

Latinx and Hispanic Representation Matters:

An intersectional study of the confluence of playwrighting, casting practices, and progressive productions as they relate to diversity and inclusion in theatre.

Created for the students of the McLennan College Theatre Department

Kathleen Laundry, Professor of Costume Design

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Why do we need to know this?

American theatre, film, and television have a long and problematic history with systemic racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and ableism:

Although BIPOC make up 70% of the world's population (and 67% of the world's non-Christians), white performers held 76% of the roles during the decade between 2006-2016 on Broadway. Of the 24% of the roles that went to minority actors (which includes all non-whites plus actors with disabilities) only 10.7% of those were non-traditionally cast. In other words, roles that could have been filled by a performer of any ethnic background, nearly always went to a white actor. White actors also earn higher wages than BIPOC actors.

Specifically at 18.3%, Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the country. Yet, they only encompass 1% to 3% of the prime time television population. Additionally, the characters that they have historically portrayed are one-dimensional racist stereotypes of The Castilian Caballero or The Dark Lady.

In the 21st Century we should know better and do better. We hope through education and deliberate action toward inclusivity in our productions as well as our classes, to increase the representation of these under-represented groups in both our student population and the plays we produce.

<https://howlround.com/how-liberal-arts-theatre-programs-are-failing-their-students-color>

<https://variety.com/2016/film/news/movie-tv-diversity-study-hollywood-straight-white-male-1201711586/>

http://www.aapacnyc.org/uploads/1/1/9/4/11949532/aapac_2015-2016_10year_report.pdf

<https://allarts.org/2019/03/study-finds-decrease-in-broadway-diversity-following-a-record-breaking-year/>

An Explanation of Terms:

- **Hispanic:** anyone who was born in Spain or is from a country that speaks Spanish which includes Mexico, most of Central and South America, as well as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, but not Portugal or Brazil. Brazilians speak Portuguese. Hispanic refers more to language than to culture. This term became popular during the 1970's as a way to identify Spanish speakers on the US Census. However, many people abhor this word due to the 1492 Conquest of the Americas by Spain and the ensuing bloodshed as they stole the land from the indigenous peoples: the Incas, Mayans, Aztecs etc... Many of their descendants survived and still speak their native languages and not Spanish.
- **Latino/Latina:** someone from a Latin American country which includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Islands. The US government adopted this word in 1997 to compliment Hispanic to refer to Spanish speakers who were also from Latin American countries.
- **Latinx:** a gender-neutral term in which the x replaces the gendered -o or -a endings. This term is used primarily by American born Latinos/Latinas who want to be more inclusive in their language, in the way that American does not signify male or female.
- **Mexican:** a Mexican national, or someone who was born in Mexico.
- **Mestizo:** literally someone with "mixed" European/Indigenous ancestry. This term became popular after the Mexican Revolution when Mexico was trying to form a cohesive cultural identity. In Mexico it is used to identify someone who is not wholly European nor wholly Indigenous and refers to most, but not all, of the population of Mexico.
- **Chicano/Chicana:** anyone who was born in the U.S., but has ancestry from Mexico. Became widely used in the 1960's to express a political stance founded on pride in a shared cultural, ethnic, and community identity. This term is used mostly in the Southern US.

Summary of what you just read:

No matter which terms are used people often disagree on usage, and terms can vary depending on the intent of the statement . Terms also vary by region, generation, and political stance. Many people prefer to be identified by their country of origin or heritage. When in doubt, it's best to ask a person how they want to be identified.

When speaking about a group:

- **Latino refers to geography- a person from a Latin American country.**
- **Hispanic refers to language- A person from a primarily Spanish speaking country.**

When speaking about an individual, refer to the person by their nationality. For example, my friends Will McKeever, Aundrea Stevens, and Dorothy McCracken are Puerto Rican American. My friend Manny Velez identifies as Chicano, but my other friends, Christie Vela and Lanell Pena do not identify as Chicana even though all three of their families have roots in Mexico. My friend Israel Silva who is a first generation Mexican American, identifies as Mestizo.

Neither term defines race or color. They are general terms that sum up a geographical or linguistic background and a great deal of diversity lies within these umbrella terms.

https://www.exploratorium.edu/sites/default/files/Genial_2017_Terms_of_Usage.pdf

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-11-22-me-59558-story.html>

<https://bilingualkidspot.com/2019/01/11/difference-between-hispanic-latino-spanish-lantix-chicano/>

Mexican/American War



The Adams-Onís Treaty gave all the land in green to “New Spain” in 1818. Three years later, Mexico obtained its independence from Spain in 1821 after 10 years of fighting the colonial government. At that point Mexico controlled most of the Southwestern part of the US. Texas rebelled in 1836 was its own republic for a decade, then became the 28th state in 1846. War broke out with the US in 1846-48. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war when Mexico ceded the Northern half of its territories to the US including what is now California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Mexico was guaranteed the full rights of citizenship for all Mexicans in the US, including the right to conduct business in their native language, as well as the right not to be kept as slaves, and to be protected from kidnapping by Indians.



The Trope of the Castillian Caballero

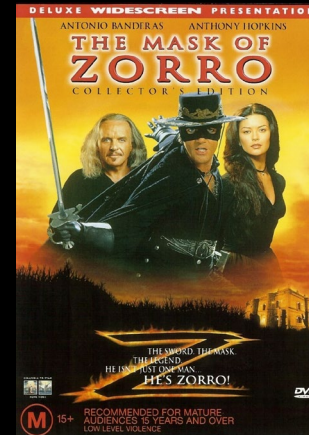
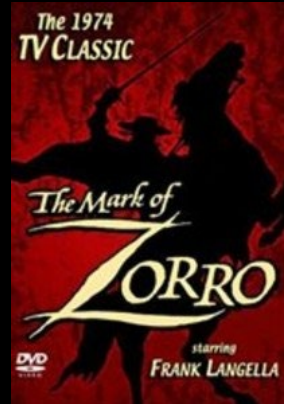
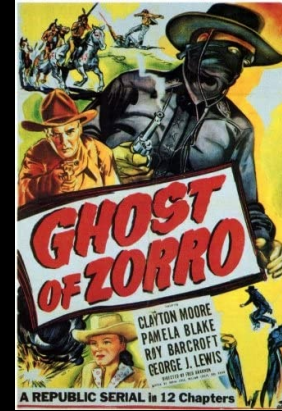
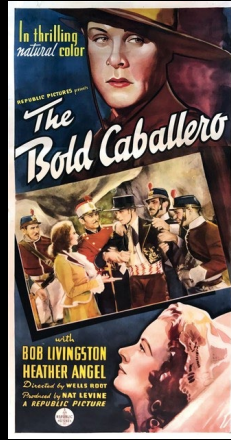
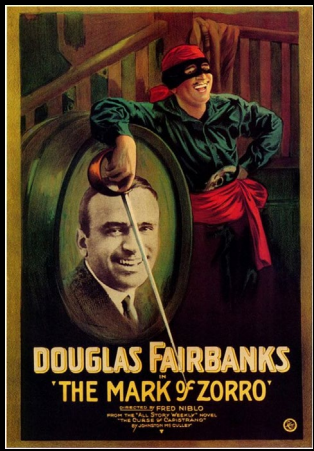
The caballero is an outlaw much like Robin Hood, defending the local population from the unscrupulous government. He is a highly sexualized character who conquered Latin women easily and was usually accompanied by a side-kick who served as foil for the caballero. The two most popular characters of this type were Zorro and The Cisco Kid.

