

BELONGÓ

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**Belongó & El Museo del Barrio Announce Historic 2026 Residency
Uniting Two Pan Latin Cultural Pillars of New York City**

**Arturo O 'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra Free Concert Series
at El Museo's El Teatro: January 9 & 10, March 13 & 14, May 15 & 16**



Photo Credit: Fadi Kheir

December 15, 2025—Belongó (formerly the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance), a non-profit institution dedicated to performing, educating about, and preserving the music of all of the Americas emanating from African and indigenous roots through the entry point of jazz, and El Museo del Barrio, the nation's leading Latine and Latin American cultural institution, are proud to announce a new multi-engagement concert residency in 2026, bringing two of New York City's most influential Pan Latin cultural institutions into closer alignment at a pivotal moment of growth for both organizations.

Extending across three pairs of concerts in January, March, and May of 2026, the residency brings composer, pianist, bandleader and 6-time GRAMMY winner and 2-time Latin GRAMMY winner Arturo O'Farrill with The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra to the historic

museum building's El Teatro, which this year received the National Design Merit Award from the Society of American Registered Architects. O'Farrill is also the founder and artistic director of Belongó. Together, Belongó and El Museo del Barrio envision this residency as the beginning of a multi-year dialogue—one that amplifies local stories, honors the legacy of Latin artistic contributions to New York City, and lays the groundwork for new cultural infrastructure in East Harlem. The partnership underscores a shared belief that world-class performance belongs not only on the city's largest stages but also within the neighborhoods that inspire it.

In addition to the concert performances, the residency will include a series of complementary public programs—such as artist talks, panels, and museum-based experiences—designed to deepen audience engagement and expand the dialogue around the music, its cultural roots, and its contemporary relevance. Details on these programs will be announced at a later date.

2026 Residency Schedule & Program Details

January 9 & 10 | Retrospective & Tribute to Christopher "Chilo" Cajigas

The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, led by Arturo O'Farrill, commemorates over twenty years of performances throughout New York City with a retrospective of its innovative and genre-bending performance seasons. The evening pays tribute to the life and music of the late spoken word artist Christopher "Chilo" Cajigas alongside some of his frequent collaborators, turntablist DJ Logic, and poet Caridad De la Luz. Tickets + registration [HERE](#).

March 13 & 14 | ALJO + BronX BandA

The Orchestra is joined by BronX BandA, a dynamic improvisational ensemble and project of the Bronx-based Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education. The program includes original compositions and new arrangements that blend traditional jazz with community sounds and stories, reflecting the rich oral histories of Bronxites. Tickets + registration [HERE](#).

May 15 & 16 | ALJO + Strings

This special engagement features the 18-piece big band in a new setting, accompanied by a string orchestra. The hybrid ensemble presents a diverse program including seldom-heard works by Chico O'Farrill (Arturo's father), compositions and adaptations by Arturo O'Farrill, and new orchestrations of pieces from the Latin jazz canon. This performance is presented as part of Carnegie Hall's *United in Sound: America at 250* festival. Tickets + registration [HERE](#).

"Bringing the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra to El Teatro feels like a homecoming," said Arturo O'Farrill. "El Museo del Barrio has long been a heartbeat of culture in East Harlem and our programming for this residency is very special. The six concerts will showcase how multi-dimensional Latin music is, and how New York City has been such a crucial epicenter for sounds and cultures blending together."

"This partnership reflects our shared belief that world-class performance belongs not only on the city's grandest stages, but also within the neighborhoods that inspire it," said Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio. "By hosting Belongó in El Teatro, we're honoring East Harlem's creative legacy while opening new pathways for cultural dialogue, collaboration, and pride in our community."

This new chapter in Belongó's relationship with East Harlem comes amid growing momentum for the organization. In 2026, Belongó will break ground on **Casa Belongó**, a state-of-the-art community performance space housed within **Timbale Terrace**, a 340-unit affordable housing project. Casa Belongó will serve as a cultural anchor for East Harlem—providing arts education, performance programming, and a creative refuge rooted in the legacy of Latin jazz pioneers like Tito Puente.

Sponsor

This program is generously supported by the New York City Council.

About Belongó

Belongó, formerly the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, was founded by Arturo O'Farrill in 2007. The non-profit institution is dedicated to performing, educating about, and preserving the music of all of the Americas, emanating from African and indigenous roots, through the entry point of jazz. The organization produces The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra's annual performance season in New York and manages the Orchestra's weekly engagement at the famed jazz club Birdland, as well as performances worldwide. Its educational programs include the Afro Latin Jazz Academy of Music (ALJAM), an in-school residency program serving public schools citywide with instrumental and ensemble instruction; the Fat Cats, a pre-professional youth orchestra that prepares the next generation of musicians; and the Global Rhythms in Our Tribe (G.R.I.O.T.), a music program that connects youth with rhythms and storytelling from global cultures as a way to engage them in anti-violence activities. In addition, it holds a world-class collection of Latin jazz musical scores and recordings.

Belongó embraces its mission with a commitment to social justice, equity, inclusion, and the equality of all cultures worldwide. For additional information, visit belongo.org.

About El Museo del Barrio

El Museo del Barrio is the nation's leading Latinx and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events. The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City.

The Museum is open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11 am – 5 pm. Pay what you can. To connect with El Museo via social media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). For more information, please visit elmuseo.org.

About Arturo O'Farrill

Mexican American pianist, composer, and bandleader Arturo O'Farrill is a towering figure in contemporary music, renowned for his genre-defying virtuosity, leadership, and unwavering commitment to social justice through music. As founder and artistic director of both the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra (ALJO) and Belongó (formerly known as the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance), O'Farrill plays a pivotal role in nurturing cultural dialogue through the transformative power of music.

O'Farrill is a 6-time GRAMMY and 2-time Latin GRAMMY winner. "One of our greatest living pianists" (Downbeat), he bridges the gap between Latin rhythms, modern jazz, and contemporary composition, pushing boundaries while maintaining a profound connection to his roots. O'Farrill has released nearly 25 albums as a solo artist, collaborator, and with ALJO. His compositions have been performed by Dr. Cornel West, pianist Lara Downes, and the San Francisco Ballet, and he has earned commissions from Jazz at Lincoln Center and The Philadelphia Music Project among others. Recently named the Bill Evans Fellow at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, he has been appointed to key positions and residencies, and has collaborated with Dizzy Gillespie, Harry Belafonte, Lester Bowie, Tito Puente, Wynton Marsalis, Carla Bley, his father Chico O'Farrill, and more.

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