


Wednesday, December 29, 2010

## Open letter from Hispanic artists to the Kennedy Center

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### Open Letter to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

#### National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (NHFA) & Being Latino, Inc.

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December 29, 2010

Mr. David M. Rubenstein  
Chairman  
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
2700 F St NW,  
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Leslie Moonves  
President & CEO  
CBS Corporation  
CBS Headquarters  
51 W. 52nd Street  
New York, NY 10019-6188

Ms. Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg  
Trustee  
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum  
Columbia Point  
Boston, MA 02125

RE: Kennedy Center Honors

Dear Messr. Rubenstein, Moonves and Ms. Kennedy Schollossberg:

The National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (NHFA) was founded in 1997, by actors Jimmy Smits, Sonia Braga, Esai Morales, Merel Julia, and Washington, D.C. attorney Felix Sanchez to provide both outreach and graduate scholarships to Latinos interested in careers in the entertainment and telecommunications industry. NHFA in partnership with Being Latino --- founded by Lance Rios --- the largest online Latino community on face book, have embarked on an impact project to address the glaring absence of Latinos on television and in film.

Since 1978, when the Kennedy Center Honors began, only 2 Latinos have received your prestigious honor: Placido Domingo in 2000; and Chita Rivera in 2002. After 32 years, 160 artists have received the Kennedy Center's lifetime achievement award. Gone are some of the true virtuosos of our community: Rita Hayworth; Fernando Llamas; Ricardo Montalban; Celia Cruz; Anthony Quinn; Raul Julia; Fernando Bujones; Kathy Jurado; Lalo Guerrero, Jose Ferrer; Luis Buñuel; and Jose Limon, who while they lived could have been honored with your award.

It is with great disappointment that we note how few U.S. and International Latinos have been singled out for your award. We note the following artists have made an enormous artistic contribution both within the U.S. and International stage. They are but a few who are more than worthy of your award.

Literature: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Sandra Cisneros, Nilo Cruz, Isabel Allende, Victor Villaseñor, Oscar Hijuelos, Junot Diaz

Music: Julio Iglesias, Gloria & Emilio Estefan, Jose Feliciano, Joan Baez, Carlos Santana, Linda Ronstadt, Willie Colon, Ruben Blades

Dance: Kenny Ortega, Amalia Hernandez, Rita Moreno, Priscilla Lopez, Jose Manuel Carreño

Actors/Film/TV: Cristina Saralegui, Sonia Braga, Rita Moreno, Raquel Welch, Edward James Olmos, Antonio Banderas, Hector Elizondo, Luis Valdez, David Valdes, Gregory Nava, Pedro Almodovar

We hope that this will be the last year Latinos are absent as honorees on your show. We note that a number of current Latino performers would undoubtedly welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to the above-mentioned icons of the Latino community, including: Jennifer Lopez; Marc Anthony; Jimmy Smits; Salma Hayek; Eva Longoria; Esai Morales; Shakira; Christina Aguilera; Adam Rodriguez; Los Lobos; Los Tigres del Norte; Javier Bardem; Benicio Del Toro; Lin-Manuel Miranda; Roberto Orci; Juanes; George Lopez; Penelope Cruz; John Leguizamo; Jessica Alba; Mario Lopez; Lynda Carter; America Ferrera; Rosie Perez; Eva Mendez; Sofia Vergara; Fergie; Ricky Martin, Enrique Iglesias; Don Omar; Alejandro Fernandez; Juan Gabriel; Los Lonely Boys; Ozomatli; and Luis Miguel to name but a few.

The Kennedy family has a long history of working alongside the Latino community, and valuing the contributions of the Latino community in building and strengthening our nation. From the moment the Latino community was first galvanized as a voting bloc in the 1960 presidential race electing John F. Kennedy as President of the United States, to the late seventies when Robert Kennedy worked with Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta and other Latino leaders during the civil rights movement, and most recently as Senator Edward Kennedy fought valiantly to his final days working on immigration reform and health care reform, the Kennedy family have been allies, partners and true friends to the Latino community. It's time for the Kennedy Center Honors to carry forward the legacy of the family name extended in the Kennedy Center Honors, by also acknowledging and including the artistic contributions made by both U.S. Latinos and International Latinos.


We hope that you will move to address this matter and make the Kennedy Center Honors a truly modern day inclusive American Award event. We also welcome the opportunity to discuss with you any ways we can support your efforts to get there.

Sincerely,  
Felix Sanchez  
Chairman  
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts

Lance Rios  
Founder & President  
Being Latino, Inc.

#### Latino Organizations Supporting this Letter

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
Hispanic Federation  
Hispanic War Veterans of America  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
MANA--A National Latina Organization  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
National Association of Hispanic Federal Employees  
National Council of La Raza  
National Hispana Leadership Institute  
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Institute for Latino Policy  
SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.  
U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute  
U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce  
United States-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation

 Labels: [Being Latino](#), [Latinos in the Arts](#), [NHFA](#)

