



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO TO CELEBRATE  
THE RE-OPENING OF 'EL TEATRO' ON FEBRUARY 23RD  
WITH SALSA LEGEND EDDIE PALMIERI**

*Funding for the Theater Renovation Project totaling \$5.3 million was  
generously provided by NYSCA and administered by DASNY*

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
Saturday, February 23, 2019 at 6:00pm  
Followed by a Ticketed Performance at 7:30pm**

**NEW YORK, NY, February 8, 2019** – El Museo del Barrio will celebrate the re-opening of El Teatro (Heckscher Theater) on February 23, 2019 with a formal ribbon cutting ceremony at 6pm followed by a ticketed performance by salsa legend and El Barrio native, Eddie Palmieri from 7:30 – 9pm. El Teatro underwent a fifteen-month long renovation, which included the installation of a new automated, motorized orchestra pit lift; an upgraded projection booth with a 20,000 lumen digital projector capable of screening modern motion pictures; a modernized audio system with a center stack of speakers and superior sound reproduction with digital controls, and substantial conservation work to the historic elements of the space. The \$5.3 million project was generously funded by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY).

“A perfect complement to our exhibitions, bilingual education activities, and public programs, El Teatro will now allow us to further explore the full range of Latinx and Latin American cultural expressions with the addition of performing arts, music, dance, and theater,” said Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio. “As we begin celebrations for our 50th anniversary, I’m thrilled that El Teatro, as an integral part of our history and our legacy, will once again open its doors to our community and, as a state of the art performing arts center, will make an impact in New York’s cultural landscape.”

The historic El Teatro of El Museo del Barrio, formerly the Heckscher Theatre, is the only theatre of its kind on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Consisting of a proscenium arch stage and seating 572, it has been acknowledged as a Landmark Quality Interior venue for its remarkable series of monumental murals designed in 1921 by the gifted illustrator and painter, Willy Pogany (1882-1955) and distinctive stained glass roundels. Originally intended primarily for children’s theatre, it is now part of the New York City’s Historic Music Trail.

Recognizing its landmark significance and historic presence, El Teatro underwent a restoration of its chandeliers, landmarks murals, decorative plaster, and paint to match historic conditions under the supervision of a conservator. Additional updates to El Teatro for this recent renovation included refurbished theatrical curtains,

rigging, and seating, as well as new aisle lighting; energy efficient LED lighting, both for theater and stage lighting; stage flooring; and additional enhancements of the projection booth, with HVAC, lights and projection windows.

"El Museo del Barrio plays a vital role in its community and in our city and state's cultural landscape. NYSCA proudly supports the museum's pivotal leadership in preserving and illuminating Puerto Rican and Latinx culture and its contributions to our shared goal of ensuring that our state's artistic heritage is inclusive of all New Yorkers," said NYSCA Executive Director Mara Manus. "We congratulate El Museo on its 50th anniversary and eagerly anticipated reopening."

"El Teatro is a wonderful, one-of-a-kind historic space and I am thrilled that it will once again be open for the public to enjoy. These renovations preserve the history and integrity of El Teatro, while ensuring that El Barrio has a state of the art theater facility to meet the needs of the future. I look forward to all that is to come for this remarkable space as El Museo continues to fulfill its mission of educating our communities on Latino culture." added New York State Senator José M. Serrano

"I couldn't be happier to have a true cornerstone of East Harlem return to its people. El Museo has been a cultural icon representing our neighborhood for generations and I feel fortunate to see this important beacon updated, allowing for presentation capabilities that compete with any large institution. Supporting projects like these is something both our city and state can be proud of. Congratulations to all those involved." - said NYS Assemblymember Robert J. Rodriguez.

"El Museo is a cultural hub for El Barrio and all New Yorkers, a premiere venue for visual art," said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. "Thanks to this exciting upgrade to El Teatro, El Museo can focus on bringing live performances, cinema, and more to this historic theater space. The City is a longtime funder of El Museo's programming and facilities and for this project, we applaud New York State for its critical support."

"El Museo del Barrio's reopening of El Teatro is so vital to East Harlem's cultural growth and vitality. I'm thrilled that Salsa legend, Eddie Palmieri will be gracing the stage for the kick-off of a newly modernized theater that will serve our communities for years to come. I applaud the State of New York for their generous funding and commitment given to El Museo del Barrio, one of our community's most beloved cultural institutions." said Council Member Diana Ayala.

Tickets for the inaugural performance by Eddie Palmieri vary. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org).

## **ABOUT EDDIE PALMIERI**

Known as one of the finest pianists of the past 60 years, Eddie Palmieri is a bandleader, arranger and composer of salsa and Latin jazz. His playing skillfully fuses the rhythm of his Puerto Rican heritage with the complexity of his jazz influences: Thelonious Monk, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner as well as his older brother, Charlie Palmieri. Palmieri's parents emigrated from Ponce, Puerto Rico to New York City in 1926. Born in Spanish Harlem and raised in the Bronx, Palmieri learned to play the piano at an early age, and at 13, he joined his uncle's orchestra, playing timbales. Palmieri's professional career as a pianist took off with various bands in the early 1950s including Eddie Forrester, Johnny Segui's, and the popular Tito Rodriguez Orchestra. In 1961, Palmieri formed his own band, La Perfecta, which featured an

unconventional front line of trombones rather than the trumpets customary in Latin orchestras. This created an innovative sound that mixed American jazz into Afro-Caribbean rhythms, surprising critics and fans alike. Palmieri disbanded La Perfecta in 1968 to pursue different musical endeavors, though he would return to the band's music in the 2000s.

## **ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO**

El Museo del Barrio, founded by a coalition of Puerto Rican educators, artists, and activists, is the nation's leading Latino and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events.

The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City, and open Wednesday to Saturday from 11:00am - 6:00pm, and Sunday from 12:00 to 5:00pm. Admission is suggested.

To connect with El Museo del Barrio via Social Media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). For more information, please visit <http://www.elmuseo.org>.

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