, Europe, Middle East
July 24, 2014 - Mar. 6, 2017,
Apr. 16 - 23, 2023

- Creative and musical director, as well as band member and often times sole accompanist for rapper Noname. Select highlights:
 - Toured internationally and nationally for debut *Telefone* tour.
 - Performed at festivals such as: Coachella Music Festival *and* MTV's REC Fest.
 - Featured on *NPR's* Tiny Desk series.
 - Opened for Hip-Hop legend Ms. Lauryn Hill at Ravinia in Highland Park, IL and First Ave in Minneapolis, MN for her "A Diaspora Calling" tour.
 - Opened for comedian Hannibal Burress at the Chicago Theatre for his "Hannibal Montanabal Experience" tour.

Chicago Poetry Block Party | Austin Town Hall Park
House Bandleader, Keyboardist, Background Vocalist

Chicago, IL
July 28, 2018

Composer

Palaver Strings | Boston Center for the Arts
Composer

Boston, MA
Mar. 8 - 9, 2019

- Debut chamber orchestra piece for 13 strings entitled "Fear the Lamb," a 3 movement tribute to the life of Emmett Till. Commissioned work by Portland, ME based chamber orchestra, Palaver Strings.
- World premiere in Boston for the "Lifesongs" concert

Selected Collaborative Performances

As Background Musician

Leon Bridges | UIC Pavilion
Choir Contractor, Background Vocalist

Chicago, IL
Aug. 24, 2022

- Organized and sang in choir for Leon's hit song, "River," for his "Boundless" tour.

Summerfest | BMO Harris Pavilion
Keyboardist, Featured Vocalist

Milwaukee, WI
Sept. 18, 2021

- Performed in opening band for Black Pumas with Liquid Soul members Ricky Showalter and Mars Williams and singer-songwriter Neal Francis.

Hayley Williams | BBC
Keyboardist, Background Vocalist

London, ENG
Feb. 4, 2020

- Brought on for singer Hayley Williams from Paramore's solo tour for her debut album, *Petals for Armor*. The BBC performance was done in the promotion stages, however the world tour was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tasha

Keyboardist, Background Vocalist

Chicago, IL, Madison, WI
Nov. 22, 2017 - July 21, 2019

- Accompanied Chicago based singer Tasha during promo for her debut project *Alone At Last*. Select Highlights:
 - 2019 Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago, IL
 - Opened for band Snail Mail at Thalia Hall in Chicago, IL
 - *Alone At Last* album release show at Sleeping Village in Chicago, IL
 - Co-Headlined with Jean Deaux and Jamila Woods at Metro in Chicago, IL
 - Co-Headlined with band Bear in the Forest at University of Madison, WI

Smino | Lollapalooza
Background Vocalist

Chicago, IL
July 30, 2016

As Band Member

Resavoir

Lead Vocalist, Main Pianist/Keyboardist

Europe, North America
June 10, 2018 - present

- RESAVOIR is a diverse collective of young Chicago artists & improvisers who perform songs written and directed by trumpeter Will Miller. Highlights include:
 - Headlining show at Lincoln Hall in Chicago, IL
 - European debut at Boiler Room TV Fest in London, ENG
 - West Coast tour including Zebulon in Los Angeles, CA and 2020 San Francisco Jazz Fest
 - Album release show at Sleeping Village in Chicago, IL
 - Band debut performance June 10, 2018 a Co-Prosperity Sphere

Perse as Funk | Subterranean
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Arranger

Chicago, IL
Jan. - Mar. 2016

- Series of themed tribute shows by In the Loop Productions. Highlights include:
 - "Midwest vs. Dirty South," Mar. 25, 2016
 - "Ladies First": A Tribute to the Finest Funky Females in Music on Feb 6, 2016
 - "A Dedication to Dilla" on Jan. 15, 2016

Selected Recordings

* = performer and writer

Solo Works

"Hades Moon" * - Akenya, Single Release (2023)

"Decay" * - Akenya, Single Release (2018)

“**Disappear**” * - Akenya, Single Release (2015)

“**Absent Mindedness**” * - Akenya, Single Release (2014)

Overcome EP * - Akenya (2010)

As Featured Vocalist

“**Masc Off**” * - Demetruet ft. Akenya & Teddy Jackson
Redirected EP vinyl re-release (2021)

“**Boundless Beings**” * - Nubya Garcia ft Akenya *Source* (Concord Jazz, 2020)

“**Comatose**” * - MFnmelo ft Akenya, Adam Ness, & Mick Jenkins
Everybody Eats (2019)

“**Bee Hive**” * - Chicago Afrobeat Project ft Tony Allen, Akenya, & Isaiah Oby
What Goes Up (2017)

“**Breathe**” * - Elton, Bedows, Burns Twins ft Akenya *Sunshower* (2017)

“**Freak Flag**” - Demetruet ft Akenya *Redirected* EP (2017)

