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**Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture announces  
complete schedule, artistic personnel and activities for**

***Machito & the Impact of the Afro-Cubans at 80***

**PRESS PHOTOS**

**May 2 – 4, 2019**

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(Bronx, NY) – Modeled after the highly acclaimed retrospective of Tito Puente in 2017, the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture will honor the late iconic singer and bandleader Francisco “Machito” Grillo (1908-1984) and his Orchestra (the Afro-Cubans) in a 3-day celebration May 2-4 on the campus of Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse (at 149<sup>th</sup> Street), in the Bronx. “Machito & the Impact of the Afro-Cubans at 80” examines the Orchestra’s influence on a variety of Latin musical styles, including Latin jazz that affected the music of Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Stan Kenton and others.

The festival’s ten events, many free, also delve into the careers and impact of Machito's family members and musical partners in the Afro-Cubans – Mario Bauzá (1911- 1993) and vocalist Graciela (1915-2010), known as the “First Lady of Latin Jazz.” Bauzá, was a talented multi-instrumentalist who served as musical director of his brother-in-law’s orchestra and encouraged Machito to embrace American jazz with Cuban rhythms. After Machito was drafted in the Army, Bauzá brought Machito’s sister Graciela (Peréz-Gutiérrez) from Cuba to join the band as lead singer. After Machito’s return from service, the three shared the stage for 32 years, topping the charts and reigning supreme at New York’s Palladium Ballroom in its heyday. Machito was the eldest of “The Three Kings” – the moniker given to the celebrated band leaders that performed at the Palladium – the others being Tito Puente, who was a timbalist in Machito’s Afro-Cubans in 1941, and the singer Tito Rodríguez who made his last public appearance with Machito in 1973.

Under the artistic direction of Machito's son, Mario Grillo, as well as Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra bassist and composer Carlos Henríquez and Latin music historian Joe Conzo, Sr., the festival is designed for both Machito enthusiasts and those less familiar with his music. Henríquez leads “Machito and Beyond” on Thursday, May 2, at 7:30 PM, in a concert that includes acclaimed vocalist Cita Rodríguez, a host of New York’s top young jazz musicians, plus some legendary percussion veterans, for a youthful take on some Machito classics. Bobby Sanabria & Ascensión will take to the stage in a free family concert on Saturday, May 4, at 11 AM, with an informative performance demonstrating how Machito & the Afro-Cubans brought Cuban forms to Latin jazz. The final concert on Saturday, May 4 at 7:30 PM features The Machito Orchestra in its 80th Anniversary concert under the direction of Mario Grillo, who carries on his father's legacy, and featuring guest vocalist and two-time Grammy winner Herman Olivera. In addition to these concerts, the three-day celebration includes listening sessions, a panel discussion, a film presentation, a museum exhibit with tour, a Latin rhythm workshop, and a closing Mambo Dance Party in the Hostos Café.

Tickets, including 3-day passes for \$45, and a schedule of events are available at [www.hostoscenter.org](http://www.hostoscenter.org) or by calling (718) 518-4455.

## EVENTS

### Listening Room

Prior to the Thursday evening and Saturday evening concerts, in the Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos beginning at 6 PM, **Joe Conzo, Sr.**, presents “The Listening Room,” one hour sessions that will include information and musical anecdotes about the concerts as well as never before heard recordings of Machito from different periods. Among the many rare recordings, include performances of Machito with Charlie Parker and Ella Fitzgerald. Conzo, who has lectured on Machito and Latin music for Hostos Community College’s Continuing Education division for the last six years, has an unmatched collection of Machito live recordings. Admission is free, and includes a complimentary glass of wine.