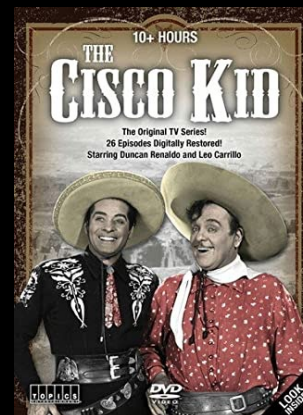


- **Cisco Kid:** created by O. Henry in his short story “The Cabellero’s Way” published in 1907. The Cisco Kid story is set in the Texas/Mexico border and the Cisco Kid and his sidekicks are clearly Mexican. The first was made as a silent film in 1914. There are 28 American Cisco Kid films. Cuban American Cesar Romero, Spaniard Duncan Renaldo, and Mexican Gilbert Roland were famous for playing this role. It was adapted into a TV series that ran for 156 episodes, a comic book that ran from 1940-58, a comic strip that ran from 1951-1967, and a made for TV movie starring Jimmy Smits and Cheech Marin.



- **Zorro:** created in 1919 by Johnston McCulley in serialized form as “The Curse of Capistrano”. These stories are set in Spanish California between 1769-1821. Zorro is presented as more Spaniard than Mexican. The first film adaptation was done in 1920 as a silent film starring Douglas Fairbanks. It was a phenomenal success which in turn created a demand for McCulley to write more Zorro stories. He published 60 more Zorro stories until 1959. There are 15 American Zorro films, 3 Mexican films, and 28 European films based on his stories.





The Trope of The Dark Lady

The Dark Lady character begins to appear in American cinema during the 1930s. Like the Castillian Caballero, the Dark Lady was a hyper sexualized character whose sexuality lured innocent men (primarily Anglo) into submission. Other traits of the dark lady included a quick temper and an overall mysterious “air” about her. Actresses such as Lupita Tovar, Dolores Del Rio, and Rita Hayworth all started their careers portraying these roles. The actress most connected with this role is Lupe Velez who starred in a series of eight movies where she played a character commonly known as the Mexican Spitfire.



Lupita Tovar



Dolores Del Rio



Rita Hayworth



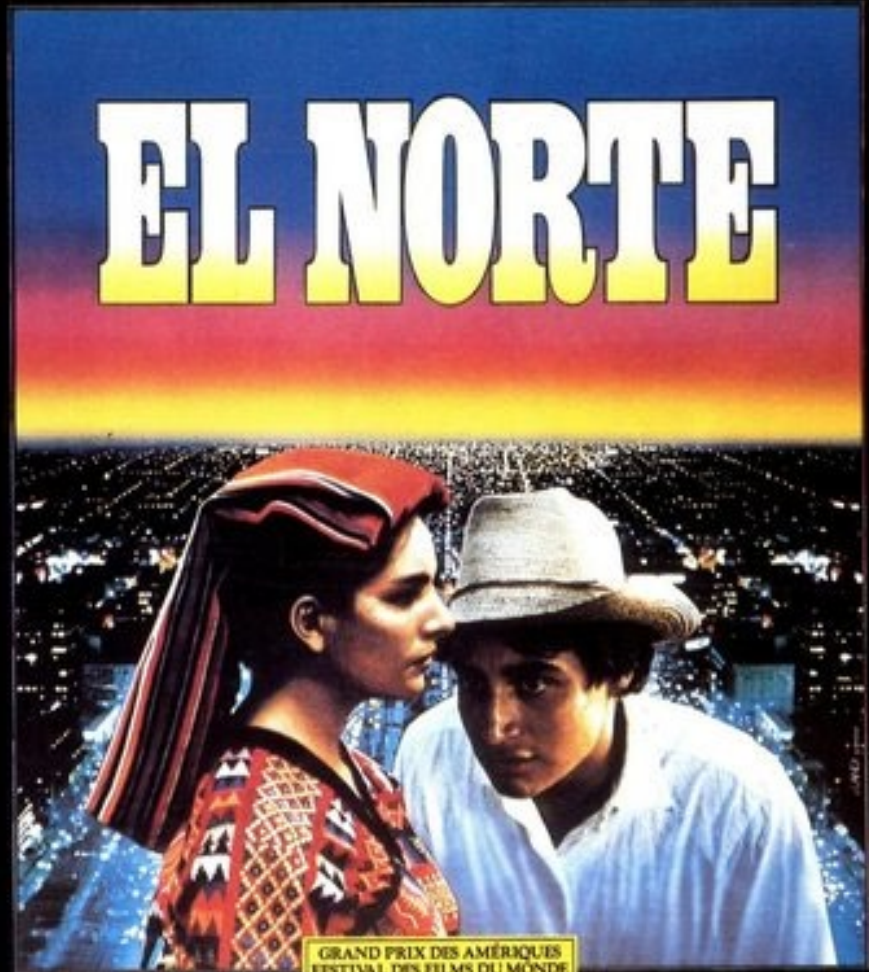
Lupe Velez



More Modern Tropes

- **Illegal Immigrants:** who often perform menial labor if men, or are being sex-trafficked if women. *Machete* films, *Born in East LA*, *El Norte*, “The Velvet Jungle” episode from *Starsky and Hutch*, Maritza from *Orange is the New Black*, Miguel in *Cobra Kai*, Icebox. Catalina on *My Name is Earl*
- **Menial Labor:** Maids all used to be Black, now they are all Hispanic. pool boy, farm/ranch hand, busboy/dishwasher, gardener. Rosalita in *The Goonies*, Isabella from *Meet the Fockers*, Carmen from *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, Lucy in *Clueless*, Rosario on *Will and Grace*, Celia on *Dharma & Greg*, Lupe in *Arrested Development*, Jennifer Lopez in *Maid in Manhattan*, and all the main characters on *Devious Maids*. Manuel from *Fawlty Towers*, all the employees of Rocky’s restaurant in *Rocky Balboa*, *Machete* films, Enrique the gay pool boy on *Legally Blonde*, Benito Martinez’s characters on *American Crime*. This trope is parodied in *A Day Without a Mexican*, a 2004 mockumentary that takes a look at what would happen if all of the Mexicans in California (one third of the population) were to suddenly disappear.
- **Gang Bangers:** youth street gang involves criminal activities usually drug dealing, murder, graffiti, rape. Key component of the Hood film. Can be identified by clothes and tattoos. *Boulevard Nights*, *Penny Dreadful: City of Angels*, *Lincoln Heights*. *Walking Dead* episode “Vatos”

Illegal Immigrants



EL NORTE

GRAND PRIX DES AMÉRIQUES
FESTIVAL DES FILMS DU MONDE
MONTREAL 1984

AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS FILM AN ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE "EL NORTE"
with ZADE SILVA GUTIERREZ and DAVID VILLALBA • scenario GREGORY NARA et ANNA THOMAS • produit par ANNA THOMAS •
réalisé par GREGORY NARA • directeur de la photographie JAMES GLENNON • son ROBERT YERINGTON • montage BETSY BLANZETT •
musique THE FOUR ORDOS • MELECO MARTINEZ • EMIL ROHARDS • LINDA O'BRIEN • SAMUEL BARBER • GUEPPE VERDI • GUSTAVE MAHLER •
Cinequest • VOLAND ALBA • Copyright © 1992 Cinequest International Inc. • Soundtrack Album Produced by GREGORY NARA & DANNY HOLLOWAY

My Name is Earl



I think it's too dark to read.



