

Leo Robin Music's Message to the People: "Vote for Mr. Rhythm" and to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce: Stop Disenfranchising the Voting Decision! Install the Star Awarded to the "Thanks for the Memory" Oscar-Winning Lyricist 30 Years Ago

SHERMAN OAKS, CA / ACCESSWIRE / October 6, 2020 / *"Vote for Mister Rhythm, Raise up your voice, And vote for Mister Rhythm, The people's choice!"* are the opening lyrics written by lyricist Leo Robin to the anthem song "Vote for Mr. Rhythm," composed by Ralph Rainger and Al Siegel, first recorded by a 19 year old Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb and his Orchestra in 1936. The lyrics take on a satirical twist that reminds us of the present political times especially with the 2020 Presidential election taking place in less than a month, *"You'll be happy with 'im, Take my advice, And vote for Mister Rhythm, I'm voting twice!"* This song has nothing to do with the politics of voting irregularities and abuses but everything to do with the spirit about jazz music and a call to "Vote for Mr. Rhythm."

A 19 year old Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb and his Orchestra ...



A 19 year old Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb and his Orchestra of a recording in 1936 of "Vote for Mr. Rhythm," composed by Ralph Rainger and Al Siegel with lyrics by Leo Robin

The controversy between Leo Robin Music and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce over the star awarded to lyricist Leo Robin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame more than 30 years ago but never installed is because the Hollywood Chamber is not honoring the voting decision made by the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee. What happened more than 30 years ago is analogous to the voting issues we face today but in the context of an award of a star to a candidate on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The Hollywood Chamber doesn't accept the results of the voting by the members of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee including the vote by the venerable Chairman Johnny Grant. Their votes were disenfranchised resulting in the candidate Leo Robin never receiving his star.

When Robin's grandson called the Hollywood Chamber and spoke to Ana Martinez, Producer of the Walk Of Fame, more than three years ago on July 6, 2017, he told her about his discovery of Leo's long-lost star" (#Leosloststar"). She confirmed it was true and said, "Nothing like this has ever happened before." Ms. Ashley Lee from the Los Angeles Times first broke on May 23, 2019 this intriguing story, [Leo Robin never got his Walk of Fame star. Now his grandson is fighting for it](#), about his serendipitous discovery of Leo's long-lost star which I believe got lost because "[The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce]...made this 30-year-old mistake,"

Leo Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1988. They wanted to see to

it that Leo would be acknowledged for the legacy that Roy Trakin, who is *the crème de la crème* of entertainment journalism, reported on September 30, 2019, in his crisp and inimitable style, in his *Variety* article, "[Thanks for the Memory: How Leo Robin Helped Usher In the Golden Age of Song in Film.](#)" But, sadly, Mrs. Robin passed away slightly more than one year before the letter was sent out from the Hollywood Chamber announcing that her husband had been awarded the star and so, unfortunately, it was never installed. The suffrage rights of the members of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee continue to be disenfranchised today.

In the wake of the release of this story last year by The Times, Leo Robin Music was outraged to learn what happened 30 years ago. Ms. Lee reported, "The envelope was returned to its sender and has since remained in the Chamber of Commerce's records." She also tweeted, "at first I didn't believe that Leo Robin's star had really slipped through the cracks" with a photo of that acceptance letter and the envelope stamped "RETURN TO SENDER." Ms. Lee explained the Chamber's view, "A mistake it was not, noted (Ana) Martinez to The Times. Back in 1989, before the ease of email and cell phones, honorees were not as repeatedly and actively pursued to secure their star as they are today. That means no follow-up letters and no calls to co-signers, even if Robin's application was co-signed by (Bob) Hope, who has four stars on the Walk."

In a recent article on September 3, 2020 by Ms. Janet Lee in *Variety*, the premier source of entertainment news, titled "[Demystifying Hollywood's Walk of Fame: 'You Cannot Just Buy a Star'](#)" Producer of the Walk of Fame, Ana Martinez, told *Variety*, "You cannot just buy a star. People don't understand that there's a process. They feel like if they have money, it can be bought, and that's not the way it works." One would like to believe that the "process" that Ms. Martinez raves about reflects ideals where the Hollywood Chamber conducts its affairs as a professionally run organization and the Hollywood Walk Of Fame Committee is a deliberative body that makes decisions in a highly ethical ecosystem. Unjustly, the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committees from 2018 through 2020 continue to disenfranchise the voting decision made by all the members of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee by denying the installation of the star awarded to Leo Robin.

