

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Musician Elio Villafranca Recipient of the first  
NALAC - Heineken Green Ribbon Master Artist Music Grant**

Pianist and composer, Elio Villafranca is honored and proud to announce that he has been selected to receive the first **NALAC - Heineken Green Ribbon Master Artist Music Grant** from The National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC). The Master Artist Grant award will be to compose a 45 minute, three-movement concerto for a Mariachi and a contemporary Symphonic orchestra. The 2008-2009 Master Artist Grant is in the discipline of music and made possible with the continued support from Heineken USA. Elio states, "Receiving the first **NALAC - Heineken Green Ribbon Master Artist Music Grant** award of \$20,000 will help further the development of my artistic work. This piece, entitled *Renacimiento de un Mariachi*, will feature Afro Cuban percussion and the mariachi MECA ensemble at Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA) in Houston, Texas."

Elio also states, "My compositional goals are to create a contemporary musical experience that would blend rhythms, instruments, and melodies from a variety of cultures, and to extend the remarkably unchanging genre of mariachi, while maintaining the traditional mariachi form as a compositional foundation. For the development of *Renacimiento de un Mariachi* I will use the musical possibilities inherent in this instrumental format to recreate in orchestra the mariachi styles of *waltz* and *huapango*, while using the Afro Cuban Yoruba rhythm, *Ñongo*, as a rhythmic foundation. This work has been the most ambitious challenge of my compositional career so far." [www.eliovillafranca.net](http://www.eliovillafranca.net)

"NALAC is pleased that it can continue to support the creative process of Latino artists and organizations through the NFA, now in its fourth year. NALAC values the importance of sustaining the arts, especially Latino arts, in communities across the nation. Now more than ever, it is important to invest in the arts, and stimulate ideas, civic engagement, and local economies." said Abel Lopez, Chair of the NALAC Board.

Funding for this grant award of the NALAC Fund for the Arts is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Ford Foundation, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Heineken USA, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Southwest Airlines. For more information on the NALAC Fund for the Arts, please visit [www.nalac.org](http://www.nalac.org)

Through the NALAC Fund for the Arts, NALAC has provided 187 grants totaling more than \$523,000 to Latino artists, ensembles and small and mid-size Latino arts and culture organizations throughout the U.S.

Maria De Leon, Executive Director of NALAC, states, "The NALAC Fund for the Arts has established itself as an important mechanism of support for the Latino artistic community, and has helped in the development of many new projects across the country. We are excited to be able to offer the first Master Artist grant in Music and look forward to continue honoring the work of master artists who have devoted a lifetime to their work. We thank the many funders who continue to support the Latino artistic field through the NFA."