### Opening Concert: Machito and Beyond

For the opening concert, “**Machito and Beyond**” on Thursday, May 2, at 7:30 PM in the Main Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra bassist / composer / arranger **Carlos Henríquez** directs an ensemble of top young jazz artists augmented by a veteran percussion section. They will perform a curated selection of Machito’s music including songs of Graciela sung by guest vocalist **Cita Rodríguez**. The percussionists -- former member of The Machito Orchestra and longtime musical director of the Tito Puente Orchestra **José Madera**, whose father was an original member of the Afro-Cubans, Machito/Puente veteran **Louis Bauzo** and Puente alumnus **John “Dandy” Rodríguez** will be featured in “Bongo Fiesta” and other tunes. The concert will also include a world premiere of long-time Machito Orchestra saxophonist / composer / arranger **Ray Santos**. Orchestra seating is \$25 and Mezzanine seating is \$20; \$5 for students and under 18. (See below for details)

### Exhibit Tour

To continue the celebration on Friday, May 3 at 6:30 PM, **Joe Conzo, Sr.**, will lead a guided tour of the exhibit **Machito and Mario: The Roots of Afro-Cuban Jazz** in the C-Atrium. Conzo, the author of *Mambo Diablo: My Journey with Tito Puente* is currently writing a book on the “Big Three” bandleaders—Machito, Tito Puente, and Tito Rodríguez. The exhibit was developed by and is on loan from the National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

### Film Screening

A presentation of the biographical documentary *Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy* (1987) by Carlos Ortiz will be held on Friday, May 3, at 7:30 PM in the Repertory Theater. One-of-a-kind street performances from Cuba to New York, dancing scenes at the Savoy, the Palladium and the Apollo Theater, and commentary by Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Barretto, Dexter Gordon, and Machito himself all come together to trace his music from its roots in Cuba to its impact in New York. Jon Pareles of *The New York Times* calls the film “hugely informative, with astonishing archival footage.” Following the screening, a post-film discussion will be moderated by Columbia University Professor and trombonist **Chris Washburne** with Machito's son, **Mario Grillo**, and author and historian **Joe Conzo, Sr.** Admission is free, but tickets are required. (See below for details.)

### Family Concert: “What Made Machito & the Afro-Cubans Musical Groundbreakers?”

Eight-time Grammy nominee **Bobby Sanabria** brings his nonet **Ascensión** to the Repertory Theater on Saturday, May 4, at 11 AM for a free family concert. A Bronx native who is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music as well as the Jazz & Contemporary Music Program at the New School, Sanabria and his ensemble will delight all ages as they perform the music of the Afro-Cubans. This lively and informative performance examines how Machito fused the Cuban forms of son, bolero, and mambo with jazz. While admission to the concert is free, tickets are required.

### **“En Clave con Machito” Latin Rhythm Section Workshop**

Following the family concert at 1:30 PM, **Mario Grillo and The Machito Orchestra** members lead a **Rhythm Section Workshop** in the Repertory Theater. They will discuss, demonstrate, and answer questions on what makes a Latin rhythm section work, demonstrating how congas, bongos, and timbales complement the bass and piano, which is now the standard in Latin music. In addition to Mario Grillo on timbales and percussion, the workshop includes **Eddie Montalvo** (congas), **Luis Mangual** (bongos), **Gilberto 'Pulpo' Colón** (piano), and **Jerry Madera**, bass. The workshop is hosted by the percussionist / educator **Annette A. Aguilar**. All ages are welcome. Admission is free, but registration is required (See below for details).

### **Panel Discussion**

A panel discussion entitled “**Machito, Bauzá, & Graciela: Creating a Genre that Endures**” follows in the Repertory Theater at 3:30 PM. **Loren Schoenberg**, Founder and Senior Scholar of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, moderates this discussion of the trio's lasting impact on Latin jazz and Latin music. Panelists include: percussionist and Musical Director of The Machito Orchestra, **Mario Grillo**; archivist / biographer, **Joe Conzo, Sr.**, saxophonist / composer / arranger **Ray Santos**; percussionist / bandleader **Bobby Sanabria**; author / historian **René López** and vocalist / educator **Cita Rodríguez**. Admission is free, but tickets are required. (See below for details).

