

AKIM FUNK BUDDHA www.funkbuddha.net

317 Lefferts Avenue, 6H, Brooklyn, NY 11225

akimfunkbuddha@gmail.com 415-370-0791

Akim Funk Buddha creates borderless performance art, fusing sounds and movements from different genres, and drawing on a full spectrum of cultural traditions and artistic disciplines. His field of operation ranges from experimental choreography, vocal percussion and tap, to Mongolian throat-singing, Balinese Baris dance, and – crucially – the Japanese Art of Tea. He is the creator of original works performed nationally and internationally, including at Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Blue Note, LaMaMa E.T.C., Joe’s Pub, PS122, Rubin Museum, Whitney Museum, etc.; the Kennedy Center premiered a well-received work-in-progress experiment, **URBAN TEA CEREMONY**, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden invited him to create several related works for their annual Sakura Matsuri Festival as well. His performances have been



commended several times in *The New Yorker's* ‘Goings on About Town’ which memorably praised **AKIM FUNK BUDDHA AND FRIENDS** for “...singing, dancing, and rhyming their way across the cultural landscape.” *The Village Voice* “loved every second of **BACK TO CREATION**, by Akim Funk Buddha, a protean talent.” *NYC Dances* wrote “The voice of Akim Funk Buddha is an instrument that has to be experienced to be believed; from him comes a haunting symphony of sound.”

A powerful and virtuosic dancer and vocalist, he has worked with Bill T. Jones and Bobby McFerrin, and performed with artists including Philip Glass, Aretha Franklin, and Vernon Reid. An established NYC arts educator, Akim has taught many young performers: at the Frederick Douglass Academy, Jamaica Center for the Arts and Learning, Stevenson School, and Rikers Island correctional facility; at the Gateway School for kids with learning differences, he created a curriculum emphasizing community building, cultural inclusivity, dignity and self-respect. Akim’s openness and improvisational genius flowers in performance, often incorporating workshop-like interactions that inspire new forms of cultural dialogue with the audience. He still maintains a reputation for pushing the envelope of the Hip Hop form: his group **ZIMBABWE LEGIT** was honored at the Whitney Museum in 2007 for its “unique fusion of African aesthetic and urban American dialect that returns hip hop to its pre-commercial roots,” and his final turn in the acclaimed documentary **FREESTYLE: THE ART OF RHYME** is a touchstone for many younger artists. Among Akim’s awards are first prize at PS122’s BEST DANCER COMPETITION, and the Fringe Festival BEST CHOREOGRAPHY award (for Average Asian American). He is also a 3-time winner of the HOTTEST POETS POETRY SLAM.

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

CREATIVE ARTIST EXCHANGE FELLOWSHIP , US State Department “Next Level”	2017
CREATIVE ARTIST EXCHANGE FELLOWSHIP , Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission / NEA	2014
BEST CHOREOGRAPHY , Average Asian American, Fringe Festival	2007
JEROME FOUNDATION , grant for production of Akim’s AMAZULU: DANCE AS A WEAPON	2005
WINNER, PS122 “TOAST” DANCE COMPETITION (tap dance w/ Chikako Iwahori)	1998
THREE-TIME WINNER, THE HOTTEST POETS , Harlem Arts Theater Monthly Poetry Slam	1998-99

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

URBAN TEA TERRARIUM Brooklyn Botanic Garden: Creative Director, Choreographer, Performer	2018
OKEECHOBEE MUSIC FESTIVAL , Okeechobee, FL: Creative Director	
Tea Lounge, Urban Tea	2017
Opening Procession	2016

