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**GRAMMY® Award-Winning Percussionist CHIEF AYANDA CLARKE
Announces *True To Our Native Land* as a Two-Day Brooklyn Event
Featuring Performances, Community Conversations, and Networking...
All Dedicated to Uplifting Traditional African Culture!
The Brooklyn Bank: December 14 - 15, 2018 (Friday and Saturday)**

Brooklyn, New York ---- Today GRAMMY Award-Winning Percussionist **Chief Ayanda Clarke**, Founder & CEO of THE FADARA GROUP LLC (www.THEFADARAGROUP.com), announced the first round of artists for *True To Our Native Land*, a family-friendly two-day event featuring performance showcases and community conversations in the heart of Brooklyn. More broadly, it's a cultural appreciation program that celebrates the vibrancy of Africa and Africans all over the world.

Confirmed participants include award-winning Broadway and television actor **ADESOLA OSAKALUMI** (*FELA!*, Antoine Fuqua's *Ice*); EMMY-nominated choreographer **JEFFREY L. PAGE** (of Beyoncé fame); internationally acclaimed hip hop cultural ambassador **TONI BLACKMAN**; award-winning playwright **NSANGOU NJIKAM** (*Syncing Ink*); **CHIEF BABA NEIL CLARKE** (former percussionist for Harry Belafonte and Randy Weston), and **CHIEF AYANDA CLARKE**, GRAMMY Award-winning musician who has performed or recorded with artists ranging from Erykah Badu, Somi, and George Clinton to M'bemba Bangoura, Abraham K. Adzenyah, Orlando "Puntilla" Rios, and Arturo O'Farrill). Additional artists to be announced early December. *TNL* will take place **Friday, December 14** and **Saturday, December 15, 2018** at **The Brooklyn Bank** (www.BrooklynBankVenue.com), a new Black-owned 4,000 square foot event space in Bed-Stuy (located at 896 DeKalb Avenue, at the corner of Marcus Garvey Boulevard).

The first night will focus on spoken word, poetry, and hip hop performances and will close with a deep examination of the artistic, cultural, and spiritual use of words and language *as tools for creation*. The second night has two segments: one part will focus on dance/movement and the other part will focus on music and sound. The event is open to the public and tickets go on sale early December. More information, visit www.TheFadaraGroup.com

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THE MISSION OF TRUE TO OUR NATIVE LAND

True To Our Native Land is more than the final line of the poem that eventually became the Black National Anthem song (“*Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing*” by James Weldon Johnson). It is also a state of mind, an affirmation, a decision to make Africa central in our lives. It is this point of view that fuels the event’s narrative: Africa is dynamic, relevant, and worthy of attention 365 days a year. It is grounded in the notion that traditional African Culture is essential to excellence in Black Thought, Black Culture, and Black history, here in the United States and throughout the African Diaspora.

Chief Ayanda goes on to say: “*True To Our Native Land* is designed to bring out the best in our African pride. The days of seeing Africa as old, stale, and something to be ashamed of are over. We’re celebrating a refreshed perspective and a progressive movement for the 21st century.”



SPONSOR AND PARTNERS

True To Our Native Land is sponsored, in part, by the Greater New York Arts Development Fund of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, administered by **Brooklyn Arts Council** (BAC).

And nationally, the event has partnered with one of the top Black-owned mobile tech companies in the country. Based in the Bay Area, **MyClickUrban** (www.myclickurban.com) allows users in select urban cities to discover events *and* freely promote events through its website and app. The company, founded in 2013, just launched *MyClickUrban Powered by Sparxo*, an online ticketing service designed for event hosts and promoters. It is the People of Color's answer to Eventbrite. *MyClickUrban Powered by Sparxo* will be the official and exclusive online ticketing service for the two-day event.

TNL is also sponsored by **African Ancestry** (www.africanancestry.com), a genealogical DNA testing company that "uses the world's largest database of African DNA lineages to determine [one's] country and ethnic group of origin..."

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS + LINKS YOU CAN USE

- *True To Our Native Land* is a family-friendly two-day event and is open to the public. Everyone is welcome to share in the celebration of African culture.
- TNL t-shirts will be available for purchase on-site at The Brooklyn Bank (Dec. 14 – 15).
- *True To Our Native Land* is a ticketed event. Tickets will be sold online via the MyClickUrban/Sparxo portal and will go on sale early December.
- Earlier this month, THE FADARA GROUP team began posting "under-two-minutes" video sketches on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter in order to promote both the upcoming event and the mission of the parent organization. Some of them are hilarious! See links below.
- Chief Ayanda Clarke has been talking about the unique work that he has been asked to do recently. That includes ancestral ceremonies and rituals at some of this country's most prestigious universities, including Wesleyan (his alma mater) and Princeton. The honoring of ancestors will be addressed at in the community conversations at TNL.
- Related media content about Chief Ayanda (article links, etc.) is available upon request (or can be accessed via @ChiefAyandaClarke on Facebook and Instagram).
- **New to Chief Ayanda Clarke and THE FADARA GROUP? Watch these videos on [FACEBOOK!](#)**

