

# Derrick N. Ashong

**Musician, Social Entrepreneur & Al Jazeera English Television Host**

Derrick N. Ashong - or DNA as he is sometimes known - is literally the voice of a new generation.

An experienced broadcaster, musician and digital media influencer, the Harvard educated talent has carved out a unique niche as an expert in bridging the gap between old and new media, and has leveraged this skill set to create cutting edge programming in both digital and broadcast media.

Described by [VanityFair.com](http://VanityFair.com) as "a spirit of promise and hope and harmony" DNA's band Derrick N. Ashong and Soulfège is a critically-acclaimed, refreshingly original and exciting group of musicians who produce an eclectic blend of Hip-Hop, Reggae, Funk, World Beat and West African Highlife music that has been featured in such major media as MTV Africa, NPR, the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, MNet Africa, ABC Chronicle and BBC Worldservice, reaching 146 million listeners worldwide. Leveraging the power of social media and proven techniques of grassroots political organizing, they have launched the Million Download Campaign, with a mission to give away one million downloads of songs and remixes from their new album *AFropolitan* by Christmas 2012. The goal of the campaign is to connect people around the world through the electrifying, consciousness-raising songs of *AFropolitan*; to "break a band" without a corporate label; and in so doing, to change the music industry.

An established media personality, DNA is the television host of "**The Stream**" on Al Jazeera English. "The Stream" premiered in May 2011 and it integrates new and traditional media, tapping into the extraordinary potential of social media to disseminate news. This show aggregates on-line sources and discussion, while seeking out unheard voices, for new perspectives from people on the ground. More information about "The Stream" can be found at [stream.aljazeera.com](http://stream.aljazeera.com). Derrick also served as the host of "**The Derrick Ashong Experience**" on SIRIUS XM's Oprah Radio.

A true Renaissance man, DNA has lived in such locations as Brooklyn, New York, Voorhees, New Jersey and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and currently resides in Washington DC. As a college student he was cast in Stephen Spielberg's 1997 film, "Amistad." He returned to Cambridge to finish his degree requirements before pursuing a Ph.D. focusing on how trends in open source software can inform a theory of "open source content." He later left the doctoral program to pursue his artistry and advocacy full-time.

Ashong has appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and "The Mo'Nique Show," and has lectured on five continents on the use of media as a tool for human development, including recent talks for the UN Foundation, London School of Economics, King's College (Cambridge), the Reconciliation Forum in Washington, D.C., the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, for Bill Clinton at the Club de Madrid, and before UK Parliament on the subject of "The Obama Generation." He is a member of the internationally recognized Americas Business Council (\*abc) Fellowship and has been a TED Global Fellow, a participant in the Arts & Entertainment task force of the U.S.- Islamic World Forum and is the CITI Performing Arts Center's first Spectrum Boston Fellow. He is the founder of Take Back the Mic, a youth-centered cultural movement that leverages the power of artistry & technology to empower young people. DNA is also on the Board of Advisors for Children Mending Hearts, an organization dedicated to the global arts exchange between at-risk children in the United States and children living in conflict zones around the world.