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Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture announces

## **Tito Puente: A Fifty-Year Retrospective of 'El Rey'**

The first ever multi-day comprehensive examination of the career of one of the most important figures in Latin Jazz through concerts, discussions, films, workshops.

**April 20 - 22, 2017**

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(Bronx, NY) – In the first ever retrospective of the life and legacy of one of the most important figures in Latin Jazz, The Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture announces “**Tito Puente: A Fifty-Year Retrospective of 'El Rey,'**” a multi-day, in-depth examination of his career through concerts, panels, film, dance, and more. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the retrospective, under the artistic direction of former Puente musical director José Madera, Jazz@ Lincoln Center Orchestra bassist / composer / arranger Carlos Henríquez, and Puente historian and archivist Joe Conzo, Sr., will take place from Thursday, April 20 through Saturday, April 22, 2017 at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture at Hostos Community College, located at 450 Grand Concourse (at 149<sup>th</sup> Street) in the Bronx.

Ernesto Antonio "Tito" Puente (April 20, 1923 – May 31, 2000) was arguably the most popular Latin artist of his time and many believe had the greatest influence on the Latin jazz art form, in melding innovative ideas related to jazz with the Afro-Cuban tradition of the mambo and other styles. With eight Grammys, 189 albums, and a career that spanned five decades, he was known for bringing Latin music to new audiences and as the composer of such hits as "Oye Como Va" and "Ran Kan Kan." With an influence on the entire music field, he helped to promote the careers of many artists including singers Celia Cruz and La Lupe.

Tito Puente had a deep connection to Hostos. He performed at the Center many times and Hostos Community College maintains an archive of Puente memorabilia with posters, musical instruments, awards, photographs and recordings. For the past five years, the College has offered a continuing education course focused on the Latin Jazz master which has featured many former Puente band members and musical associates as guest speakers. A logical extension, the three-day event at Hostos will promote a greater understanding of this important artist and the art form he helped to create, engaging both hard-core Puente fans and those less familiar with the artist, with many multimedia and multigenerational activities.

The three concerts over the course of the retrospective will cover the entire career of Tito Puente. On April 22, 2017, the 18-piece **Mambo Legends Orchestra**, led by **José Madera** and which features many Puente Orchestra alumni, will perform the master's music from his early years, 1950 – 1966 known as the “Palladium era.” For this event, Madera has transcribed and arranged material from the six different instrumental iterations of the Orchestra some of which has not been heard in over 50 years.

Preceding, on April 21, 2017, Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) bassist / composer / arranger **Carlos Henríquez**, who performed with Puente at the age 17 and regularly leads the J @ LC Orchestra, will premiere a 12-piece ensemble of musicians, performing a youthful take on Puente's music. Focusing on the Latin Jazz Era from 1967 to 2000, the recreated charts will be from a period when Puente moved away from the 17-piece band and embraced smaller ensembles such as “the Golden Men” as well as from his recordings with the legendary singers Celia Cruz and La Lupe. In partnership with Lincoln Center Education, Henríquez will also lead a free family performance for all ages, teaching young audiences why Puente's music continues to influence a new generation of fans.

The retrospective will also include workshops, a panel discussion, and a film, amongst other activities. José Madera, John “Dandy” Rodríguez, and other notable percussionists will lead a percussion workshop, open to the public. A panel discussion, “Don’t Call it Salsa: The Legacy of and Impact of Tito Puente on Latin Jazz” will feature music historians and musicians, and the PBS documentary “Tito Puente: the King of Latin Music,” will be screened with a talk-back after. Hostos will create a listening room, where Joe Conzo Sr. will play never before heard selections from his personal collection of more than 6,000 Puente live recordings. The *Tito Puente Legacy Project*, the archive that includes posters, photographs, awards and musical instruments of the bandleader, will be open throughout the weekend and a tour will be available.

A full schedule of dates and times will be released in late February.

Tickets will be available on February 8, 2017 and can be purchased by calling (718) 518-4455 or online at [www.hostoscenter.org](http://www.hostoscenter.org). Box Office window hours are Mon. – Fri., 1 PM to 4 PM. 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.

This retrospective is made possible by the support of the Hostos Community College Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, New York State Assemblyman José Rivera, New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr., and Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center.

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#### **About José Madera**

José Madera spent 31 years with the Tito Puente Orchestra, first serving as a percussionist and later as the musical arranger and the musical director. Today with the Mambo Legends Orchestra, Madera has recreated and rearranged much of the music that the band performed during the heyday of the Mambo. Prior to joining Tito Puente, Madera played with the famous Machito Orchestra. Later, he worked with the legendary Fania Records as a staff arranger. He has written many arrangements for countless Latin, pop, R&B, and jazz artists and has recorded with many of them, with over 250 recording and 75 album credits to his name, including Diana Ross, James Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Celia Cruz, Chico O’Farrill, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Parker, amongst many others.

#### **About The Mambo Legends Orchestra**

The Mambo Legends Orchestra is made up of former musicians from the Tito Puente Orchestra, driven by their dedication to keep the sound of 1950s and 60s Palladium-era big band music alive. They are devoted to performing new creative Latin and Latin jazz concepts, while playing the music of Machito, Tito Rodríguez, and Tito Puente, the music of a time that critics call the “Greatest and Most innovative Era” in the history of Latin music. Performing together for over 30 years, they are led by John ‘Dandy’ Rodríguez, Mitch Frohman and musically-directed by Jose Madera, each having spent over 25 years working with Tito Puente.

#### **About Carlos Henríquez**

Carlos Henríquez was born in 1979 in the Bronx, New York. 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 involved with 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 featured on more than 25 albums. Henríquez has performed with artists including Chucho Valdés, Paco De Lucia, Tito Puente, the Marsalis Family, Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Lenny Kravitz, 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.

**About Joe Conzo Sr.**

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

**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/>