Legislation Details (With Text)

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Res. No. 1060

Resolution commemorating the life and achievements of Max Roach, one of the most influential musicians in the history of jazz.

By Council Members Comrie, Brewer, Dickens, Fidler, Gennaro, Gerson, Gonzalez, James, Mark-Viverito, Nelson, Palma, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Vacca, Weprin and White Jr.

Whereas, Max Roach, a percussionist, drummer, and jazz composer, was born on January 10, 1924, and grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; and

Whereas, Max Roach began studying piano at a neighborhood Baptist church when he was eight and took up the drums a few years later; and

Whereas, At the age of 16, he performed his first big-time gig with Duke Elligton's orchestra at the Paramount Theater; and

Whereas, Max Roach played with jazz greats such as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Coleman Hawkins and Bud Powell, and is credited with helping to lay the groundwork for a

new style in jazz called bebop, which represented a defining change in jazz music in the early 1940s; and

Whereas, By disregarding the elaborate big band arrangements central to swing era music and streamlining bands with four to six musicians, bebop became a style of music that enabled greater improvisation; and

Whereas, Max Roach studied composition at the Manhattan School of Music and graduated from that school in 1952; and

Whereas, That same year, Max Roach co-founded Debut Records, one of the first musician-run record companies, which released a recording of a concert considered to be the greatest ever by some, entitled "Jazz at Massey Hall," and the groundbreaking bass-and drum improvisation, "Percussion Discussion"; and

Whereas, Max Roach expanded the standard form of hard-bop, a style of jazz that was an extension of bebop, and developed a more intense rhythmic drive along with an infusion of blues and gospel influences by using 3/4 waltz rhythms and modality in his 1957 album, "Jazz in 3/4 time"; and

Whereas, In 1972, Max Roach joined the faculty of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; and

Whereas, Max Roach was the first jazz musician to win a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, an unrestricted fellowship granted to talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction; and

Whereas, Max Roach died on August 16, 2007, at the age of 83; and

Whereas, An article appearing in the August 16, 2007 edition of The New York Times, pointed out that Max Roach is considered to be one of the founders of modern Jazz, who rewrote the rules of drumming, broke musical barriers, and defied listeners' expectations; and

Whereas, The same article also noted that Max Roach is widely considered to be the most imaginative and influential percussionist in modern jazz; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the life and achievements of Max Roach, one of the most influential musicians in the history of jazz.

SO

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