SAKURA MATSURI FESTIVAL , Brooklyn Botanic Garden: Choreographer, Designer, Performer	2015-2018
ZIMBABWE LEGIT Reunion Tribute, Kennedy Center, Washington DC	2014
ARTIFICIAL AFRIKA by Vernon Reid at Dixon Place: Dancer, Choreographer, Throat Singer	2012
GATEWAY GALA, Lincoln Center , Performance with Kids: Creative Director, Choreographer & Performer	
Opening for Alicia Keys concert	2012
Opening for Stevie Wonder concert	2011
AKIM FUNK BUDDHA at the BLUE NOTE , Lead Vocalist, Musical Director, Choreographer/Dancer	2005-2015
TED TALKS TOKYO , Tea Ceremony as part of Ryotaro Souryou Matsumura talk	2014
AKIM FUNK BUDDHA PRESENTS: The annual "HIP HOP HOLIDAY" , BAM Café Live	2007-2014
"THE FLYING BOOM BOX" , Summerstage – Von King Park NYC:	
Creator, Choreographer, Artistic & Musical Director	2010
"CARMEN – THE URBAN OPERA" , Summerstage – St. Mary's Park:	
Creator, Choreographer, Artistic & Musical Director	2010
AKIM FUNK BUDDHA & THE STARSHIP CREW, at THE BALI SPIRIT FESTIVAL:	
Director/Musical Director/Lead performer	2009
FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH , Dance Performance, Choreographer/Lead performer	2008
"KEVIN SO, AVERAGE ASIAN AMERICAN" , Fringe Festival: Choreographer	
(Best Choreographer Award)	2007
THE BEAT , The Harare International Arts Festival, Zimbabwe: Dancer and Vocalist	2007
ZIMBABWE LEGIT with GRAND WIZARD THEODORE , VH1 Hip Hop Honors, Whitney Museum	2006
Music and Honoree	
"BLIND DATE" , Bill T. Jones Arnie Zane Dance Company, NY Central Park Summerstage	
& Montclair University and international tour: : Musician, Beat Boxer, Throat Singer, Dancer	2006-2007
ZIMBABWE LEGIT REUNITES , Brooklyn Academy of Music: Director, Singer, Choreographer, Dancer	2005
DIN DIN YAA (JOY OF A CHILD) , African Music & Dance, Carnegie Hall: Host/MC	2005
AMAZULU: DANCE AS A WEAPON , Hip Hop-inflected Dance Theater Piece, LaMaMa, Etc.	2005
EAR TO THE GROUND (Four Seasons) , Mulberry Street Theater: Performer/Choreographer	2004
DHA FUZION (World Music Live Band) , Lincoln Center Outdoors: Musical Director/Lead Singer	2002
BACK TO CREATION , Performance Piece, P.S. 122	2001

SELECTED TV & FILM APPEARANCES

AMERICA'S GOT TALENT: Beatboxer, Fire Dancer with Flambeaux	2009
LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN: Dancer, Throat Singer	2003
FREESTYLE: THE ART OF RHYME (Documentary Film): Freestyle MC, Closing Narrator	
(Awards: Best Documentary, Woodstock Film Festival; Documentary Jury Prize, Florida Film Festival; Best Documentary, Urban Film Festival on Hip Hop Culture)	2000
SESAME STREET: ELMO PALOOZA: Experimental Hip Hop Dancer with Big Bird	1999
CHRIS ROCK SHOW: Guest Artist	1998

ALBUMS

JAMTSE: LOVE AND COMPASSION (An Offering for Tibet) Akim Funk Buddha w/Tina Malia & others	2008
FOUR SEASONS , Akim Funk Buddha & Floyd Fisher	2008
HOUSE OF STONE , Akim Funk Buddha & C Rayz Walz	2007
BROTHERS FROM THE MOTHER Zimbabwe Legit	2005
ZIMBABWE LEGIT , Zimbabwe Legit, Glow In The Dark Records LLC	2005

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

STEVENSON SCHOOL , New York, NY: Hip Hop dance theater, Creative Movement, Songwriting	2014- present
RIKERS ISLAND Friends of the Island Academy program for incarcerated youth	2017-2018
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL , New York, NY: Dance	2017-2018
FREDERICK DOUGLASS ACADEMY , New York, NY: Dance and Theater	2017-2018
YAI , Movement and Theater classes for learning-disabled adults	2017-2018
GATEWAY SCHOOL , New York, NY: Hip Hop dance theater	2008-2014
JAMAICA CENTER FOR THE ARTS & LEARNING , New York, NY: Hip Hop dance	2008
CENTER FOR CONTEMPLATIVE MIND , Northampton, MA: Youth Program Coordinator	1999
TRIBAL SOUNDS FOR UNORTHODOX VOICE AND CHANT: Artist Workshops	1997-1998