Orange is the New Black



DANNY TREJO STEVEN SEAGAL MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ JESSICA ALBA ROBERT DE NIRO

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ'S
MACHETE



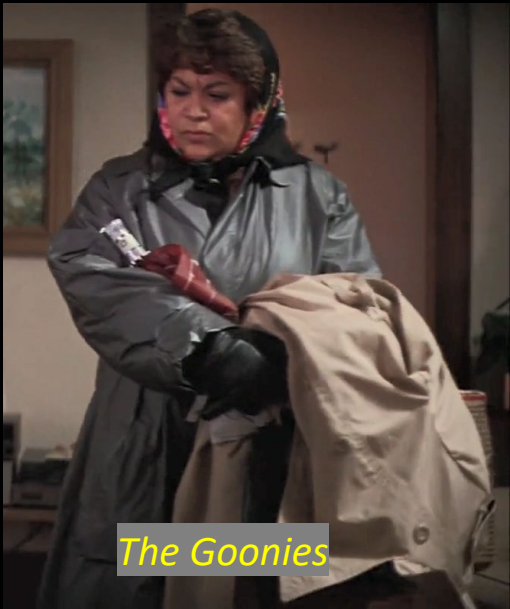
HBO FILMS PRESENTS

ICE BOX

SEARCHING FOR FREEDOM. CAUGHT IN THE SYSTEM.

