

HOUSE ALLEN



# DANCE INSTRUCTOR

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# CHRISTA SYLLA

Christa “Fatoumata” Sylla has been an arts educator sharing cultural dance with the Jacksonville community for over 17 years. Since 2015, she has been an adjunct faculty member at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) as the World Dance instructor. Ms. Sylla has taught master classes at DA, Lavilla School of the Arts, Florida State College of Jacksonville, Florida Ballet, and Jacksonville University. She has been an instructor and choreographer for Jacksonville Centre of the Arts since 2005.

As the director, a dance instructor, and choreographer for Nan Nkama Pan-African Drum and Dance Ensemble (formally known as Culture Moves 101), Ms. Sylla has received notoriety for her passionate personality, cultural and historically based repertoire, and emotionally charged choreography. She wrote and directed Mande! The Evolution, a dance production based on the history and travels of Afro-movement through the African diaspora. She has served as the choreographer for the local musical, Majigeen, since its debut in 2005, and as a choreographer for The Golden Nutcracker since its inaugural debut in 2017. In 2018, Ms. Sylla’s choreography piece, Awon Omo Shango, was selected for the Duval County Public Schools district wide event, Celebration of the Arts.

In 2016 Ms. Sylla was featured on the WJCT series, Hometown, about her work with women in the community that focuses on feminine movements in African dance. That same year, she was the recipient of the 2016 Award of Recognition for Artistic Excellence from African Arts and Culture Jacksonville Inc.

In addition to continuing her studies with master instructors in the United States, Ms. Sylla has traveled to Guinea, West Africa; Jacmel, Port au Prince and Abricots, Haiti; and San Jose and Limon, Costa Rica for international dance exchanges. The experiences she had in these countries and her interactions with the people greatly influence her pedagogy. She refers to herself as a “Dancethropologist” to signify her commitment to educating on the cultural context of ethnic dances and not technique alone. Her commitment to cultural preservation earned her and Nan Nkama Pan-African Drum and Dance Ensemble recognition from the Florida Department of State’s Florida Folklife Program in 2019. Ms. Sylla and Nan Nkama are officially documented as folk artists dedicated to historical conservation through the arts.