

# ARTURO O'FARRILL

## AFRO LATIN JAZZ ENSEMBLE

**PIANO** Arturo O'Farrill  
**TENOR SAXOPHONE** Ivan Renta  
**TRUMPET** Jim Seeley  
**TROMBONE** Rafi Malkiel  
**BASS** Raúl Reyes  
**DRUMS** Vince Cherico  
**CONGAS** Keisel Jiménez  
**PERCUSSION** Carlos Maldonado

Zellerbach Theatre  
Friday, May 8 @ 7:30 PM

There will be no intermission.

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### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mexican-American pianist, composer and bandleader **Arturo O'Farrill** stands as a towering figure in contemporary music, renowned for his genre-defying virtuosity, leadership and unwavering commitment to social justice through music. O'Farrill is a celebrated composer whose work has been performed by Dr. Cornel West, pianist Lara Downes, the San Francisco Ballet and more. Hailed by *DownBeat* as "one of our greatest living pianists," O'Farrill bridges the gap between traditional Latin rhythms, modern jazz and contemporary composition, continually pushing the boundaries of the art form while maintaining a profound connection to his roots. Beyond performing worldwide, O'Farrill is a passionate educator and advocate for social justice, using his platform to champion diversity and unity. As founder and director of both the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra and *Belongó* (formerly known as the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance), O'Farrill plays a pivotal role in nurturing cultural dialogue through the transformative power of music.

Driven by a mission to merge Afro Latin traditions with the innovation of modern jazz, O'Farrill founded the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra (ALJO) in 2002, redefining Latin jazz through bold performances, social commentary and global collaborations. From Carnegie Hall to NYU Abu Dhabi, the ALJO has become a vital force in music,

recently appearing at Town Hall with Brazilian legends and at WNYC's Centennial Broadcast. O'Farrill has partnered with choreographers from Alvin Ailey to Ballet Hispánico and scored major works like Arielle Smith's *Carmen* for the San Francisco Ballet. His compositions, like *Tabla Raza* with Tania León and *Four Questions* with Dr. Cornel West, reflect a deep engagement with heritage and activism. In 2007, he launched *Belongó*, a nonprofit advancing Afro Latin jazz and community empowerment. A renowned educator at UCLA and beyond, O'Farrill also leads *Casa Belongó*, a new cultural hub in East Harlem. A six-time Grammy® Award-winner, his acclaimed recordings include *Fandango at the Wall in New York*, *Four Questions* and the 2024 release *Mundoagua: Celebrating Carla Bley*, hailed by *The Wall Street Journal* as "a masterwork."

Born in Mexico City and raised in New York City, O'Farrill's musical journey is deeply rooted in a legacy of innovation and cultural fusion. His father, Chico O'Farrill, was an influential composer, arranger and conductor who played a crucial role in integrating Afro-Cuban rhythms into jazz during the 1940s and 1950s. O'Farrill pursued formal education at the Manhattan School of Music and the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, where he focused on jazz theory and composition. In the 1980s, he joined the Carla Bley Big Band, before going on to collaborate with the renowned Dizzy Gillespie United Nation Orchestra, Harry Belafonte, Lester Bowie, Steve Turre and more, further solidifying his reputation as a versatile player and adept arranger. In 1995, he was named pianist and music director of the Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra, an ensemble he would go on to lead following his father's death in 2001. O'Farrill is based in Brooklyn where he lives with his wife, classical pianist Alison Deane. Their sons, Zack and Adam, are also musicians and frequent collaborators.

## 26/27 SEASON: JAZZ

- OCT 2** Michael Mayo
- OCT 30** Arun Ramamurthy & Rudresh Mahanthappa
- NOV 22** Louis Cato
- DEC 6** Isaiah J. Thompson:  
A Guaraldi Holiday
- FEB 5** Branford Marsalis & Dianne Reeves:  
Celebrate John Coltrane
- MAR 18** Endea Owens & The Cookout
- APR 11** Sarah Elizabeth Charles

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Endea Owens by Lauren Desberg