HBO FILMS

Maids



The Goonies



Clueless



Will and Grace



Down and Out in Beverly Hills



Maid in Manhattan



Arrested Development



Penny Dreadful:
City of Angels

Manual Labor



American Crime



American Crime

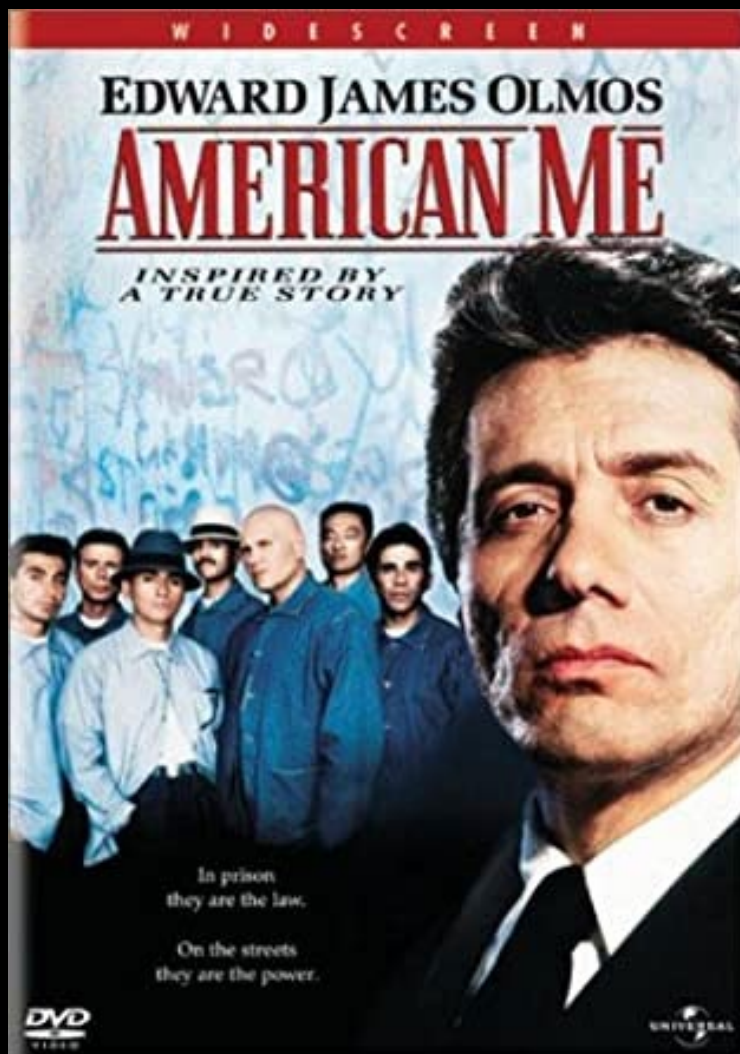


Fawlty Towers



Legally Blonde

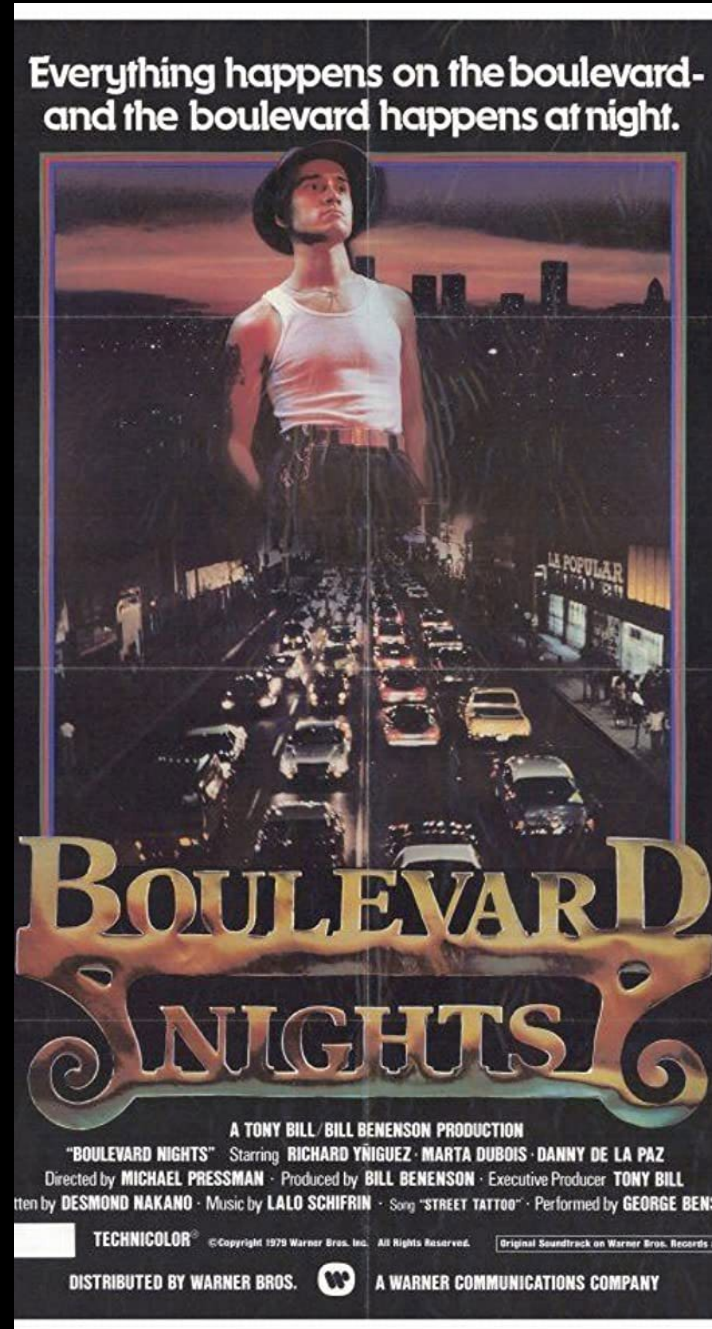
Gang Bangers



The Walking Dead



Penny Dreadful: City of Angels

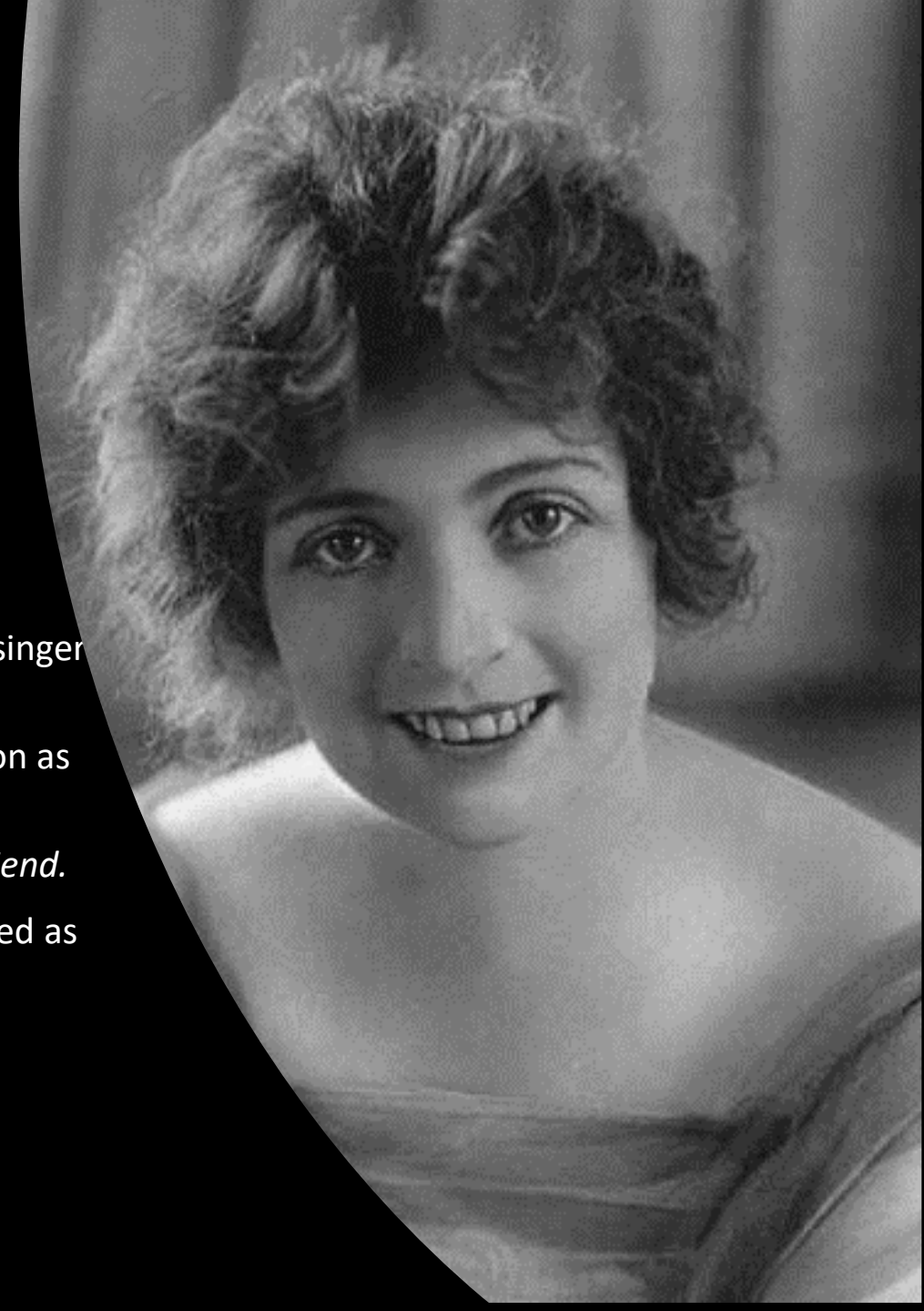


What now?

Without bringing attention to the mistreatment of Latinx/Hispanic characters, it makes it difficult for writers to change how they write these characters. By learning about stereotypes, we grow to appreciate quality storytelling. We always have to ask ourselves certain questions: Are these stereotypes damaging? How should show-runners and writers improve their storytelling when it comes to Latinx/Hispanic characters? Can we like certain pieces of media while simultaneously recognizing their mistreatment of Latinx/Hispanic characters?

Myrtle Gonzalez: The first Mexican American Actress

- Born in Los Angeles, CA in 1891 to a Mexican father and Irish mother.
- Her mother, a former opera and popular singer, influenced Myrtle to become a singer herself.
- By the time Myrtle Gonzalez was in her teens she had already gained a reputation as a strong soprano.
- She began working for Vitagraph Studios in 1913 with the film *Her Husband's Friend*.
- Altogether Gonzalez appeared in 78 films (12 full-length) and came to be regarded as one of the country's first leading ladies.
- She passed away in 1918 of the Spanish Flu. She was only 28 at the time.



Jose Ferrer: the first Latino to win a Tony

Born in Puerto Rico in 1912, Jose Ferrer's family emigrated to New York when he was two years old. His parents were wealthy and wanted him to have a broader education, so he was sent away to boarding school in Switzerland. He spoke four languages fluently and studied piano and voice. He graduated from Princeton in 1933 and then enrolled in Columbia where he studied Romance languages.

He began acting while still in college. He was the first Hispanic actor on Broadway in *A Slight Case of Murder*, 1935. He starred in *Charley's Aunt* (partly in drag) that ran for 233 performances in 1940-41. It was a huge personal success. He made his Broadway debut as a director on *Vickie*, 1942. He played Iago to Paul Robeson's Othello in 1943, ran for 296 performances, longest running Shakespeare play in the US to this day. His wife, Uta Hagen, played Desdemona. He starred in *Cyrano* in 1946, and became the first Latino to win a Tony award for Best Actor. Later in 1950, *Cyrano* was adapted as a film, which made him the first Latino film star, and the first to win an Oscar for Best Actor. He was also the first actor and first Hispanic person to be awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1985. He has 121 film and TV credits over a 40 year career.



Anthony Quinn: the first Latino to win an Oscar

Mexican actor **Anthony Quinn** was born Manuel Antonio Rodolfo Quinn Oaxaca. He was nominated for four Oscars and won two, the first for *Viva Zapata!* in 1952 in which he played Eufemio Zapata, brother of the famous Mexican revolutionary. He had seven credits on Broadway and was nominated for a Tony award for *Becket*. He was the first Mexican American to win an Oscar. He has 169 credits over a 70 year career.

