



CHIEF AYANDA IFADARA CLARKE

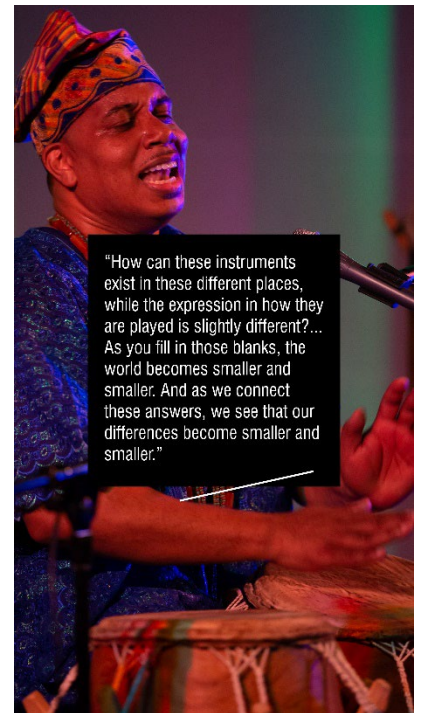
Narrative Bio

Chief Ayanda Ifadara Clarke, Ajibilu Awo of Osogboland, is a transformative leader in the worlds of music, culture, and spirituality. His peers, juniors, and elders alike have long praised him for his dynamic performances, thought-provoking programs, and, most importantly, for his impeccable character. Highly skilled and heavily sought-after, the master percussionist, educator, and creative content consultant purposefully embodies and uplifts African and African Diasporic traditions in all aspects of his life and professional work.

A native Brooklynite, “Chief Ayanda” (as he is respectfully called) was quite literally born to the sound of the drum. He was raised in a home where African philosophy and music (especially African drums) were central. Performing since he was five, Clarke has toured throughout five continents and the Caribbean several times over. He is also a Dalton School and Wesleyan University graduate. Though enriched by his global travels and cultural immersions, Chief Ayanda remains guided by his African core. His unique views on life and culture have made him a popular guest on SiriusXM, Tavis Smiley’s KBLA Talk Radio (LA), Marc Lamont Hill’s *Night School* digital show, WBAI Radio (NY), Fox 5 News NY, in the *Amsterdam News*, and countless other outlets.

Clarke is a spiritual advisor and cultural director on the creative team of *Syncing Ink*, the Off-Broadway hip-hop theater production premiering at the Apollo’s Victoria Theater in May 2024.

MUSIC Chief Ayanda is a GRAMMY® Award-winning percussionist who has performed or shared the stage with legendary artists and performance groups such as **Randy Weston, George Clinton, Michael Jackson, Will Calhoun, Doug E. Fresh, KRS-One, Erykah Badu, and Somi, Chief Bey, Orlando Rios, Batoto Yetu, The Amistad Project, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Forces of Nature, and Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater** (founding music director). Other select performing credits include **Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music, National Sawdust, Good Morning America, America’s Got Talent, U.S. Open, The Late Show with David Letterman**, and many others. As a composer and music production consultant, his original music has been recorded, performed on, and licensed for television, film, and Off-Broadway productions. Be it for his own projects or that of his clients or mentees, Clarke develops creative content in various genres.



“How can these instruments exist in these different places, while the expression in how they are played is slightly different? ... As you fill in those blanks, the world becomes smaller and smaller. And as we connect these answers, we see that our differences become smaller and smaller.”

continued

Intertwining Music, Culture, and Spirituality

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It is his knowledge of cultural style, traditional instrumentation, and compositional understanding (which ranges from hip hop to popular music to traditional African music throughout the Diaspora) that positions him uniquely in the industry, especially as a consultant to those who wish to respectfully highlight the intersection of art and spirit.

CULTURE Chief Ayanda's lectures, masterclasses, performances, and public programs are presented through *True To Our Native Land*, his education initiative. As a keynote, panelist, or workshop leader, Clarke regularly speaks at community, non-profit, academic, and corporate events ranging from the Bronx Knights Youth Football and Cheerleading annual banquet and the Brooklyn Public Library to Princeton University, Yale University, Howard University, Apple, Microsoft, Apollo Theater, and many other spaces. He gives context to how he approaches his relationships with students and mentees of all ages:

Teaching is an honorable vocation where one acquires skills and credentials to produce successful results. Being an educator, however, is a journey that's focused on life-long learning and facilitating personal enlightenment for all who seek it. At my core, I'm an educator.

THE FADARA GROUP is the organization Chief Ayanda founded to house his initiatives, including the Integrated Wealth Alliance *aka* IWA (a network of African-centered business leaders), and *Afro-Vitality: A Wellness Expo*. A passionate institution-builder, Clarke serves on the Leadership Advisory Board of the Ella Baker Institute, a community-responsive educational organization. THE FADARA GROUP serves as a co-producer for *Syncing Ink*, the Off-Broadway hip hop theater production debuting at the Apollo's Victoria Theater in May 2024.

In 2023, on the historic stage of the world-famous Apollo Theater (accompanied by his two sons and his father, Chief Baba Neil Clarke), Chief Ayanda accepted that organization's *Nguzo Saba Family Recognition Award* for the Clarke family's 90+ years of advocacy of African values and traditions.



SPIRITUALITY In recognition of his life-long commitment to African spirituality, Clarke was installed as a chief in Osogbo, Nigeria, nominated by his mentor, **Chief Agbongbon Fakayode Faniyi**. Chief Ayanda is a spiritual health counselor and healer who serves as an initiate of Ifa, Orisa, Ayan, and Egungun (ancestors). He's also the founder and Chief Babalawo of Ile Oturupon Sokun Temple. His clients and students are individuals, couples, and families based throughout the United States from all walks of life.

For institutions of higher learning and community groups, Chief Ayanda is heavily sought after as an officiant for ancestral veneration ceremonies. In this capacity, he frequently officiates events at spaces such as Wesleyan University, Princeton University, SUNY Purchase, and the Bowery Resident's Committee (BRC) Advisory Group for the Inwood Sacred Sites (NY), where he also serves as a spiritual advisor.

■ More at www.linktree.com/chiefayandaclarke and via @ChiefAyandaClarke (IG and FB); @THEFADARAGROUP (Twitter/X).
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