### **Closing Concert**

**The Machito Orchestra** performs a historic “**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert**” at 7:30 PM in the Main Theater, with Musical Director and Percussionist **Mario Grillo** leading the tribute to his father’s work. Guest vocalist, **Herman Olivera**, the noted sonero who, among his many achievements, has been lead vocalist for Eddie Palmieri, will take on the singer's role. In addition to Machito hits such as “Cuban Fantasy” and “Mambo Inn,” the concert will include some rare gems. Orchestra seating is \$35 and Mezzanine seating is \$25; \$5 for students and under 18. (see below for details)

### **Dance Party**

The festival ends with a **Mambo Dance Party** in the Hostos Café immediately following the performance at approximately 9:30 PM. Warrior DJ Roy will spin Machito’s hits for dancing. Tickets are \$10 and include two beverage tickets for wine or a soft drink. The Dance is available for concert ticket holders only.

Tickets can be purchased by calling (718) 518-4455 or online at [www.hostoscenter.org](http://www.hostoscenter.org). All reservations and registrations for free events can be made by calling (718) 518-4455. Weekend passes for both evening concerts and the dance party can be purchased for \$45 and include the best available seats. Box Office window hours are Mon. – Fri., 1 PM to 4 PM, and 2 hours prior to events. Hostos Community College can be reached by the IRT 2, 4, 5, and busses Bx1, Bx2, Bx19 to East 149th Street and the Grand Concourse.

“Machito and the Impact of the Afro-Cubans at 80” is sponsored by the Hostos Community College Foundation with funds from: the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, The Howard Gilman Foundation, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Office of New York State Assemblyman José Rivera, and the Office of New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

*A Listing of Events and Biographies of the Artistic Directors and Vocalists Follow:*

The full schedule of events for **Machito and the Impact of the Afro-Cubans at 80**:

**Thursday, May 2**

*Music/Talk:* Listening Room with Joe Conzo, Sr.  
Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, 6:00 PM  
Free Admission

*Opening Concert:* “Machito & Beyond” with Carlos Henríquez Ensemble & guest vocalist Cita Rodríguez (with percussionists José Madera, Louis Bauzo, and John “Dandy” Rodríguez)  
Main Theater, 7:30 PM  
Orch: \$25 Mezz: \$20 (Students and Under 18: \$5)

**Friday, May 3**

*Exhibit Tour:* “Machito and Mario: The Roots of Afro-Cuban Jazz” with Joe Conzo, Sr.  
C –Atrium, 6:30 PM  
Free Admission

*Film:* “Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy”  
Panel discussion follows moderated by Chris Washburne  
Repertory Theater, 7:30 PM  
Free Admission (Tickets Required: 718-518-4455)

**Saturday, May 4**

*Family Concert:* “What Made Machito & the Afro-Cubans Musical Groundbreakers?”  
Bobby Sanabria & Ascensión  
Main Theater, 11 AM  
Free Admission (Tickets Required: 718-518-4455)

**(Saturday May 4, Continued)**

*Workshop:* “Machito en Clave” Latin Rhythm Section  
Repertory Theater, 1:30 PM  
Free Admission (Registration Required: 718-518-4455)  
Guest Artists: Mario Grillo, Eddie Montalvo, Luis Mangual, Gilberto 'Pulpo' Colón, Jerry Madera; hosted by Annette A. Aguilar

*Panel:* “Machito, Bauzá, & Graciela: Creating a Genre that Endures”  
Repertory Theater, 3:30 PM  
Free Admission (Tickets Required: 718-518-4455)  
Participants: Loren Schoenberg, moderator, Mario Grillo, Joe Conzo, Sr., Ray Santos, Bobby Sanabria, René López, Cita Rodríguez

*Music/Talk:* Listening Room with Joe Conzo, Sr.  
Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, 6:00 PM

Free Admission

*Closing Concert:* The Machito Orchestra 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert led by Mario Grillo

Main Theater, 7:30 PM

Orch: \$35 Mezz: \$25 (Students and Under 18 - \$5)

*Dance Party:* Mambo Dance Party

Hostos Café (Third floor), 9:30 PM (approx.)