He was a civil rights activist. He provided funding for the Latino advocacy group, the Spanish-Speaking People's Congress. He assisted in fundraising efforts for the legal defense of Mexican American youth in the racially charged Sleepy Lagoon murder trial in 1942. In 1969, he visited with Native American student activists occupying Alcatraz Island in protest, promising to offer assistance. In 1971, he narrated a documentary film by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission discussing job discrimination faced by Hispanic Americans. He was a supporter of the United Farm Workers organization led by his friend and labor activist Cesar Chavez.



West Side Story Broadway, 1957

West Side Story is a reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the Jets (Tony's gang) are second generation Polish immigrants and the Sharks (Maria's brother Bernardo's gang) are first generation Puerto Rican immigrants. Tony and Maria's love transcends their ethnic differences, but ultimately is killed by prejudice and hate. Miscegenation was still illegal in many states until *Loving v. Virginia*, 1967.

When *West Side Story* debuted on Broadway the show immediately gained fame for its unflinching engagement with social concerns of the day: racial unrest, urban gang violence, immigration, and altercations with the police. The creative team of *West Side Story* made their Civil Rights' agenda quite clear: Bernstein wrote that *West Side Story* was "an out and out plea for racial tolerance" and Arthur Laurents said that the show "was about how love can survive in a world of bigotry and violence." Nevertheless, only one Latinx actor was cast: Chita Rivera. When it was adapted for film she was replaced by Rita Moreno.



Chita Rivera as Anita

Carrascolendas, 1970-1978

The passing of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 sparked an unprecedented number of bilingual television programs for children. *Carrascolendas* was one of the first. It was created by Aida Barrera, who began her career in TV on KLRN in 1962 while studying Spanish Literature at UT. She was hired to give extra-curricular Spanish language lessons for the PBS affiliate. She wanted to expand the tutorial into a more dynamic children's program. After receiving a \$1,000 donation from a viewer, she took a trip to Washington DC to seek financial support for a show. After a lot of hard work, she was given \$200,000 to produce 30 half-hour black and white programs.

“By 1974, the operating budget was \$1.5 million and the show was taped in color. They had enough money to shoot on location all over the US, hire more writers and designers, and build more puppets. The show was filmed in Austin, and ran on PBS for 8 seasons. At the height of its run, two crews worked with two directors, 14 hours a day, seven days a week, to produce one new program every three days, according to an *Austin American-Statesman* article by Marjorie Hoffman (July 28, 1974). The show's set filled a 5,400-foot studio, allowing cameras a 360-degree sweep. The centerpiece was a mill with an operational, 15-foot paddle wheel that churned real water. New episodes aired on Saturday mornings, with reruns throughout the week.”



<https://www.pbs.org/show/carrascolendas/>

<https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2003-07-04/166689/>

<https://www.kut.org/post/tribute-aida-barrera-and-carrascolendas>

El Teatro Campesino

Founded in 1965 by Luis Valdez on the Delano Grape Strike picket lines of Cesar Chavez's United Farmworkers Union, the company created one act plays on flatbed trucks to take on tour to dramatize the plight of migrant farmworkers.

In 1971 the company moved to San Juan Bautista and in 1973 Peter Brook and his Paris based company participated in an 8 week experimental workshop culminating in a joint venture performing in the San Joaquin valley.

In 1987, Valdez wrote the screenplay for *La Bamba*, a biopic about Ritchie Valens, a popular 1950's Chicano musician, that starred Lou Diamond Phillips.

The company developed many productions that featured the ancient mythologies of indigenous cultures, adapted and revised classics, wrote original pieces for PBS, raised awareness of climate change, and developed a K-12 curriculum for Monterey County schools based on its history and principles.

<http://elteatrocampesino.com/>
<https://howlround.com/commons/kinan-valdez>



Luis Valdez

Zoot Suit, 1979

Written by Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* was based on the Sleepy Lagoon Murder trial in 1942 and the Zoot Suit riots of 1943 in Los Angeles. It was first staged in Los Angeles at the Mark Taper Forum in 1978 and after a sold out run and two extensions was transferred to Broadway. It was the first Chicano play on Broadway and starred, Daniel Valdez as Henry Reyna, the leader of the 38th Street gang, and Edward James Olmos as El Pachuco earning him a Tony award nomination.

“Valdez calls *Zoot Suit* the “great-grandfather” of Latino theatre and credits it with “creating potential for success of Latino artists.” Valdez estimated that approximately half of those in attendance in L.A. were new theatregoers. “I’ve always believed that theatre is a creator of community and that community is a real creator of theatre,” he said.

Adapted into a film in 1981. Nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Picture. It was revived in LA in 2008 for its 30 year anniversary and again in 2017, when the original cast members Daniel Valdez and Rose Portillo, returned to play Henry Reyna’s parents.

<https://www.centertheatregroup.org/news-and-blogs/news/2017/january/how-zoot-suit-changed-theatre-forever/>



Edward James Olmos as El Pachuco

La Bamba, 1987

La Bamba was written and directed by Chicano playwright and activist, Luis Valdez (*Zoot Suit*). It is a biographical film based on the life of Chicano Rock and Roll icon Ritchie Valens. It starred Lou Diamond Phillips as Valens, and Esai Morales as his brother Bob. Ritchie Valens was born Ricardo Valenzuela and changed his name in order to break into the business. People assumed he was Italian. Valdez said, ““The story of Richie Valens is a story of rock ‘n’ roll. It’s a story of multi-cultural and multi-racial America; at a time when America had its highest hopes, in the 1950s that it was going to be an example to the rest of the world. That is our challenge today, in a time when people’s ethnicity is being questioned, when their race is being condemned, we must continue to sing the song of rock ‘n’ roll to keep this country honest and real.”

Los Lobos did all the music for the film. They were a Chicano band from East LA and had already recorded one of Valens’ songs. While they were in the studio they were joined by Willie Dixon and Carlos Santana.

Luis Valdez was criticized for casting Phillips who is Filipino American, instead of a Mexican American actor to which Valdez replied, “Why not? The Filipinos are the Hispanics of Asia, what’s the problem?” 91% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes.

<https://remezcla.com/features/film/luis-valdez-esai-morales-la-bamba-screening-ampas/>



Selena, 1997

Written and Directed by Gregory Nava about the life of Tejano music star Selena Quintanilla-Perez who was tragically murdered at 23 by the president of her fan club. The film starred Jennifer Lopez as Selena, Edward James Olmos as her dad Abraham, and Constance Marie as her mom Marcella.

This was J-Lo's breakout role. She was chosen from 21,000 other actresses who auditioned. She earned \$1 million and was the highest paid Hispanic actor at the time. The Hispanic community protested at her casting because they wanted a Chicana in the role and Lopez was from New York and her parents were from Puerto Rico. Nava stated that she was perfect for the role, besides looking just like her, she "shared her spirit."

The film was a box office and critical success. The Hollywood Reporter stated, "This is a film about dreams, and we are taken inside Selena's short lifetime and her desire to make it as a major American singer and entertainer. Her dream was fueled vicariously by her father (Edward James Olmos), whose own dreams were quashed when he was caught between Mexican-Americans who resented his infatuation with rock 'n' roll and whites who resented Mexican-Americans." The film grossed \$35 million in the US.

