

HERNÁNDEZ, VICTORIA (1897–1998)

Among a handful of Puerto Rican pioneer women entrepreneurs, Hernández owned the renowned music store, Almacenes Hernández, managed musical groups, organized tours, and served as intermediary between major record labels, like Victor and Decca, and Latin music ensembles. She arrived in New York in 1919 and lived most of her life in the city. An accomplished cellist and pianist, she was instrumental in promoting Latin music in New York, the Caribbean and Latin America from its inception. Recognized as the “godmother” to musicians, Hernández’ astute business acumen complemented her famous composer brother, Rafael Hernández’ dedication to writing some of the most famous songs in Puerto Rican music. By 1941 she opened Casa Hernández in the South Bronx, a music and general store that became a hub for newly arrived migrants.