The Afro Latin Jazz Alliance (ALJA)

Founded in 2007 by GRAMMY®-award winning composer, pianist, and educator Arturo O’Farrill to support Afro Latin jazz and provide institutional support for the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, ALJA’s comprehensive array of performance and education programs celebrate Latino contributions to American jazz and explore the rich diversity of jazz in the Americas.

ALJA’s mission is to perform, educate about, and preserve the music of all the Americas, emanating from African and indigenous roots, through the entry point of jazz. ALJA embraces its mission with a commitment to social justice, equity, inclusion, and the equality of cultures worldwide. Addressing inequality is part of our mission, which we fulfil by making our programs accessible and affordable to all, as well as and socially relevant by ensuring participation of all our constituencies regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic background.

Through thirteen years of performance, education, preservation, and public engagement, ALJA has brought attention to Afro Latin jazz as an important American artform. No other institution in the United States currently focuses primarily on Afro Latin jazz performance, education, and preservation. Given that Afro Latin jazz is often seen as a subset or a chapter in the larger settings of institutional jazz, ALJA’s programs and performances aim at illustrating that Afro Latin music is not a subset but a distinct genre that is at the roots of American jazz, that both genres are irrevocably intertwined, their histories running parallel. The future of jazz is dependent on re-engaging in a discussion which accords the two genres equal partnership.

In the last thirteen years ALJA has produced over 88 concerts in New York for its annual season at Symphony Space and at various venues throughout the city showcasing the full range of Afro Latin jazz; toured nationally and internationally; recorded GRAMMY®-nominated and GRAMMY®-winning albums; instituted year-long educational residencies in the New York City public schools; created a pre professional training orchestra program for young musicians; and garnered critical acclaim for its Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra as the leading orchestra of its genre in the world.