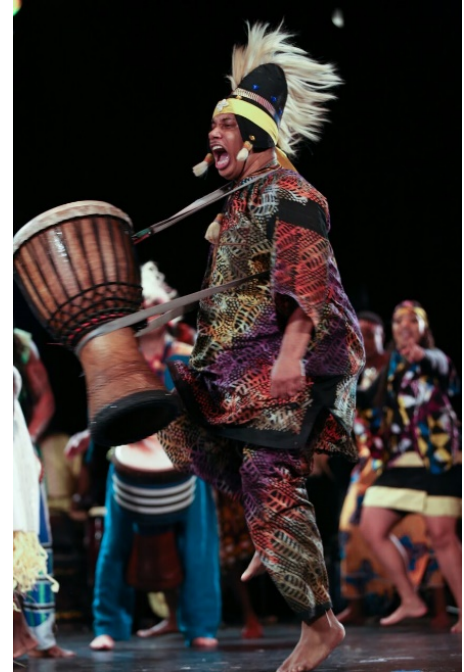


ABOUT CHIEF AYANDA CLARKE

Chief Ayanda Clarke (aka Chief Ayanda) is an African American master percussionist, GRAMMY® Award-winning musician, arts educator, and lecturer. He's been performing professionally since he was five and has performed or shared the stage with some of the world's most revered percussionists and artists, including the late **Randy Weston**, **George Clinton**, **Erykah Badu**, **M'bemba Bangoura**, and **Somi**.

A glance at some of his performing credits in the United States include *Carnegie Hall*, *Lincoln Center*, *Radio City Music Hall*, *Michael Jackson: 30th Anniversary Celebration at Madison Square Garden*, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Good Morning America*, *America's Got Talent*, *the U.S. Open*, *Sesame Street*, and many other places. He's also recorded and licensed music that has been featured on FOX's *So You Think You Can Dance*. In 2014, Chief Ayanda was a featured percussionist on the title track of **Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra's** major work, *The Offense of the Drum*. The project won a GRAMMY® Award that year: *Best Latin Jazz Album*.

For his talent and devotion to African culture, he's been exalted by his juniors, peers, and elders alike. The media has taken a keen interest as well. He's been featured as Black New Yorker of the Week" in the *Amsterdam News* and has been a featured guest in local blogs, television shows, and podcasts throughout New York City, across the U.S., and in Africa.



BACKGROUND AND TRAINING

Chief Ayanda's first public performance was as a small child when he played at the historic Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) with the International African-American Ballet. His father, Chief Baba Neil Clarke, the legendary jazz percussionist, was his first teacher. He went on to learn from other trainers such as M'bemba Bangoura, Abraham K. Adzenyah, the late Orlando "Puntilla" Rios, Souleymane Diop, and other giants in the field.

Since then, 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 record with Chief Bey, Orlando Rios, Randy Weston, Batoto Yetu, The Amistad Project, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Forces of Nature, Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater, pop artist Jewel, and many others.

Clarke's research of the percussive arts (including a variety of drums and bells, the balafon, and the shekere) is exhaustive. His range spans several musical traditions, including those of Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Angola, Cuba, Brazil, the Caribbean, and of African Americans.

A BUSINESS LEADER AND VISIONARY

A business owner who is highly motivated about community wellness and development, Chief Ayanda founded THE FADARA GROUP LLC to channel that passion. He is also co-founder and musical director of Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater, the Bessie-nominated company of the Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation (a 501c3 organization). And he is partner and musical director of Palms Down, Inc., a percussion ensemble. Through Palms Down, he's performed and co-produced music that was licensed for *Elysium*, the film starring **Matt Damon** and **Jodi Foster**.

EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELING

Chief Ayanda is a high school graduate of the prestigious The Dalton School in New York and a college graduate of Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He teaches children and adults throughout the New York Tri-State Area and lectures regularly on African culture and the percussive arts across the country.

Additionally, Chief Ayanda is trained and sanctioned as a spiritual health counselor. For nearly 20 years, he's guided countless clients based on traditional African spiritual principles and practices. In 2016, sponsored by his mentor **Chief Agbongbon Fakayode Faniyi**, Ayanda Clarke was installed as a chief in the ancient city of Osogbo (Nigeria).

LEARN MORE

CONTACT US

All confirmed participants are available for pre-event media interviews. Inquiries are directed to April R. Silver of AKILA WORKSONGS: pr@akilaworksongs.com or 718.756.8501 office, 646.522.4169 mobile.

Learn more via the official website (www.THEFADARAGROUP.com) and via social media:

- **LinkedIn:** [@ChiefAyandaClarke](#)
- **Facebook:** [@ChiefAyandaClarke](#)
- **Instagram:** [@ChiefAyandaClarke](#)
- **Twitter:** [@THEFADARAGROUP](#)

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