

THE FADARA GROUP

CHIEF AYANDA IFADARA CLARKE *GRAMMY® Award-Winning Master Percussionist*



Chief Ayanda Ifadara Clarke (“Chief Ayanda”) is an African American master percussionist and arts educator. With more than thirty years of immersion, study, and training, Clarke is largely recognized as one of the best all-rounded percussionists of his generation.

Clarke’s extensive research and connection to the percussive arts—drums, bells, the balafon, and the shekere—includes the musical traditions of Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Angola, Cuba, Brazil, the Caribbean, and of African Americans. Performing professionally since he was five, Chief Ayanda has toured throughout North America, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada, and Europe several times over. His talents have led him to perform or share the stage with many greats, including **Randy Weston, George Clinton, Will Calhoun, Michael Jackson, Doug E. Fresh, KRS-One, Erykah Badu, Somi**, and others.

His select performing credits include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, National Sawdust, *Good Morning America*, *America’s Got Talent*, the U.S. Open, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Sesame Street*, FOX’s *So You Think You Can Dance*, and more. He’s also performed, recorded, and licensed music that has been featured on television, in film (*Elysium*, starring **Matt Damon** and **Jodi Foster**) and Off-Broadway (*Cullad Wattah*).

Chief Ayanda has trained and studied with the best: **Chief Baba Neil Clarke** (his father), **M’bamba Bangoura**, **Abraham K. Adzenyah**, and **Souleymane Diop**. He has also played for or performed or recorded with the **Chief Bey**, **Orlando “Puntilla” Rios**, **Batoto Yetu**, **The Amistad Project**, **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, **Forces of Nature**, and pop artist **Jewel**, among many others. Chief Ayanda’s GRAMMY® is for his featured percussionist role on **Arturo O’Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra’s** album, *The Offense of the Drum*.

An institution builder, the graduate of The Dalton School and Wesleyan University co-founded Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater, a Bessie Award-winning company where he served as founding musical director.

Chief Ayanda established THE FADARA GROUP, as well as AJIBILU MUSIC, to house his cultural work and recorded music projects.

Intertwining Music, Culture, and Spirituality

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