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TITO PUENTE JR. HEADLINES THE RETURN OF THE HLSCC PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Monday, 23 February – The H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) will mark the highly anticipated return of its renowned Performing Arts Series on Saturday, 21 March 2026 with a headline performance by internationally celebrated Latin jazz artist Tito Puente Jr. at the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium.

For more than twenty years, the Performing Arts Series has served as a cultural heartbeat for Tortola, connecting the Virgin Islands to distinguished international performers while strengthening HLSCC's role as one of the region's leading performing arts centres. Its revival represents a renewed commitment to artistic excellence and reaffirms the College's place at the intersection of education, creativity, and community engagement.

Puente Jr. last performed at the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium on 12 January 2013 during the eighteenth season of the Series, delivering an electrifying concert still remembered as a defining moment in the programme's history. Born in New York City and of Puerto Rican heritage, Puente Jr. continues the global legacy of his legendary father – Tito Puente – by blending Afro Cuban rhythms, Caribbean musical traditions, and classic jazz elements with a spirited contemporary style. His 2026 return offers residents and visitors an exceptional opportunity to experience elite Latin jazz in an intimate setting.

"When we spoke about bringing the Performing Arts Series back, we knew the moment had to feel historic," said Linette Baa, Performing Arts Coordinator at HLSCC. "Tito Puente Jr. represents excellence, legacy, and global cultural impact. His music connects generations, cultures, and communities, which is exactly what we want the Series to embody as it returns."

MORE

Ahead of the concert, HLSCC will host a Student Outreach and School Engagement session on Friday, 20 March, featuring an interactive educational encounter with Tito Puente Jr. The outreach supports the College's mission to inspire youth, expand access to arts education, and nurture emerging cultural leaders across the Territory.

"The return of the Performing Arts Series is the renewed commitment to our mission as a college," said Dr. Richard Georges, President of HLSCC. "The Student Outreach with Tito Puente Jr is a powerful extension of that mission, grounded in the belief that meaningful contact with the arts builds confidence, sparks imagination, and shapes the next generation of cultural contributors. This concert is one of many experiences we are reintroducing as we strengthen HLSCC's role as a centre of learning, inspiration, and community life in the Virgin Islands. We are excited for what this revival represents and hope it is only the beginning of many special moments to come."

Tickets will be available online at https://events.hlscc.edu.vg/ with limited quantities offered at J&C Trading Ltd and the HLSCC Campus Store. With only 420 seats available, patrons are encouraged to secure their tickets early. Each purchase directly supports arts education, student development initiatives, and cultural programming across the Virgin Islands, helping to sustain the Performing Arts Series for generations ahead.

Ticket options include VIP at $100 with preferred seating and priority entry, Premium at $75 for an elevated concert experience, General Admission at $50, and an Early Bird General Admission rate of $45 for a limited time. Student and faculty tickets are available for $25 and $30 with valid identification and must be purchased in person.

The Performing Arts Series aligns fully with HLSCC's mission to change lives by providing a learning experience that cultivates excellence, intellectual curiosity, community, and a spirit of stewardship. This performance is supported by the generosity of Unite BVI and JOMA Properties. The College invites corporate partners, organisations, alumni, and individuals to join in supporting this event and the continued growth of the Performing Arts Series.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tito Puente Jr. is an internationally touring Latin jazz bandleader known for carrying forward the musical legacy of his father, the legendary Tito Puente. With a dynamic stage presence and a repertoire that fuses salsa, Afro Cuban rhythms, and classic jazz, he bridges generations and geographies with ease. Known for "Oye Como Va" from his Billboard-winning debut *Guarachando* and the A.B. Quintanilla produced *Siéntelo*, he has performed more than 300 shows annually, collaborated with Bobby Cruz, and appeared on BET Jazz. His performances honour cultural heritage while bringing a modern vibrancy that captivates audiences around the world. **Website:** titopuentejrtour.com | **Instagram:** @titopuentejr

ABOUT H. LAVITY STOUTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) is the leading accredited community college in the Virgin Islands, accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. With career-ready programmes, workforce training, and signature cultural initiatives, HLSCC advances education, innovation, and community life across the Territory. **www.hlscc.edu.vg**

PHOTO CAPTION:

1. Official Promotional Image of Tito Puente Jr. (Provided)
2. Official Poster for the Performing Arts Series: Tito Puente Jr. Concert