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/selena-review-1997-movie-987622>

<https://www.eonline.com/news/640361/jennifer-lopez-reflects-on-selena-s-legacy-20-years-after-her-death-calls-ex-marc-anthony-an-iconic-latin-artist>



Dora the Explorer, 2000-2019

Dora was created by Chris Gifford, Valerie Walsh Valdes, and Eric Wiener. It is one of the longest running series on Nick Jr. The show teaches Spanish language, as well as counting, and critical thinking. Dora has been voiced by Kathleen Herles, Caitlin Sanchez, and Fatima Ptacek. Guest voices include John Leguizamo, Cheech Marin, Ricardo Matalban, Esai Morales, Chita Rivera, and Paul Rodriguez.

Dora has been adapted into 30+ other languages, focusing on Dora teaching the audience English language skills. Dora has been adapted into a book series, video games, two stage shows, two spin off shows, and a live action film.

Dora is a very positive role model for girls. She goes on adventures and solves puzzles without the help of a boy and without needing to be rescued by a boy.



Frida, 2002

- Salma Hayek took on perhaps the most intersectional role of the 20th Century: Frida Kahlo. Frida had four identities as a Woman, Latina, Bisexual, and Disabled. Salma shared all but one, being disabled.
- Directed by Julie Taymor, six Oscar nominations and two wins.
- Film and cultural critic Emanuel Levy wrote, “Hayek’s performance so heartily embodies the painter that she and the actress become indistinguishable...the role is a physical triumph for Hayek, and one of her most psychologically demanding ones to date.”
- Hayek recently spoke out about the conditions under which she had to make the movie with sexual predator Harvey Weinstein at the helm. He was continually sexually harassing her, threatening to fire her from the film unless she could raise \$10 million and find an A-list director. When the sexual harassment stopped, the rage only escalated. He threatened to shut down production unless Hayek agreed to do a full nude sex scene with Ashley Judd. Hayek said she suffered a nervous breakdown while filming that scene.

<https://emanuellevy.com/review/frida-2002-1/>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/salma-hayek-harvey-weinstein-monster-making-frida/story?id=51769629>



George Lopez, 2002-2007

At this time there were only two other TV shows on network television that featured a primarily Hispanic cast. Stand up comedian George Lopez created and wrote this show to be semi-autobiographical, at the urging of Sandra Bullock, who helped him get the show off the ground. The show revolves around George's life at work, managing a Los Angeles airplane factory, and raising his family at home. His childhood was miserable with an abusive father, Manny, and an alcoholic neglectful mother, Benita. However, he has a beautiful wife, Angie, a rebellious teen daughter Carmen, and a son Max who is dyslexic.

Other characters on the show are his awkward friend Ernie, and his father-in-law Vic. The show won an Emmy award in 2005 and ran for 5 seasons, but was cancelled in the middle of the sixth. "You know when you get in this that shows do not last forever, but this was an important show and to go unceremoniously like this hurts. One hundred seventy people lost their jobs," he said. ***The George Lopez Show***, ran for 13 years in syndication on *Nick at Night*.

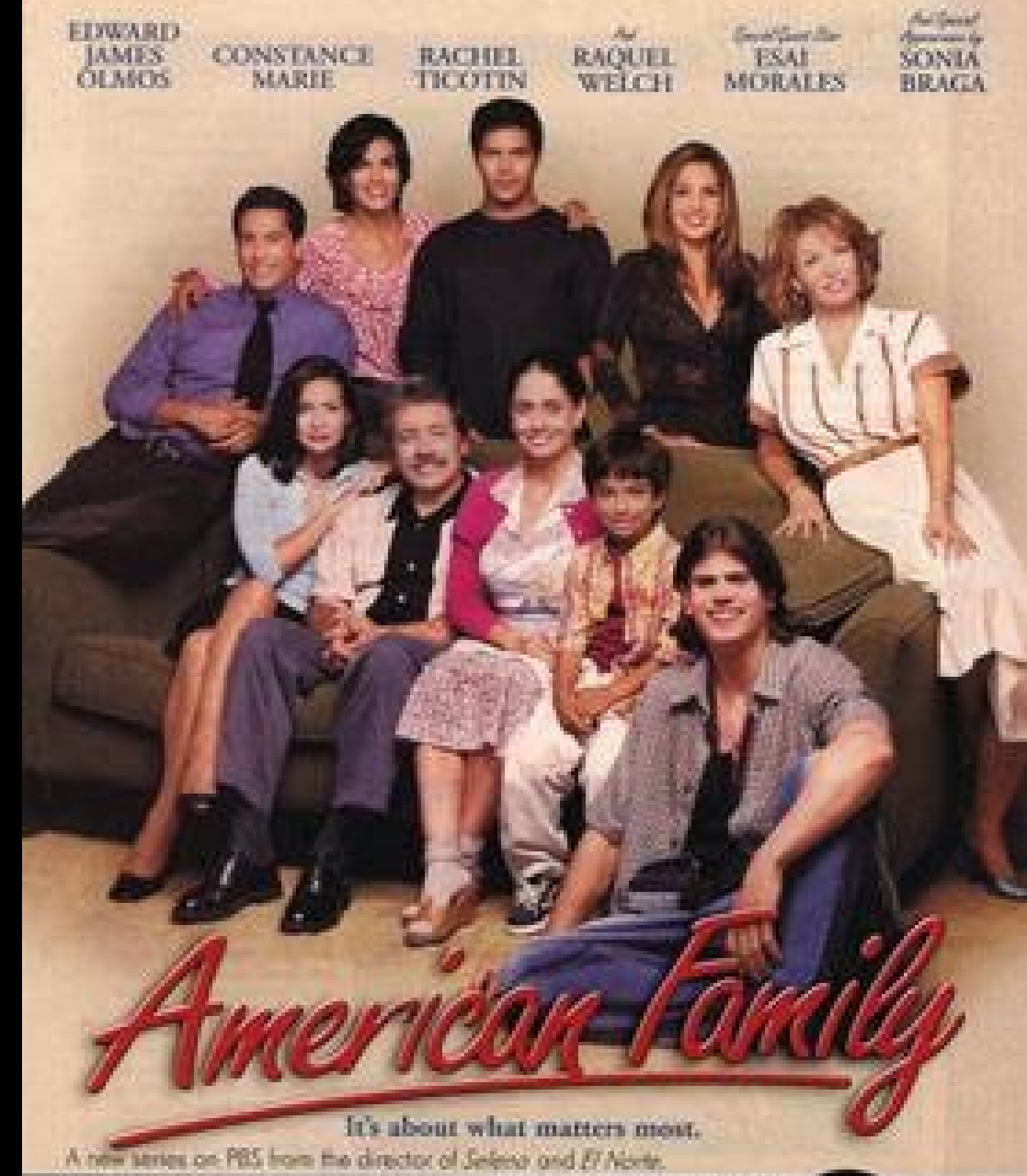


American Family 2002

First Latinx family featured in a drama series.

