

Media Contact:
Gina Espinosa-Meltzer
media@ghcc.org

GHCC spotlights Latino inclusion in creative arts with screening of 'In the Heights'

The GHCC hosted a showcase screening June 12 of the all-Latino musical "In The Heights," part of an initiative to help more Latinos and Latino businesses take advantage of Georgia's multi-billion entertainment industry.

An esteemed group of Atlanta Latinos attended the showing of the film, an aspirational story centered on the childhood neighborhood of actor and writer Lin-Manuel Miranda ("Hamilton"), New York's Washington Heights. The film was directed by John M. Chu, who also directed the hit "Crazy Rich Asians."

The screening was held in partnership with the Plaza Theatre, Areu Bros. Studios and 3Pas Studios' Ben Odell. The Plaza is owned by Chris Escobar, executive director of the Atlanta Film Festival. Areu Bros., led by founder and CEO Ozzie Areu, is the first Latino-owned studio in the nation. Odell's 3Pas Studios specializes in Spanish, English and dual-language movies and series and which has been at the forefront of the growing niche for commercially minded, Latinx-oriented content with crossover appeal. His producing partner is L.A.-based Mexican megastar [Eugenio Derbez](#).

"Our private screening of "In The Heights" opening weekend was truly a one-of-a-kind experience for me," said Areu. "To have such powerhouses come together and bring the Latinx community in Atlanta to one place to watch this story that so many of us could relate to was very special and unique. Not to mention, hosting it in the Plaza Theatre, a Latino-owned historic landmark in the city and having owner Chris Escobar there, along with the GHCC and their newest President and CEO Veronica Maldonado-Torres, as well as 3Pas Studios' Ben Odell whose work is very prominent in the Latinx community – I mean it couldn't have gotten any better than that for me. I was honored to have Areu Bros. Studios there with these amazing individuals and all of those who joined us, and more importantly to have been able to support the film's opening weekend in NALIP [the National Association of Latino Independent Producers] and Gold House Co.'s newest #LatinxGoldOpen initiative."

Gold House is a nonprofit collective of Asian & Pacific Islander founders, creative voices, and leaders.

Maldonado-Torres, the president, and CEO of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, said the screening is the beginning of a new initiative, CREAR (meaning 'create' in Spanish), to enhance awareness among state-wide stakeholders of Latinos who are prominent in Georgia's film and entertainment industry, and to expand the number of Latino creative professionals and companies working and doing business in the state. There'll be more on that in the coming weeks.

"The Chamber's goal is to increase the representation of Latinos in the arts by identifying, supporting, promoting and connecting Latino creative professionals with the existing thriving ecosystem in Georgia," Maldonado-Torres said.

📞 404-929-9998
📍 270 Peachtree St. NW. Suite 2200. Atlanta, GA 30303

📱 @Ghcc1 📺 @Ghcc_news
📺 @Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

There were 399 productions filmed in Georgia in 2019, including 26 feature films, 31 independent films, 214 television series, 91 commercials and 29 music videos. Film and television productions spent \$2.7 billion in Georgia, and had an economic impact several times greater.

However, Latinos are underrepresented in all the creative professional sectors (including music, visual arts, dance, writing and fashion). Latino actors landed just 4.5% of more than 47,000 speaking roles in the 100 top-grossing U.S. movies from each of the past 12 years and only 3% were leads or co-leads, according to Forbes. Latinos directed just 4% of those films and produced just 3%, according to USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

"Having these organizations come together for this screening and celebration of 'In The Heights' really speaks to the broader narrative of inclusion in the entertainment industry, of making sure these voices are expressed and these gaps in representation are filled," Maldonado said. "The Chamber wants to help open up the pathways of economic opportunity and improve the connection for Hispanic talent into the creative industry. We want to continue to position our community for economic impact and opportunity and the multi-billion entertainment industry is just one of the many areas we are going to be playing in."

ABOUT THE GHCC

Established in 1984, the GHCC is the largest Hispanic-serving chamber of commerce in the Southeast. As an advocate of the Hispanic business community for over 37 years, the GHCC is the voice of Hispanic business across the state of Georgia, proudly serving a diverse membership of corporations and small businesses. For more information about the chamber, please visit www.ghcc.org.