Program in Latino History and Culture (PLHC)

Latino Initiatives Pool FY 2010 Final Report

PLHC was established in 2004 to increase Latino visitation; create public programs; maintain a Latino presence on the NMAH Web site; and support and enhance scholarship and collections acquisition on Latino aspects of American history and culture. The Smithsonian Latino Center provided the seed money in support of the Program.

In 2010 the Program in Latino History and Culture received a Latino Initiatives Pool award of $15,000. Thanks to this award the program has been able to attract new visitors to the Museum, present engaging programming, and provide opportunities for our visitors to learn about Latino history and culture.

The Latino Pool FY 2010 award helped to fund a series of events commemorating the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution. Three days of programming took place on September 23, 24 and 25 in Carmichael Auditorium. The program was done in collaboration with George Washington University, University of Maryland, Boston University, and the Mexican Cultural Institute. All these institutions contributed funds that matched the Latino Pool allocation.

The programming began with an academic symposium organized with Jaime Marroquin of George Washington University, Mary Kay Vaughn of the University of Maryland, Adela Pineda from Boston University, Alejandra de la Paz from the Mexican Cultural Institute and staff from the Smithsonian Latino Center. The symposium was organized in three panels and focused on the relationship between both countries as played out in different scenarios: intellectual connections, artistic exchanges, social movements, and political interventions.

Papers were invited to be presented after two years of research and consultations. The Smithsonian Scholarly Press will publish an edited volume based on the symposium.
presentations. The academic symposium was digitally recorded and clips of all three panels will be available online later this winter.

Three classical movies with thorough analysis from Boston University’s Dr. Adela Pineda were shown in Carmichael Auditorium. The films presented an opportunity for participants to look at the Mexican Revolution from different perspectives. The films included *Viva Villa!* (1934) produced by David O. Selznick and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.; *The Wild Bunch* (1969) directed by Sam Peckinpah; and *Viva Zapata!* (1952) directed by Elia Kazan, with screenplay by John Steinbeck.

Guillermo Gomez Peña was a guest artist who presented his latest work, *Strange Democracy* inspired by the events of the Mexican bicentennial of its Independence from Spain and the centennial of the Revolution. His spoken word piece provided an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the Revolution. He presented two performances, the first on Thursday, September 23 and the second on Friday, September 24.

Many stories of the Mexican Revolution were through *corridos*, a ballad style song with lyrics based on tales of events, heroes, and heroines. *Corridos* were created and recreated during the Revolution as a way to carry news and ideals from town to town. Mariachi music likewise gave musical life to stories of lost love and won battles. Both genres were presented as the closing of the three-day events in Carmichael Auditorium.

The three days of programming were well attended. The academic symposium had over 200 people participating throughout the day. The symposium was webcasted and viewing classrooms were set up at both, University of Maryland and George Washington University. The performances and films gather approximately 275 people.
The Program in Latino History and Culture, the Museum’s Jazz Appreciation Month Program and the Latino Center joined forces once again to present the Pablo Aslan Trio. The program was part of the year-long programming celebrating Argentina's bicentennial anniversary and was the opening program of Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM) 2010 at the Museum.

Pablo Aslan is an Argentine born bassist and producer who directs Avantango, a tango-jazz ensemble featuring New York based Argentine musicians and dancers. The ensemble tours throughout the United States. His CD, “Avantango,” was selected as one of the Best Albums of the Year, Critics Choice 2004 by JAZZIZ magazine. Aslan has performed and recorded with Yo Yo Ma, Wynton Marsalis, Shakira, Lalo Schifrin, Joe Lovano, Gary Burton, Paquito D’Rivera, Denyce Graves, Osvaldo Golijov, Pablo Ziegler, the New World Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and David Krakauer’s Klezmer Madness among many others. In the 1990’s he was the founder and co-director of New York Buenos Aires Connection and New York Tango Trio with bandoneonist Raul Jaurena, with whom he produced several CDs and toured throughout the world.

The concert, which took place on April 1st in Carmichael Auditorium, was attended by over 300 people. Seating capacity in the auditorium was only 270, and many people waited outside the auditorium doors to get in. This program was also webcast and over 2,000 people viewed it online.

On May 13th, as part of Argentina at the Smithsonian the Museum organized a program looking at the relationship between the United States and Argentina during its dictatorial government. “A Fresh Look -- U.S. Perspectives during Argentina's Military Dictatorship (1976-1983)” was moderated by National Public Radio journalist María Hinojosa. The onstage conversation featured the testimonies and analyses of F. Allen “Tex” Harris, former political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires; Cynthia Arnson, Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars; and American University law professor and human rights advocate Juan Méndez about the complex and controversial relationship between the U.S and Argentine governments during Argentina’s military dictatorship from 1976-1983. The program was attended by approximately 175 people and was also webcast and viewed by about 200 people outside the Washington Metropolitan area.
Another program the Museum presented in collaboration with the Latino Center as part of Argentina at the Smithsonian series was “More than Malbec: The Story of Argentine Wine” on September 9. The round table conversation featured Laura Catena of the pioneering Catena family from Mendoza and Washington Post wine critic David McIntyre. The panelists discussed the fascinating history of wine making and the wine industry in Argentina, its relationship to the development of the U.S. industry, and the impact of Argentine wines on U.S. market today. Nora Favelukes from Wines of Argentina, a trade association, moderated the program which was followed by a book signing. The attendance was for this program was 270 people.

PLHC continues to add to the hands-on teaching collection on Latino history and culture at the Museum, and presents these objects in a didactic cart on the museum floor. The objects on the cart serve as a starting place to talk about the contributions of Latinos to American history. In addition to the Latino Immigration Cart, this Spring we implemented the Latin Music cart which was extremely successful among the Museum teen audience. Approximately 400 visitors interacted with the Cart on a weekly basis.