In a preview, almost 85 years ago, on December 31, 1935 in *Variety*, it said this about the then soon to be released film that would introduce the song "Vote for Mr. Rhythm": "The third in the Big Broadcast series from Paramount, this one, with its large cast of radio, stage and screen talent, far outdistances the two that

precede it. There are enough comedians of one form or another in Broadcast to make it a hit solely on the strength of the laughs: Jack Benny, Martha Raye, Bob Burns and Burns & Allen are the prominents poking at audience ribs. Burns' best scenes are those in which he bursts in on radio programs which are on the air, while looking for conductor Leopold Stokowski. Raye is slow to get started but finishes strong. Towards the end she socks through with the 'Vote for Mr Rhythm' number." The film was directed by Mitchell Leisen and produced by Lewis E. Gensler and also starred Shirley Ross and Ray Milland.

Leo Robin had great influence on Hollywood and worked with all of these stars and filmmakers during their careers. He wrote the lyrics to the jazz standard "Love Is Just around the Corner," which was composed by the producer Lewis E. Gensler. He wrote the lyrics to the jazz standard "Love in Bloom," which Jack Benny adopted as his theme song and was known for playing it off-key on his violin. He wrote the music for many of the films that both Martha Raye and Shirley Ross appeared in and sang his songs and who will ever forget Shirley Ross singing with Bob Hope the 1938 Oscar-winning song "Thanks for the Memory," with lyrics by Leo Robin. Ray Milland, Bob Burns and Burns & Allen also were in many films where Robin wrote the music and director Mitchell Leisen worked with him on many films including the acclaimed *Easy Living* in 1937, which Robin wrote the jazz classic of the same name.

Leo's influence on jazz was as great as it was on Hollywood. In 1936, when a very young Ella was emerging on the jazz scene, Leo Robin wrote "Vote for Mr. Rhythm," which would indeed become an anthem for Ella Fitzgerald and Chick Webb. This should be no surprise since Robin had them in mind when he wrote it and was prescient with the superstardom that Ella would achieve in her lifetime. Robin's lyrics are direct on who was Mr., "Now when I'd say vote for Mister Rhythm, You all know I mean Chick Webb. That's all, my friends, I came to state, Now listen to a noble candidate!" As to Ella, Robin is more veiled, "Change your woe Into a [scat], " which she is famous for and cites one of her big hits at the time. The song "Vote for Mr. Rhythm" appears on more than 20 albums of either Ella Fitzgerald or Chick Webb.

Meanwhile, in contradiction to its mission, the Hollywood Chamber is not doing justice to the nomination of Robin. Instead we are witness to the injustice of Leo's long-lost star and the Hollywood Chamber's refusal to honor their commitment to Robin's memory. It has always been true when a letter has been "Return to Sender," the sender will verify the address and resend it. In 1990, the Hollywood Chamber obstructed installation of the star when it placed the acceptance letter

that was returned to sender in its files and made no attempt to resend it. The Hollywood Chamber made no attempt to notify the sponsor, Bob Hope, who was one of the most famous entertainers in the world at the time. The Hollywood Chamber must have had Bob Hope's number from their own dealings with him. What the Hollywood Chamber did after the letter was "Return to Sender" was to disenfranchise the voting decision made by all the members of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee to award a star to Leo Robin.

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and the Walk of Fame Committees from 2018 through 2020 continue to disenfranchise the decision made by all the members of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee by denying the installation of the star awarded to Leo Robin. Throughout the past sixty years, the Hollywood Chamber has successfully kept track of 2,691 honorees and has seen to it that each and every one of them received a star and had it successfully installed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame with their name on it -- except for Robin. At this point, one can't help but conclude that Robin, his sponsors, his family and the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee, itself, have been treated unjustly by the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk Of Fame Committees. One would think that today's Hollywood Walk of Fame would honor the decisions made by those who served before them. With the fast approaching Presidential election, it's time for the Hollywood Chamber to honor the decision made by the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee more than 30 years ago or seven Presidential election cycles ago and honor its obligation to put Leo's long-lost star in its rightful place on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

For more information, visit the official website of Leo Robin at <http://leorobin.com/>.

CONTACT:

Scott D. Ora

President - Leo Robin Music

thanks4thememory@icloud.com

(818) 618-2572

Leo Robin (@LeoRobinMusic) / Twitter

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