Gregory Nava (*Selena*) created the series which focuses on family patriarch Jess Gonzalez, a Korean War vet, his wife Berta, and their 5 adult children. Starring Edward James Olmos, Sonia Braga, Esai Morales, Kurt Caceres, Constance Marie, Rachel Ticotin, AJ Lama, Raquel Welch, and David Villalpando.

Melanie McFarland, television critic for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, stated that "Gregory Nava ventures into territory no other scripted television show has meaningfully addressed -- the Iraq War.



<https://www.seattlepi.com/ae/tv/article/American-Family-runs-smack-into-the-war-1141054.php>

<https://uh-ir.tdl.org/bitstream/handle/10657/5462/MONTANO-THESIS-2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Jose Rivera

Jose Rivera's family immigrated to New York from Puerto Rico when he was four. The only book in their household was the Bible. He did not receive any education or exposure to the literature and writers of Latin America while in high school or college. In his 30's he read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who later became his mentor at the Sundance Institute. Marquez was known for his magical realism style of writing and Rivera absorbed it. Rivera's written 33 plays to date, most of which are based on his life experiences and are in the magical realism style. *Marisol* is his most well-known play so far.

In 2005 he was the first Puerto Rican screenwriter to be nominated for an Oscar, for *Motorcycle Diaries*, which was a memoir of Che Guevara. He has also won two Obie Awards for Playwrighting, a Fulbright Fellowship, a Whiting Award, a McKnight Fellowship, the Norman Lear Writing Award, an Impact Award, and Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Grant.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/theater/newsandfeatures/jose-rivera.html>



In the Heights, 2008

Lin Manuel Miranda wrote the first draft of *In the Heights* as a sophomore in college. The final version was a musical with music and lyrics by LMM and book by Quiara Alegria Hudes both of Puerto Rican descent. The story takes place over 3 days in a primarily Dominican neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York City.

It was nominated for 13 Tony awards and won 5 including Best Musical, and won a Grammy for the soundtrack. It ran for 4 years on Broadway. LMM played the lead Usnavi de la Vega, and Christopher Jackson played Benny. He would later play Washington in *Hamilton*. The national tour lasted two years, there were productions mounted in 11 countries.



One Day at a Time, 2017

Reimagining the original Norman Lear sitcom with a Cuban American family. Lupita the mom, is a Army nurse vet and the mother of two kids, Elena and Alex. She has moved in with her mother Lydia, after having left her husband Victor, another Army vet who was suffering from PTSD and alcoholism and was violent. The show covers issues like immigration, workplace sexism, Veteran affairs, and coming out. Starring Justina Machado, Todd Grinnell, Isabella Gomez, Marcel Ruiz, Stephen Tobolowsky, and Rita Moreno.

Numerous critics ranked it as one the Top Ten TV shows of the year. It ran 3 seasons and was cancelled by Netflix but then was picked up by CBS and aired its 4th season in 2020, but was then put on hiatus during the pandemic. 97% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes. Kelly Lawler at *USA Today* noted that Elena's coming-out arc in the first season has drawn special praise from LGBT critics for its "unique, realistic and refreshing take on the subject... the depiction of a young, happy Latina lesbian comes as a hopeful sign for many."

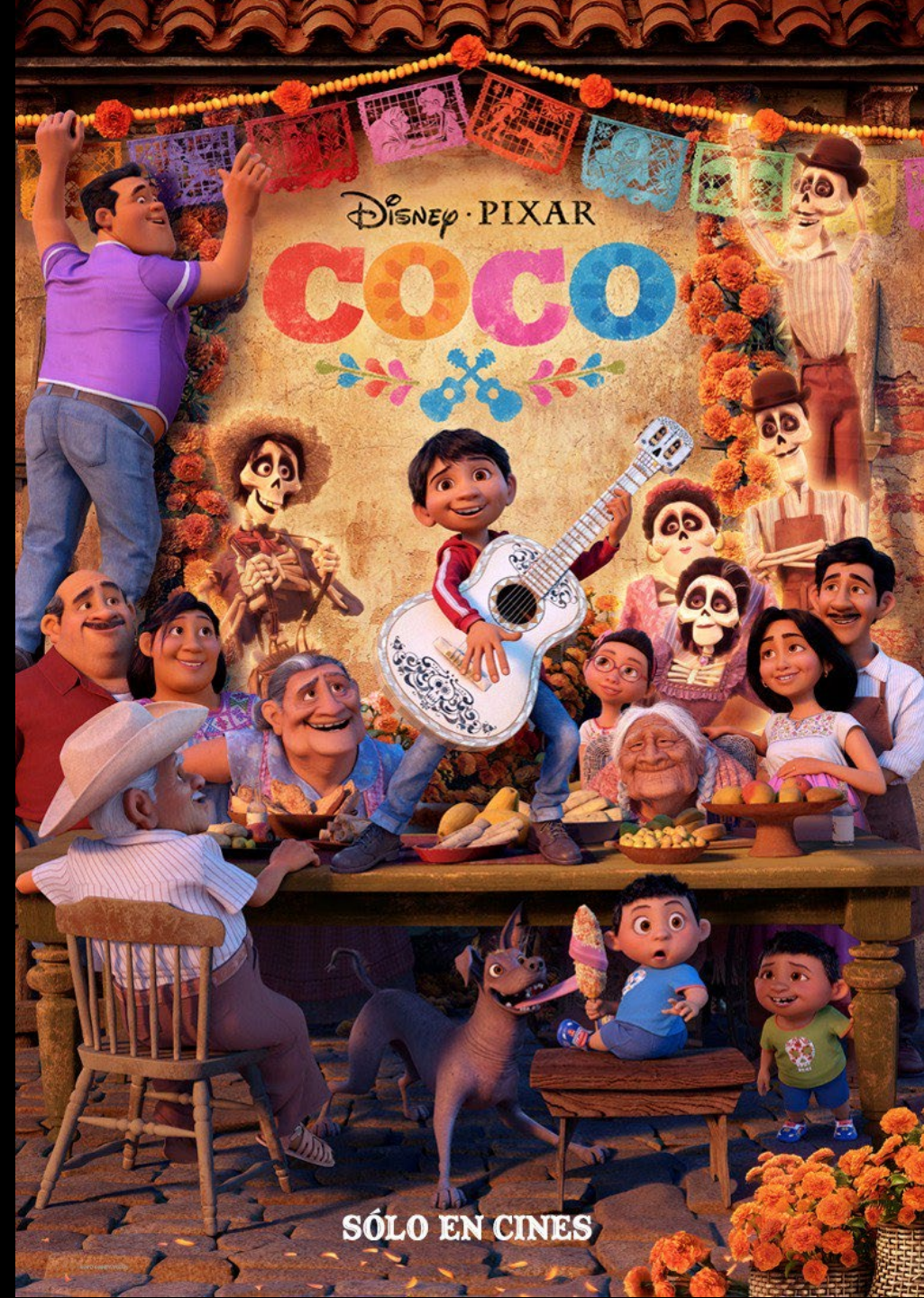
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2017/01/23/one-day-at-a-time-coming-out-story-elena-netflix/96787436/>



Coco, 2017

Coco is the first ever film with a nine figure budget to feature an all-Latinx cast. It starred Anthony Gonzales, Ana Ofelia Murgia, Luis Valdez, Gael Garcia Bernal, Benjamin Bratt, Edward James Olmos, and Cheech Marin.

