



THE BRONX

## The Bronx is Singing: How One Organization is Showcasing the Borough's Musical Talent

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BRONX, N.Y. - From the outside, it looks like a typical storefront, but open the door and you will hear the beautiful sounds of the Kora, a stringed instrument from West Africa. Musician Salieu Suso has been playing it for decades.

"By playing here is to continue traditions to show the people of the Bronx and the children of the descendants of Africa, to see and then to learn the culture of Africa," said Suso.

He is one of the dozens of musicians who perform at the Bronx Music Heritage Center, a venue that showcases local artists.

Created in 2012, the center highlights musicians and artists from immigrant groups that call the Bronx home, from Hondurans to Gambians.

Those immigrants have a history of creating innovative music.

"We're known as the birthplace of hip-hop, the el condado de la salsa, the borough of salsa," said Elena Martinez, co-artistic director of the Bronx Music Heritage Center. "We have this grounding in music, and so people should take advantage and come up and take advantage of the Bronx."

Organizers say for many years, the Bronx was home to historic theaters, but the borough's hard times during the 1970s and 80s forced many of them to close.

This week, the Bronx Music Heritage Center kicks off its new season, its last before moving to the new Bronx Music Hall, a venue on Elton Avenue that will include classroom space, gallery space and a theater with seating for 250 people. That's five times the capacity of the current Bronx Music Heritage Center.

"We'll be able to take all of this and open it up and make it bigger and just expand on everything that we do here," Martinez said.

This season's programming lasts through the end of the year. For more information go to [thisisbronxmusic.org](http://thisisbronxmusic.org).

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