\$10 (includes two beverage tickets for wine/soft drink)

*Limited Capacity. Concert ticket holders only.*



**Francisco “Machito” Grillo** (1908-1984) played a huge role in the history of Latin jazz, for his bands of the 1940s were probably the first to achieve a fusion of powerful Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz improvisation. At its roaring best, the band had a hard-charging sound, loaded with jostling, hyperactive bongos and congas and razor-edged riffing brass. Machito was the front man, singing, conducting, shaking maracas, while his brother-in-law Mario Bauza was the innovator behind the scenes, getting Machito to hire jazz-oriented arrangers. The son of a cigar manufacturer, Machito became a professional musician in Cuba in his teens before he immigrated to America in 1937 as a vocalist with La Estrella Habanera. He worked with several Latin artists and orchestras in the late '30s, recording with the then-dominant Latin bandleader Xavier Cugat. After an earlier aborted attempt to launch a band with Bauza, Machito founded the Afro-Cubans in 1940, taking on Bauza the following year as music director where he remained for 35 years. After making some early 78s for Decca, the Afro-Cubans really began to catch on after the end of World War II, appearing with -- and no doubt influencing -- Stan Kenton's orchestra (Machito played maracas on Kenton's recordings of "The Peanut Vendor" and "Cuban Carnival") and recording some exciting sides for Mercury and Clef. Upon Bauza's urging, Machito's band featured a galaxy of American jazz soloists on its recordings from 1948 to 1960, including Charlie Parker (heard memorably on "No Noise"), Dizzy Gillespie, Flip Phillips, Howard McGhee, Buddy Rich, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Cannonball Adderley, Herbie Mann, Curtis Fuller and Johnny Griffin. Playing regularly at New York's Palladium, Machito's band reached its peak of popularity during the mambo craze of the 1950s, survived the upheavals of the '60s and despite the loss of Bauza in 1976, continued to work frequently in the '60s, '70s, and early '80s when the term "salsa" came into use. The band recorded for Pablo (in tandem with Gillespie) and Timeless in its later years, and was playing Ronnie Scott's club in London in 1984 when Machito suffered a fatal stroke. A documentary film by Carlo Ortiz, *Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy*, was released in 1987. – Richard Ginnell *All Music*

**Mario Bauzá** (1911 – 1993) was an Afro-Cuban jazz musician. He was one of the first to introduce Cuban music to the United States by bringing Cuban musical styles to the New York City jazz scene. While Cuban bands had popular jazz tunes in their repertoire for years, Bauzá's composition "Tangá" was the first piece to blend jazz with clave, and is considered the first true Afro-Cuban jazz or Latin jazz tune. Bauzá had been hired as lead trumpeter and musical director for Chick Webb's Orchestra by 1933, and it was during his time with Webb that Bauzá both met fellow trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and discovered and brought into the band singer Ella Fitzgerald. Importantly, Bauzá introduced the young Havana virtuoso Chano Pozo to Dizzy, when the latter wanted to add a Cuban percussionist to his band; though Pozo was killed in a Harlem bar fight just a year later, he left an indelible and long-lasting mark on Dizzy's playing and compositions, co-writing several legendary compositions such as "Manteca" and "Tin Tin Deo". In 1938 Bauzá joined Cab Calloway's band, later convincing Calloway to hire Dizzy Gillespie as well. Bauzá continued to work with Gillespie for several years after he left Calloway's band in 1940. The fusion of Bauzá's Cuban musical heritage and Gillespie's bebop culminated in the development of cubop, one of the first forms of Latin jazz. In 1941, Bauzá became musical director of Machito and his Afro-Cubans, a band led by his brother-in-law Machito. The band produced its first recording for Decca in 1941, and in 1942 Bauzá brought in a young timbalero named Tito Puente. "Cubop City" and "Mambo Inn" followed the success of "Tanga." Machito and his Afro-Cubans often played straight-ahead big band mambo music. Many of the numbers were covers of recordings which had proved popular in Cuba. The band played mambo-style dance numbers at venues such as Manhattan's Palladium Ballroom. Bauzá kept his post as director of the Afro-Cubans until 1976. After this he worked sparingly, but was always highly respected. – *Wikipedia*.