If Disney can turn *Lion King* into *Lion King: the Musical* and have it run on Broadway for 20 years, I imagine that this film will be next. It received a 97% fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes “Coco’s rich visual pleasures are matched by a thoughtful narrative that takes a family friendly –and deeply affecting—approach to questions of culture, family, life, and death.”



Knives Out, 2019

Knives Out is a classic whodunit with one stunning difference: The protagonist is Latina. Writing for Time, Andrew Chow stated, Screenwriter Rian “Johnson, meanwhile, weaves in commentary on liberal hypocrisy, inherited wealth, 1% entitlement and class warfare. By its end, *Knives Out* has unexpectedly revealed itself to be a razor-sharp parable of a prevailing attitude towards illegal immigrants in America—and one of the most incisive sociopolitical films released this year.”

Knives Out succeeds where other films have failed because Johnson conceived of the film’s entertainment and protest elements as inextricably bound— fully committed to the character of Marta to both lead the story and reflect a larger American tension. Ana de Armas stated, “It was a dream. These characters don’t exist,” especially in this type of setup: a wealthy family played by all of these big movie stars, and then you have a Latina—the last thing you would imagine is that the movie is about her.” Carlos Aguilar writing for Remezcla stated, “From the flames of greed, de Armas’ Marta emerges as a heroine for all immigrants and their children whose most inalienable superpower comes from empathy, civility, resilience and the utmost value for human life. Kindness is exalted, not denigrated.” Played by Ana de Armas, a Cuban Spanish actress. She was nominated for a Golden Globe.

<https://time.com/5739679/knives-out-rian-johnson-making-of/> <https://remezcla.com/features/film/knives-out->



West Side Story, 2020

Steven Spielberg was at the helm of this new version of *West Side Story*. All Sharks are played by Latinx actors. Rita Moreno, who played Anita in the film, will play Valentina (the drug store owner whose name was Doc in the original production). It was filmed on location in New York and New Jersey. Due to the pandemic, it won't be released until the end of 2020, so there's no critical reactions to it yet.



Rachel Zegler as Maria



Ariana DeBose as Anita



David Alvarez as Bernardo



Josh Andres Rivera as Chino

In the Heights film, 2021

It was supposed to be made in 2016 with the Weinstein Bros. but due to numerous sexual misconduct charges against Harvey Weinstein, the rights were auctioned off to Warner Bros. for \$50 million.

Stars Anthony Ramos as Usnavi, LMM plays Piragua Guy. Also stars Corey Hawkins, Leslie Grace, Melissa Barrera, Olga Merediz, Daphne Rubin-Vega, Gregory Diaz IV, Stephanie Beatriz, Dascha Polanca, Jimmy Smits, Noah Catala, and Marc Anthony.

Scheduled to be released June 2020, but due to pandemic, won't come out till June 2021.





The current Artistic Director is Sorany Gutierrez and it is housed in the Latino Cultural Center.

Mission Statement:

“Teatro Dallas was founded as a non-profit theater in 1985 by Jeff Hurst and Cora Cardona. As a cultural institution, we focus on international theater and the Latinx experience as lenses through which to experience the human condition. We stage productions for adults and children from both classical and contemporary Latino, US, and international playwrights. We support emerging local artists and produce works from a variety of genres, expanding the definition of theater to include visual, musical, spoken word, performance art, and more.

Teatro Dallas is a pillar in our community with seasonal productions and ongoing classes for children and adults no matter their financial need. We regularly represent the United States abroad at world-class theater festivals. And we are proud to have hosted our own International Theater Festival for the past 20 years; the first of its kind in the Southwest.”

<https://www.teatrodallas.org/>

Texas Latinx Theatre Companies

Dallas

- Cara Mia theatre company. David Lozano artistic director <https://www.caramiatheatre.org/>
- Cambalache Teatro en Espanol https://www.facebook.com/Cambalache-Teatro-en-Espa%C3%B1ol-212111598854208/?ref=page_internal
- Teatro Flor Candela <https://www.teatroflorcandela.org/>
- Teatro Dallas <https://www.teatrodallas.org/>
- Teatro Vivo <https://teatrovivo.org/>

Austin

- Puerto Rican Cultural Center <http://www.prfdance.org/>
- Teatro Espacio Agua Viva <https://www.facebook.com/teatroespacio.aguaviva?fref=ts>

Houston

- Gente de Teatro <http://www.gentedeteatro.org/>
- MECA Multicultural Education and Counseling Through the Arts. <http://www.meca-houston.org/>

San Antonio

- Teatro Audaz <https://www.teatroaudaz.com/>
- Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center <http://www2.guadalupeculturalarts.org/>
- Classic Theatre Artistic Director Kelly Hilliard Roush <https://www.classictheatre.org/>

El Paso

- Tornillo Collective founded by Nancy Lorenza Green <https://www.krwg.org/term/tornillo-collective>
- Chamizal National Memorial <https://www.nps.gov/cham/planyourvisit/chamizal-theater-productions.htm>

Latino Tony Award Winners

- Jose Ferrer: Best Actor for Cyrano in *Cyrano de Bergerec*, 1947
- Jose Ferrer: Best Director *The Strike*, 1952
- Jose Ferrer: Best Actor *The Strike*, 1952
- Jose Ferrer: Best Director *Stalag 17*, 1952
- Joes Ferrer: Best Director *The Fourposter*, 1952
- Jose Quintero: Best Director *for A Moon for the Misbegotten*, 1974; founded Off-Broadway by starting the Circle in the Square Theatre.
- Claudio Segovia: and Hector Orezzaoli Best Costume Design for *Black and Blue*, 1989
- Gerald Gutierrez: Best Director for *The Heiress*, 1995
- Gerald Guitierrez: Best Director for *A Delicate Balance*, 1996

Latino Tony Award Winners

- Wilson Jermaine Heredia: Best Actor for *Angel in Rent*, 1996
- Ruben Santiago Hudson: Best Actor *Seven Guitars*, 1996
- Robert Lopez: Best Score *Avenue Q*, 2003
- LMM: Best Score *In the Heights*, 2008
- David Alvarez: Best Actor *Billy Elliot, the Musical*, 2009
- Clint Ramos: Best Costume Design *Eclipsed*, 2016
- LMM: Best Book of a Musical *Hamilton*, 2016
- LMM: *Hamilton*, 2016
- John Leguizamo: Best Play *Latin History for Morons*, 2018

Latina Tony Award Winners

- Rita Moreno: Best Supporting Actress for *The Ritz*, 1974
- Priscilla Lopez: Best Actress for *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*, 1980.
- Chita Rivera: Best Actress for *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, 1993
- Mercedes Ruehl: Best Actress for *Lost in Yonkers*, 1993
- Sara Ramirez: Best Actress, for Lady of the Lake in *Spamalot*, 2005
- Karen Olivo: Best Actress for Vanessa in *In the Heights*, 2008
- Karen Olivo: Best Featured Actress in a Musical for Anita in *West Side Story*, 2009
- Chita Rivera: Lifetime Achievement, 2018

Did you notice that there are half as many Latinas as Latinos who won Tony Awards?