

Rick Najera

Bio

Rick Najera is an award-winning actor-writer-director-producer with credits in film, television, theatre and Broadway. He is undeniably one of the most sought after comedic talents in the industry. Honored twice by Hispanic Business Magazine as '**100 Most Influential Latinos in America**', Najera is also one of the most powerful voices in the Latino world today.

"Poet and producer, actor and comedian, award-winning TV writer, denizen of the Latin quarter, Hollywood Hills and Great White Way, Rick Najera is the embodiment of diversity." – Writers Guild of America

With an extensive range of talent, Najera has enjoyed working in many forms of entertainment, whether writing for television or film to acting and theatrical stage and performance. Most recently, Najera penned the holiday feature film **Nothing like the Holidays** starring Debra Messing, Alfred Molina, John Leguizamo and Freddy Rodriguez. His writing/acting credits also include the critically acclaimed award-winning stage works, **LATINOLOGUES™** (Broadway), interactive musical comedy **Sweet 15 Quinceañera** and **Diary of a Dad Man**, a new one-man show. He has also written for groundbreaking television comedies such as **MAD TV** and **In Living Color**.

As one of the only three Latinos in history to write and star in his own show on Broadway, Najera made his Broadway debut in 2005 with his self-written and created, award-winning sketch comedy show, **LATINOLOGUES™**. The show triumphed **on Broadway** at the historic Helen Hayes Theatre on W. 44th Street for a four-month run (137 performances with an extension), a historical achievement for a Latino-oriented show. Najera's show on Broadway was directed by comedy legend, Cheech Marin and paved the way for others shows to follow such as the Tony-award-winning musical, **In the Heights**. While on Broadway, Najera joined Broadway's brightest, most influential and well-loved personalities when his caricature was placed on Sardi's exclusive **Wall of Fame** in midtown Manhattan.

Nearly 100 different guest actors have performed in **LATINOLOGUES** throughout its 15 years of performances and touring the U.S., making it **the longest running and only showcase in America for Latinos of its kind**. International celebrities and well-known comedians and actors seek out Najera to perform in his show, such as Eugenio Derbez, Jamie Camile, Odalys Garcia, Fernando Carrillo, Cynthia Klitbo as well as those from the U.S. (Christian de la Fuente, Mario Lopez, Erik Estrada). In addition to performing in his own stage productions, Najera has also appeared in many films and television shows such as "How the Garcia Girls Spent Their Summer", "The West Wing", HBO's "Habla" and recently CNN's 'Latino in America'.

Najera's interactive musical stage play, "**Sweet 15 – Quinceañera**, is already another theatrical success with standing ovations and sold out houses. A full production of this play recently made its world premier at San Diego REPerory Theatre. "I love theater because I learn about a national audience better than any Nielsen report," says Najera. His new one-man comedy creation, **Diary of a Dad Man**, was performed at San Diego REPerory Theatre, The Latino Cultural Center in Dallas, The Rialto Theatre in Atlanta, GA. and most recently taped as a Showtime special as part of the Laugh Out Loud Comedy Festival.

On the corporate entertainment side, Najera has been able to bring his savvy business sense to entertainment, creating vibrant, culturally aware and popular programming to television and Internet. Currently he is President and CEO of **Grupo Najera**, a full service production company developing English language content for the general market as well as Latino market. Most recently he was SVP of Production and Development for **MovidoTV**, an internet-based Latin entertainment company providing English language content and webisodes geared toward Latinos 18-34. Najera was SVP Content Strategist for social network, Mio.tv and developed, wrote and produced 23 webisodes based on Europe's hit show, Camera Café with David Salzman (MAD TV). While at LATV Networks, **a national bilingual television network**, Najera rose from Director of Programming to **Vice President of Development**, and was responsible for creating new original content. He created, developed, executive produced and wrote four new cutting-edge, half hour comedies '**L.A.T.N. (Latino Ahora Today Now)**, a sketch comedy news program; '**The Homies Hip-Hop Show**' (18 episodes), the first nationally syndicated Latino stop-motion animation series on LATV; '**Cesar and Chuy**'(co-creator, 26 episodes), two animated characters that provide comedy relief to a host of today's popular videos, with Najera playing the voice of 'Chuy'; and **Mas Comedy**, stand-up comedians and entertaining comedy sketches. While at LATV, Najera brought original animation and stop motion as well as comedy and political satire for the first time to the

network, **creating an entirely new genre.** Additionally, during his appointment with LATV, the network grew to 26 markets as well as Puerto Rico.

