

AKILA WORK SONGS

Full Bio *for* APRIL R. SILVER

Communications and Marketing Executive, Cultural Arts Curator,
Social Justice Activist, and Published Writer/Editor. **Founder and CEO of AKILA WORKSONGS**



Silver is a nationally respected communications and marketing executive, cultural arts curator, community activist, and published writer/editor. She founded AKILA WORKSONGS, a public relations agency based in New York, in 1993 and it has emerged as a leading agency of its kind for the past three decades. Silver is widely respected for her holistic approach to public relations and for servicing a wide range of progressive artists and activists. The agency has represented clients ranging from aspiring artists to multi-national philanthropic foundations. For her successes, the native New Yorker has been mentioned or featured in *Ms.*, *ESSENCE*, *EBONY*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *The Lurie Daniel Favors Show (SiriusXM)* *Roland Martin Unfiltered (Black Star Network)*, *First Things First with Dominique DiPrima (KBLA Radio)*,

JET, as well as *CNN*, *BET*, *HuffPost Live*, *Tom Joyner Morning Show*, and many other outlets (nationally and internationally). Silver is also a founding TV host of BET Network's former talk show *My Two Cents*. In 2014, Mayor Ras J. Baraka appointed Silver to Newark's Arts, Cultural Development, and Tourism Transition Committee.

Under Silver's leadership, AKILA WORKSONGS' distinguished clientele (past and present) has included the late **Amiri Baraka**, **Nana Camille Yarbrough**, **Sonia Sanchez**, **Doug E. Fresh**, **Kevin Powell**, **Sister Souljah**, **Chuck D.**, **KRS-One**, **Heather B.**, **Marc Lamont Hill**, **Byron Hurt**, **Toni Blackman**, **asha bande**, **Adesola Osakalumi**, **Stanley Nelson**, **Chief Ayanda Clarke**, **Andrea Ritchie**, **Timothy Jones**, **Mo Beasley**, **MomsRising**, **TRANSART & Cultural Services**, **Mott Foundation**, **Romare Bearden Foundation**, **Carnegie Hall**, **The Public Theater**, **Brooklyn Museum**, **PEN World Voices Festival**, the **Center for Black Literature**, **New Jersey Performing Arts Center**, *Still I Rise: Maya Angelou* documentary, **Temple University**, **Howard University**, **Virginia State University**, **Florida Memorial University**, most Black theater productions on and off Broadway, and hundreds of other clients nationally and abroad.

AS WRITER, SPEAKER, MENTOR, PROFESSOR

Silver's essays have been published in the *New York Daily News*, *Word.Beats.Life (The Global Journal of Hip Hop Culture)*, and various blogs. She is the editor of [*Be a Father to Your Child*](#) (Soft Skull Press/Counterpoint; 2008), a work that *HuffPost Black Voices* cites as a “powerful and groundbreaking anthology.” *Foreword Magazine* claims “Editor April R. Silver has turned her first book into a must-read for anyone involved in the black community.” *Mothering Magazine* says *Be a Father* is an “artfully designed anthology that addresses the intersection of hip-hop with issues of black masculinity and parenting...” Silver is working on her second anthology (*I've Got Life!*) about Black women artists, activists, and healers.



In 2013, the president of **American University of Nigeria** (Yola) invited Ms. Silver to keynote about her signature topic, the intersection of arts and activism. She returned six months later to create an artist residency featuring her clients from the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, *FELA!* Also in 2013, to celebrate 20 years in business, Silver was featured at the **Schomburg**

Center for Research in Black Culture in an interview conducted by journalist Curtis Stephen. Through the Brooklyn Arts Council, Silver became a mentor with the New York City Department of Small Business Services. In 2023, Silver, a die-hard hip hop head, taught **SUNY Old Westbury's** first-ever hip hop social justice course for its Educational Opportunity Program.

AS A CULTURAL WORKER AND CUSTODIAN

While a student at Howard University in the early 90s, Silver was the founding president of The Cultural Initiative, Inc., producer of the nation's first hip hop conference on a college campus. The annual event was a touchstone event that launched the hip hop education movement now embraced by academia and helped solidify April Silver and her peers as pillars in the hip hop cultural movement for self-determination. After graduation, she went on to teach in New York City's junior high public schools and then later formed her agency in an effort to merge hip hop culture with community activism and personal enrichment. Silver was also a member of the NY Chapter of the Recording Academy (The GRAMMYS®), served intermittently on its Board of Governors, served as a 2nd Vice President, and chaired its spoken word committee (working to have the category definition updated).

Since childhood, Silver has been driven to help create a more balanced world, all guided by traditional African values that support the evolution of all humanity. Among her hundreds of business endeavors and community service projects over the years, she founded the organization *Co-Motion* (in response to the killing of **Amadou Diallo**); served as Interim Executive Director of [Nkiru Center for Education and Culture](#), the non-profit organization and bookstore co-founded by **Talib Kweli**, **Yasiin Bey (Mos Def)**; founded *Artists for Life* as part of the Hurricane Katrina relief movement; and co-founded *Help Haiti* as a part of the Haiti earthquake relief movement. Silver continues to volunteer, counsel, and help financially support a variety of cultural and social justice initiatives in the United States and in West Africa.



A student of Orisa spiritual practice for more than 30 years, Silver was initiated to Ifa in Nigeria by **Chief Fakayode Faniyi**, Agbongbon Awo of Osogbo. She is training with her mentor **Chief Ayanda Ifadara Clarke**, Ajibilu Awo of Osogbo. She is a sanctioned custodian of traditional Ifa culture as expressed by the Yoruba people in West Africa. Currently working and residing in Brooklyn, with a satellite office in Atlanta, Silver is working on her latest book, two film projects, an independent alumni organization, and a non-profit organization focused on communications and cultural literacy for HBCU-bound students.

CONTACT APRIL!

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Silver is seen here at SUNY Old Westbury (photo by Omar Akil Williams) and with friend Doug E. Fresh. Page 1 and 3 photos by Solwazi Afi Olusola.