“**Silk Pillows**” * - Smino ft Akenya *Blkswn* (Downtown Records, 2017)

“**American Hypnosis**” * - Saba ft Akenya *Bucket List Project* (2016)

“**Reality Check**” * - Noname ft Eryn Allen Kane & Akenya *Telefone* (2016)

“**Windows**” - Chance the Rapper ft Alex Wiley & Akenya
#10Day mixtape (2012 - re-released in 2019)

Additional Vocals or Background Vocals

If All I Was Was Black - Mavis Staples (ANTI, 2017)
background vocals: Akenya

“**Church/Liquor Store**” - Saba ft Noname
additional vocals: Akenya
Bucket List Project (2016)

“**Yesterday**” - Noname
additional vocals: Phoelix, Akenya, & TheMIND
Telefone mixtape (2016)

As Band Member

Resavoir - Resavoir (International Anthem, 2023, 2019)
vocals, piano, Wurlitzer, sampler: Akenya

“**Plight**” - Resavoir
vocals, piano, Rhodes, sampler: Akenya
Transmissions from Total Refreshment Centre (Blue Note Records, 2023)

As Music Producer and/or Composer

All Solo Singles

“Fear the Lamb” - *Ready or Not* (Azica Records, 2022)

Recorded by Palaver Strings, Composed by Akenya Seymour

Music Videos

“Decay”

Official Lyric Video by Akenya

Released on Jun. 29, 2018

“Disappear”

Directed by Todd Burr

Released on July 15, 2016

Educator

Selected Teaching Positions

Chicago High School for the Arts

Music Instructor

Chicago, IL

Aug. 7, 2019 - Feb. 26, 2020

- Hired for several positions including:
 - All Levels Music Theory Instructor
 - A Capella Ensemble Director
 - Private Voice Teacher

Classick Studios

Private Voice Instructor

Chicago, IL

Sept. 12, 2017 - Feb. 26, 2020

Bucktown School of Music

Private Piano and Voice Instructor

Chicago, IL

May 15, 2018 - Oct. 7, 2019

Workshops and Panels

Chi Teen Lit Fest | Columbia College
Songwriting Workshop Instructor, Panelist

Chicago, IL
Apr. 27, 2019

Lyric Opera Songwriting Workshop | Civic Opera House
Instructor

Chicago, IL
Jun. 27, 2017

Chicago Voices | Columbia College
Panelist

Chicago, IL
Feb. 3, 2016

- Served on panel with Renée Fleming. In partnership with Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Selected Honors and Awards

- Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Individual Artist Program, 2023
- New Music USA Creator Fund, 2023
- 3Arts Award in Music, 2022
- New England Conservatory's "Grow Your Art" Grant, 2022
- *Chicago Reader*: "Best of: Best Jazz Band - Resavoir," 2019
- Chicago Academy for the Arts Alumni Grant, 2017
- *Grammy*® Nomination, background vocals on Mavis Staples, "Build a Bridge," 2017

Selected Press

- *Atwood Magazine*, "[Akenya on Self-Mythology, Astrology, and New Single 'Hades Moon,'](#)" 2023
- *Hooligan Magazine*, "[Akenya is Transforming with New Single 'Hades Moon,'](#)" 2023
- *These Days Magazine*, Various including, "[Hades Moon,](#)" "[Decay,](#)" and "[Disappear](#)" premieres, 2016-2023
- *Apple Music*, "Classical Music You Must Hear This Month" featuring "Fear the Lamb: Gorgeous and Gallant - Gory and Galvanizing," by Akenya Seymour, May 2022
- *Rythm* Pride Campaign, [Interview with The Vixen and Performance](#), 2021
- *Chicago Reader*, Various including, "[Bridgeport's resurrected Ramova Theatre debuts in style with a Slo 'Mo spectacular,](#)" 2016-2023
- *Topic Magazine's* "[The Ascendants](#)" docuseries, Episode 3, "Akenya," 2020
- *Do312*, Various including, "[25 Chicago Women-Fronted Bands We Love,](#)" 2016-2020
- *Vulture*, "[8 Backing Musicians Jam on Their Most Memorable Sessions,](#)" 2020
- *The TriiBe*, "[Lyme disease couldn't keep singer Akenya Seymour down for long,](#)" 2018
- *Southside Weekly*, "[Within 'Decay' a Story of Growth,](#)" and "[Akenya's Very Sonic Kind of Mind,](#)" 2019, 2017
- *The Fader*, "[Disappear,](#)" Music Video Premiere, 2016
- *Chicago Tribune*, "[Akenya Seymour a Sonic Nomad,](#)" 2016

Selected Sync Placements

- Jordan Peele's *US* (2019) - "Reality Check" by Noname ft Eryn Allen Kane & Akenya
- Showtime's *The Chi* (2017) - "Reality Check" by Noname ft Eryn Allen Kane & Akenya