The Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC) will host a live performance by the Afro Dominican band Gagá Pa'l Pueblo on May 22 at the Bronx Music Hall outdoor plaza to celebrate the Dominican tradition of Gagá.

Featuring music and masked dancers, the performance is part of the BMHC’s National Endowment for the Arts grant series “Masking the Seasons in the Bronx,” which highlights traditional masked celebrations from Latino communities that have a presence in the Bronx. In the Dominican Republic, Gagá is
celebrated as part of the springtime agricultural cycle with masked figures including Los Diablos.

The event is also part of the BMHC’s signature Bronx Rising! series, a multi-disciplinary series that brings the Bronx’s cultural riches, past and present, to life through music, comedy, film screenings with Q&As, poetry readings and spoken word events. Last month the BMHC held a Bronx Rising! event in the Bronx Music Hall plaza for the first time. It featured a live Wanaragua performance by Wabafu Garifuna Dance Theater and was also the BMHC’s first performance with a live audience since pandemic began.

Bronx Rising! will continue on the Bronx Music Hall plaza this summer with performances celebrating the Andean summer solstice festival of Inti Raymi on June 19 and the Puerto Rican Fiesta de Santiago on July 24. The BMHC is run by the nonprofit Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco).

“We’re thrilled to be hosting in-person performances again,” said Elena Martínez, co-artistic director of the BMHC. “Music, in particular music by Latino artists, is essential to the heart and soul of the Bronx. We look forward to bringing the community together again, through the power of live music, as we build momentum to begin programming in the Bronx Music Hall later this year.”

The May 22 Bronx Rising! event is free, but space is limited. Attendees must reserve a spot by calling (917) 557-2354. COVID protocols will be strictly enforced. For those unable to attend in person, a livestream will be available on the Bronx Music Heritage Center’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bxmusic/.

Before the pandemic, the BMHC’s programming was held at the BMHC Lab, a storefront space at WHEDco’s Intervale Green affordable housing development. During the pandemic, the BMHC streamed virtual programming on its Facebook page, reaching more than 30,000 viewers and employing 160 plus to date.

Later in 2021, WHEDco will begin offering programming in the 14,000 square-foot Bronx Music Hall (BMH), a new music and performing arts venue that includes a flexible 250-seat performance theater, multi-use classroom, lobby with permanent and interactive exhibits and public amphitheater-style seating in two adjacent plazas for outdoor performances.

The BMH will serve as the permanent home of the BMHC and the cultural centerpiece of WHEDco’s Bronx Commons, a newly constructed $165 million,
426,000 sq. ft. facility featuring 305 units of fully-leased affordable housing, a 150-seat, New York City Department of Education-operated K-3 program, street-facing commercial space for small businesses and community programming, and the Melrose Community Access Support and Training (CAST) Center, a 2,200 square-foot hub for small business, family support services and community engagement.