



After Years Of Neglect, The Bronx Gets A Very Necessary Affordable Housing Complex And Music Hall

Viva
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Back in 2014, Jennifer Lopez performed her *first-ever* hometown concert at Orchard Beach. However much I wanted Lopez's concerted effort to reconnect with the block to be executed earlier on, there's something to be said about the lack of cultural spaces and music venues in the very borough that let out a piercing cry to birth hip-hop, a now-global phenomenon. Not to mention, the long abandoned Mecca absorbed many of our beloved artists, spanning genres from rap to salsa to classical, and then some.

READ: [This Boricua Is Plotting To Open The Bronx's First Independent Bookstore](#)

After years of neglect, the Boogie Down is getting a most necessary affordable housing complex and music hall. The Bronx Commons Development will introduce 305 inexpensive apartments and a new 300-seat arts and cultural center and performance space. As Mayor de Blasio has stated, "there is no finer tribute to New York's deep artistic history than including a music hall in this Bronx

development,” adding that it “will transform long-vacant City land into a vibrant cultural mecca and residential community for the borough and the City.”



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Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been echoes the mayor’s sentiments, further bolstering the gravity of such an undertaking. “As we create and preserve affordable housing at record pace, we aren’t just helping people, we are building better neighborhoods. Bronx Commons represents exactly the kind of dynamic, mixed-use development that Mayor de Blasio envisioned in Housing New York. The 305 affordable apartments will serve New Yorkers at a range of incomes, while also providing a cultural hub for the Melrose community with open space, quality retail, and a new music venue on land that had long been abandoned.”

READ: [Bronx Photographer Pens Love Letter To His Borough: “What Piano District?”](#)

The long-awaited project not only combines affordability, open space and access to the arts that is sure to contribute to its vibrant and culturally-significant neighborhoods, it also serves as a groundbreaking vision that many a Bronxites will truly be proud of. And we, for one, can’t wait to see the end results, projected for 2019. *Uptown baby, Uptown baby...*



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About WHEDco

The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corp. (WHEDco) is a community development organization founded on the radically simple idea that all people deserve healthy, vibrant communities. Working in the South Bronx, WHEDco builds award-winning, sustainable, affordable homes that serve as anchors for strong communities that residents can be proud of. WHEDco's mission is to provide the Bronx with access to all the resources that create thriving neighborhoods – from high-quality early education and after-school programs, to healthy food, cultural programming, and economic opportunity. For more information: www.whedco.org

About the Bronx Music Hall

The Bronx Music Hall will be a state-of-the-art venue where Bronx residents and visitors from around the city and the world can connect to music and dance through high-quality shows and exhibits; explore Bronx music history and understand its lasting legacy and contributions to today's popular music; and actively participate in music and art making. At 14,000 square feet, the Bronx Music Hall will feature flexible performance space with seating for 300 people, a permanent, interactive exhibit that connects visitors to the history and influences of Bronx music, rehearsal and classroom spaces, gallery space for temporary or traveling exhibitions, and an outdoor plaza for recreation and open-air performances. Cutting-edge music has a deeply rooted history in the Bronx. A thriving Latin music scene gave it's the nickname, El Condado de la Salsa (The Borough of Salsa) and everyone knows that hip hop, now a global phenomenon, was born in its streets. The Bronx had not one, but two major centers of early R&B (doo wop) music, Morrisania and Belmont, which produced groups suchh as The Chords, the Chantels and Dion & the Belmonts; and a thriving jazz scene along Boston Road, which was home to many jazz legends (and even some future NEA Jazz

Masters) including Jimmy Owens, Valerie Capers, Maxine Sullivan, Lou Donaldson, Herbie Hancock and even Thelonius Monk. The Bronx has also been the place where traditional music, as well as popular music, found a home—young Puerto Ricans have been able to return to their island percussive roots at the casitas that dot neighborhoods such as Melrose. Today the sounds of emerging communities who now make the Bronx their home fill the soundscape—the drums of the Garifuna, the plucked kora strings from the Gambia, and bachata from the Dominican Republic—creating new work, collaborating across genres and generations, and innovating music forms in one of the most diverse counties in the nation.

About BFC Partners

BFC has been a developer of affordable and market-rate housing, as well as mixed use projects in New York City for more than 30 years. After starting in the East Village in the 1980s, BFC has established itself as a major developer in Brooklyn, completing the award-winning Toren in Downtown Brooklyn and the award-winning creative office building 1000 Dean Street in Crown Heights. BFC is currently nearing completion on 7 DeKalb at City Point on Flatbush Avenue and has broken ground on the city's first outlet center on Staten Island. Most recently, BFC was part of a team to be selected by the city to develop Bedford Courts in Crown Heights and Essex Crossing on the Lower East Side. Since the firm's inception in the 1985, BFC and its principals have completed over \$5 billion in development projects, encompassing the construction of more than 8,000 residential units and millions of square feet of mixed-use development. For more information about BFC Partners visit www.bfcnyc.com

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