



Parranda – Paranda at the Bronx Music Heritage Center

Posted on [December 10, 2017](#) by [Fuyo](#)



by Francisco G. Gómez

Last Friday's **parranda** at the Bronx Music Heritage Center was awesome; we had such a wonderful time at this community celebration.

For those of you who may not know about the BMHC, well, it was founded by the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation. It is a community development organization founded on the radically simple idea that all people deserve healthy, vibrant communities. They build award-winning, sustainable, affordable homes – but their work is not over when their buildings are complete. **WHEDco** believes that to be successful, affordable housing must be anchored in strong communities that residents can be proud of.

"The BMHC is a performance and community space designed to showcase and amplify the Bronx's rich musical legacy. Envisioned as a "lab" space, the BMHC encourages artists and community members to gather, participate in performances, and express their vision for this cultural facility. Building off the success of the BMHC lab, WHEDco will open a permanent music venue and cultural center, the Bronx Music Hall, in Bronx Commons, it's third affordable housing development, currently under construction. Bronx Commons will transform the final underdeveloped parcel of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area into a vibrant center for living, working, learning, shopping and entertainment – including 305 affordable apartments, a landscaped public

plaza, places to eat and shop, all anchored by the Bronx Music Hall.” See their website [here](#).

Back to the night’s festivities. The celebration began with a set of heated **Garifuna** tunes performed by several musicians from Belize – Andy Ordoñez, Honduras – Emilio Nuñez and Guatemala – Alex Kwabena Colón. Singing in their language, a mixture of Carib and Arawak indigenous words, the choral harmonics were simply beautifully backed up by two drums called the segundo and the primero, very similar to the drums used in the Puerto Rican musical tradition of Bomba. To top it all off, two guitars carried the rhythms, creating the most delightful toe tapping fusion of incredible sounds.

The Garifuna performance was followed by an “Asalto Navideño” performed by a compendium of Puerto Rican musicians from a number of different bands that perform locally and internationally. Some of the headliners were, six time Grammy nominee percussionist **Bobby Sanabria** , guitarist Bryan Vargas, vocalist Genevieve (Eva) Morales and percussionist Jorge “Georgie” Vázquez, as well as, other outstanding musicians from the New York area.

In a retumbe of **aguinaldos** backed up by **bomba** drums pounding out sicas and yubas and **danzones** executed with the unmistakable traditional Puerto Rican **cuatro**, the entire BHMC came alive with the holiday songs of Borinquen – It was simply electrifying! The event culminated in a jam session of Garifunas and Puerto Ricans coming together to throw down in a musical collective spirit that is signature of Indigenous, African and Spanish people from the different parts of the Americas.

Kudos to BMHC for their production of “Bronx Rising Season 6,” an annual musical event not to be missed in the years to come!

Link: <http://www.raicesculturalcenter.org/blog/parranda-paranda-at-the-bronx-music-heritage-center/>