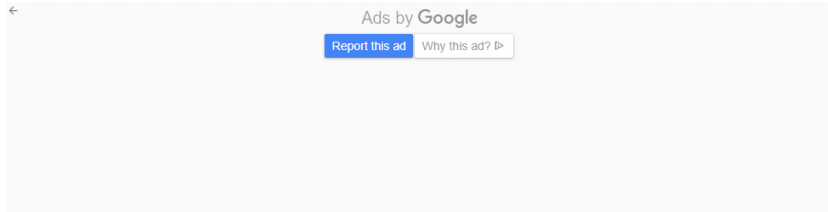


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The director of Lin-Manuel Miranda's 'In the Heights' explains the movie's delayed release due to the coronavirus and why it must be shown in theaters

Jason Guerrasio Mar 24, 2020, 11:00 PM



"In the Heights." Warner Bros.

- Insider spoke to "In the Heights" director Jon M. Chu about the delay of the movie's release due to the coronavirus.
- On Tuesday, Warner Bros. announced that the movie, which is an adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical, would not be released on June 26.
- The movie's new release date is June 18, 2021.
- Chu said he's not discouraged since the movie deserves to be seen in theaters once the coronavirus passes and large audiences can see it together.
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On Tuesday, Warner Bros. announced a handful of changes to its theatrical slate due to the coronavirus pandemic, including opening "Wonder Woman 1984" in August instead of June and pulling the release of two titles, "Scoob," the next Scooby-Doo movie, and "In the Heights," the big-screen adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical.

But the director of the movie version of "In the Heights," Jon M.

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Broadway musical.

But the director of the movie version of "In the Heights," Jon M. Chu, is not disappointed in the decision. The way he sees it, his movie is more relevant now than ever before and it needs to be shown in a crowded theater, not at home.

"We want people to have the movie theater experience," Chu told Insider. "And with it being a musical, if you look back at history, that kind of movie has always brought people together at the worst times to celebrate life. And now we need that even more so."

The movie was days away from being completed when the decision was made to halt everything

It has been a hectic few weeks for Chu ("Crazy Rich Asians"). When the coronavirus outbreak began to grow, he was still focused on getting the movie — which follows the life of a bodega owner (Anthony Ramos) over the course of a few days in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City — ready for its scheduled June 26 release.



Chu told Insider he was around 20 days from picture lock. They were doing the final mix of the movie and a few weeks ago were with an orchestra putting final touches on the movie's score. But things got real for everyone on the movie when President Trump addressed the nation the evening of March 11 and announced temporary travel bans.

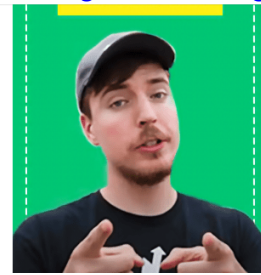


Jon M. Chu. Jordan Strauss / Invision / AP

Chu was in New York, where the movie was shot and where post-production was taking place, and got on a plane to go back to his family in LA. Many others who didn't live in New York also did the same. But work didn't end. Key members of the post-production team began to work from home. Mixing equipment was even set up at one person's place. Chu said they were very close to picture lock but then things got more complicated.

"Everyone had kids coming home from school, there were a lot of personal things that went down," Chu said. "So we decided to hold off. We talked to the studio and everyone said to hold a beat."

The movie was put on hold for five days and in that time the



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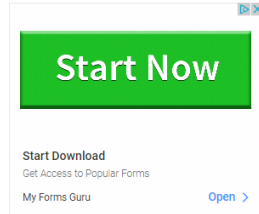
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off. We talked to the studio and everyone said to hold a beat."

The movie was put on hold for five days and in that time the governor of California issued a stay-at-home order. Soon after, Warner Bros. decided to move the movie's release date indefinitely (it since has been slated for June 18, 2021).



The movie was always going to open in theaters

Chu said there was never a discussion to put the movie online before a theatrical run.

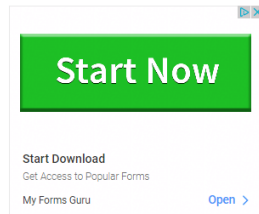
"I actually called the studio to make sure, because I had read stuff online," Chu said. "And they said, 'You have our word. We know what this movie is.'"

Chu said that he and Miranda, who along with doing the music and having a producing credit also stars in the movie, have been in constant contact throughout.

"When I talk to Lin the most important thing to him is releasing it the right way," Chu said.

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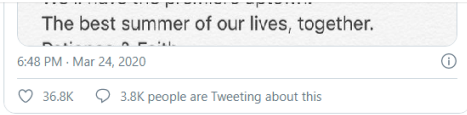


Lin-Manuel Miranda @Lin_Manuel

Alright, mama, okay...

We had the best summer of our lives filming #InTheHeightsMovie last year. We gathered in Washington Heights and told this story, on location in this neighborhood, with our neighbors in this community. We couldn't wait to share it with you. But we're going to have to wait a little longer. With the uncertainty in our world, right now, the release of In The Heights is being postponed. When we can safely gather again, flags in hand, we will be there, enjoying this movie in theaters. We'll have the premiere uptown. The best summer of our lives, together.

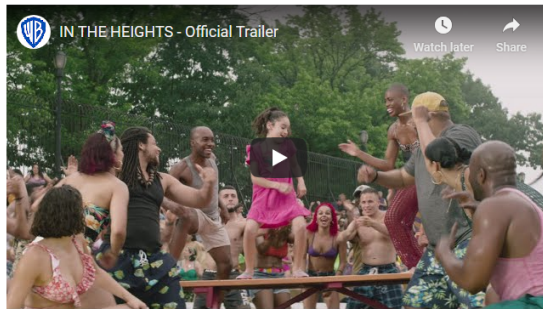
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Chu believes the world is going to be a little different when we rebound from the pandemic, that "this will change everybody in terms of priorities," but that movies like this will be an important way to galvanize everyone because of its "message of community."

Chu said that there's a moment in the movie when there's a blackout and everyone is brought together on a hot evening in Washington Heights by the song "Carnaval del Barrio." He believes that moment in the movie will be a powerful one when people see it.

"When that song happens and the power comes back on, I think it's going to give a lot of people that light they need," Chu said. "The big thing is we get this movie on the big screen when people are in the right place in their lives to enjoy it. When people are coming out of the darkness and the light can come in."



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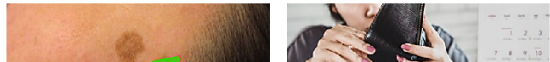
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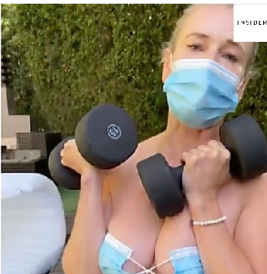
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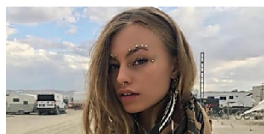
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