**Graciela Pérez Gutiérrez** (1915-2010) was born in Havana, Cuba and raised in the Afro-Cuban Jesús María neighborhood. A pioneer in music, as a black Cuban woman, in a so-called man's world, she opened doors for all those who followed her. She performed around the world, recording and sharing the stage with her adoptive older brother, Frank "Machito" Grillo, who encouraged her to sing. They played alongside Mario Bauzá (originator of the genre of Afro-Cuban Jazz) in the world-renowned orchestra Machito and the Afro-Cubans. Graciela was primarily known for her tremendous voice, risque and sassy stage presence and sexy double entendre lyrics. She could sing a jazzy guaracha as easily as handling the most romantic boleros. Though her last names were Pérez Gutiérrez, she was only known by her first name, "Graciela", long before doing so became widely fashionable among musicians. She was summoned to New York City in 1943 by Mario Bauzá, when Machito was drafted into the army. She joined the orchestra as lead singer until Machito returned in 1944 and from then on the three shared the stage together until their untimely split in 1975. For thirty-two years they were on top of the charts and were the orchestra not only to beat, but to emulate. Not only did they travel the United States and the rest of the world, but they were leaders and reigned supreme during the heyday of the Palladium Ballroom (where blacks, Jews, Italians and Hispanics, and celebrities would converge to dance), from 1946 until it's closing in 1966. Besides the Palladium, they would perform at the Royal Roost, Birdland, the Park Palace, the Corso and the Apollo Theater on a yearly week-long gig—and many other clubs and theaters in New York. Graciela and the orchestra also performed on a yearly basis in Hollywood—specifically at the Crescendo nightclub.. They were also the summer headliners in the Concord Resort Hotel, in the Catskills Mountains, for more than twenty years. They recorded albums in which her best-known songs include "Esta es Graciela", "Íntimo y Sentimental" and "Esa Soy Yo, Yo Soy Así." – *Wikipedia*

#### **About Mario Grillo**

Mario Grillo is old enough to have caught the tail end of the Mambo craze, and to have played with his father, yet young enough to have absorbed the groundbreaking trends that influenced Latin jazz. Grillo played timbales, congas and bongos when he made a debut with his father's band, The Machito Orchestra, at the age of five. In 1975, he joined the band for its Grammy-nominated recording *Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods* with Dizzy Gillespie and featured arrangements by Chico O'Farrill. Grillo, often known as "Machito, Jr.," toured Europe with Machito and took over the duties of musical director in the band in 1977, the year that they earned another Grammy nomination for *Fireworks*—when Lalo Rodríguez changed the tone as co-lead singer. Committed to keeping his father's legacy alive, the renowned percussionist has since returned to venues around the world with The Machito Orchestra. A native New Yorker, he has led the orchestra for more than 40 years at home and abroad. In 2015, he donated Machito's handwritten scores and arrangements to the Library of Congress. Most recently, Grillo has been performing and recording with the Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban Experience under the direction of bassist John Lee.