As a professional Writers Guild of America (WGA) scribe, Najera has been nominated for two WGA awards for Best Writing for a Comedy/Variety Television Series for his writing on Fox's MAD TV. Najera has written four pilots for the major industry networks and numerous animated pilots and series for Disney, Televisa, CBS, LATV, Mio.TV, Kartoontv.com and Nuyorican Productions.

As a director, and for the fifth consecutive year, Najera will direct **CBS' Multicultural Sketch Comedy Talent Showcase**, where he mentors and directs select comedic talent and presents one of the important showcases in the industry, seen by hundreds of casting agents and industry professionals. Najera has also directed his Latinologues comedy showcase for the last 15 years. Najera created, wrote and starred in his own sketch comedy show, BBQ Bill, which was featured on CBS's *Innertube*, one of the first online comedies for a major network at the time.

Najera has authored numerous plays including, *Latin's Anonymous*, *Peculiar People*, *A Quiet Love*, *The Pain of the Macho*, *Latinologues™*, *Sweet 15 - Quinceañera* and most recently *Diary of a Dad Man*. Three of his plays are compiled into his book, *'Pain of the Macho'* which is required reading in several universities.

Rick Najera has also been involved in many charitable organizations giving back to the community: collecting toys for children for Latino Family Institute, hosting the San Diego Teen Producers Project Fundraiser, performing at Latino Family Book Fair, speaking at colleges around the country, elementary schools, health care clinics and mentoring kids of all ages for the last 20 years. Najera is a true advocate for education, reading, writing and the arts.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:

- Humanitarian Award Winner – LISTA -Latinos in Science and Technology Association (2010)
- ALMA Award winner, Best Writer, Special Achievement, *Nothing Like The Holidays*, (2009)
- Imagen Award nomination, Best Live Theatrical Performance, DADDY DIARIES (2009)
- 'Jerry Lester Award' for Theatrical Performance, Sweet 15 (2008)
- 'Hispanic Pioneer of America' - Discovery Channel en Español (2006)
- 'Top 10 Celebrities to Watch', San Diego Latino Film Festival (2006)
- 'Father of the Year' – Telemundo, Miami (2006)
- '100 Most Influential Latinos in America' - HISPANIC Business Magazine (2005)
- Writers Guild of America (WGA) Award Nomination, Television Writing Achievement for Outstanding Script in a Comedy / Variety Series (2004)
- Image Award, Best Live Theatrical Production, Rick Najera's LATINOLOGUES™ (2004)
- Writers Guild of America (WGA) Award Nomination, Television Writing Achievement for Outstanding Script in a Comedy / Variety Series (2003)
- ALMA Award Nominee, Best Writer for a Television Drama, ABC
- Nosotros Golden Eagle Award, Best Writer, Latino Laugh Festival for Showtime
- '50 Most Influential in Hollywood' – VARIETY
- 100 Most Influential Latinos in America' - HISPANIC Business Magazine (1996)

Rick Najera has been recognized and featured in publications such as *Hollywood Reporter*, *Variety*, *Hispanic Magazine*, *San Diego Magazine*, *Hispanic Business*, *Latino Future Magazine*, *Creative Screenwriter*, *Latino Leaders Magazine*, *Latina Magazine*, *Bello*, *Latin Style*, *Latin Heat*, *Sister Cities*, *Hispanic Outlook* and on television shows such as *A&E's Breakfast with the Arts*, *PBS's Life and Times*, *NBC's Hispanics Today*, *Univision's Aqui y Ahora*, *Despierta America*, *Escandalo TV*, *Primer Impacto*, *El Gordo y La Flaca*, *LATV*, *Mun2*, *Perfect Image TV*, *American Latino* among others.

For more information on Rick Najera visit www.ricknajera.com.