

Film Feature: The Importance of the Quiet Revolution of ‘In the Heights’

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on June 20, 2021 - 11:25pm

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When I used to have cable television (when I lived with my parents and they paid for it), there was this section of one hundred or so music channels, each with a different music style to explore. I remember stumbling across it one day when I was younger, in complete awe that there was even that variety of music in the world.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

I remember getting to the “Latin music” section and strolling through each type, feeling the distinct rhythm, beat, and vocals of each channel. The experience I had while watching *In the Heights* reminded me of that feeling as a child, experiencing nationalities that I had naively once considered too similar to differentiate, now bursting to life with their own proud heritage.

I grew up, explored my Mexican roots, and in doing so, grew to admire the sense of community and uniqueness every Latin American culture had at its core. I was lucky enough to see a stage production of “In the Heights”, and it would be an understatement to say that I had never witnessed a single show (TV or otherwise) that perfectly encapsulated the immigrant experience I had come to know so well. No, we didn’t always break out into song and dance, but the number of times we actually did would probably surprise you. While it is nowhere near a perfect representation of the American immigrant experience or the diversity that exists within it, it is the closest thing we’ve gotten in mainstream film in the last few decades.

I’ll start by applauding Lin-Manuel Miranda on the adaptation of his hit play because there are some major differences between the two, the soul of it shines through as it tries to address some more recent social and political obstacles. While a straight reproduction from stage to the screen would have also been powerful, by removing/adding some characters, restructuring the narrative and musical numbers, and tweaking the overall message makes this not only more representative of the people it’s about but also more palatable for the people that need to see it the most. This play (and to an extent, this film) is arguably Miranda’s most important contribution to Broadway to date. While “Hamilton” might be the thing that ends up engraved on his tombstone, the sheer amount of representation and cultural relevance in “In the Heights” automatically reached peaks that even the ambitious Alexander Hamilton could never hope to reach.



[Click here for Jon Espino’s film feature for “In the Heights”](#) [24]



Photo credit: Warner Bros



[Click here for Jon Espino’s film feature for “In the Heights”](#) [24]

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