#### **About Carlos Henríquez**

Carlos Henríquez was born in 1979 in the Bronx. He studied music at a young age, played guitar through junior high school and took up the bass while enrolled in The Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program. He entered LaGuardia High School of Music & Arts and Performing Arts and was a member of the LaGuardia Concert Jazz Ensemble, which went on to win first place in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition and Festival in 1996. In 1998, swiftly after high school, Henríquez joined the Wynton Marsalis Septet and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, touring the world and being featured on more than 25 albums. Henríquez has performed with Chucho Valdés, Tito Puente, the Marsalis Family, Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Marc Anthony, and many others. He has been a member of the music faculty at Northwestern University School of Music since 2008, and was music director of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra's cultural exchange with the Cuban Institute of Music with Chucho Valdés in 2010. He has led many concerts at Jazz at Lincoln Center including programs on Tito Puente, Machito, Dizzy Gillespie and, most recently, for a program of his own compositions under the title "The South Bronx Story."

### **About Joe Conzo Sr.**

Historian Joe Conzo, Sr., who is currently writing a book on the “Big Three” bandleaders Machito, Tito Puente, and Tito Rodríguez, owns an unrivaled collection of Machito live recordings. He is the producer of many recordings by Latin artists on prestigious labels such as Sony Music and Pablo. Conzo lectures for Jazz @ Lincoln Center, the Smithsonian and other organizations, and, since 2013, has taught a continuing education course on Latin music and Latin Jazz at Hostos with a focus on Puente, Rodríguez and Machito. A long-time Puente publicist and confidant, he penned the acclaimed book “Mambo Diablo: My Journey with Tito Puente” and produced more than 20 benefit concerts for the Tito Puente Scholarship Fund. He also currently serves as the Director of the Tito Puente Legacy Project – an archive of Puente memorabilia based at the school.

### **About Cita Rodríguez**

Cita Rodríguez, the daughter of the famed salsa singer Pete “El Conde” Rodríguez, was born in the Bronx and attended Boys and Girls Harbor School in Spanish Harlem, where she studied flute and sang in the chorus. She moved with her family to Puerto Rico in 1979, and soon after she appeared frequently with her father’s band. While a student at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, Rodríguez became part of the salsa group Los Hijos de Salsa, which involved recording and touring. In 1991, after the family returned to New York, Rodríguez and her brother, Pete became part of the group Generaciones with her father. Since her father’s passing in 2000, she has performed and recorded with her own group as well as being a featured vocalist (often performing Graciela tunes) with the Mambo Legends and other groups.

### **About Herman Olivera**

Born to Puerto Rican parents in Newark, New Jersey, Herman Olivera began his career in New York City where he earned his reputation as a “sonero,” that is, an expert in the demanding art of lyric extemporization. He began performing in his early teens and achieved international recognition in the early 1980s as the lead singer of Conjunto Libre. He then went on to form recording and performance collaborations with Johnny Pacheco, Ray Barretto, The Machito Orchestra, and Israel ‘Cachao’ Lopez, among many others. In the late 1990s, Olivera assumed the prestigious role of lead vocalist for the Eddie Palmieri Orchestra. To date Herman has recorded on over 45 albums, received four Grammy nominations and is the recipient of two Grammy awards. In 2014, he recorded his debut album titled *La Voz del Caribe*.

### **About the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture**

The Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture consists of a museum-grade art gallery, a 367-seat Repertory Theater, and a 900-seat Main Theater, presenting artists of national and international renown. It is easily accessible from Manhattan, Queens and New Jersey and is a mere 15 minutes by subway from midtown Manhattan.  
[www.hostoscenter.org](http://www.hostoscenter.org)

### **About Hostos Community College**

Hostos Community College is an educational agent for change, transforming and improving the quality of life in the South Bronx and neighboring communities since 1968. Hostos serves as a gateway to intellectual growth and socioeconomic mobility, and a point of departure for lifelong learning, success in professional careers, and transfer to advanced higher education programs. The College’s unique “student success coach” program, which partners students with individualized guidance, is emblematic of the premier emphasis on student support and services. Hostos Community College is part of CUNY, the nation’s leading urban public university serving more than 480,000 students at 24 colleges. <https://www.hostos.cuny.edu/>