

# LEO ROBIN MUSIC

February 2, 2021

Mr. LL Cool J  
LL COOL J Inc.  
6311 Romaine St Suite 7219  
Los Angeles, CA 90038-2617

Dear LL Cool J,

**Leo Robin Music's Open Letter to LL Cool J Re: Moral Wrong for Failure to Install the Star, "#Leosloststar," Awarded to the "Thanks For The Memory" Oscar-Winning Lyricist More Than 30 Years Ago** *(Released Tuesday, February 2, 2021 6:38 AM PST)*

I, as Leo Robin's grandson, am compelled by the recent announcement and the events that have taken place over the course of 30 years to request that you redress the moral wrong committed against lyricist Leo Robin by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and the Walk of Fame Committees (2018 - 2020). Leo Robin Music was outraged by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce's recent announcement to once again deny the installation of the star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame that was awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago. The Hollywood Chamber as well as the Walk of Fame Committee continue to be morally adrift in regard to this unprecedented situation with the star awarded to Robin but not installed. And they must recognize that they bear responsibility for this on-going moral injustice and take the steps to address it.

While Leo Robin music congratulates these performers for the honors, we are woefully reminded of the fact that the star awarded to Leo Robin in 1990 was never installed. When I called the Hollywood Chamber and spoke to Ana Martinez, Producer of the Walk Of Fame, more than three years ago on July 6, 2017, I told her about my discovery of Leo's long-lost star. She confirmed it was true and said, "Nothing like this has ever happened before." After I spoke with Ms. Martinez, I followed her instructions and wrote a letter addressed to the Walk of Fame Committee, of which you were a member representing the recording industry at the time.

When I spoke to Ms. Martinez, she informed me that you along with the other members of the Committee had just met for the annual meeting to select the honorees and that she was going to call you and the others to inform all of you of this development. In the letter I sent to the Walk of Fame Committee on July 11, 2017, a fresh carbon copy is enclosed, I wrote, "In light of these bizarre circumstances, I...humbly request that the Walk of Fame Committee reinstate the award to Leo of the posthumous star."

**It's time we hear from you on what your response was when you learned of this development. Were you in favor of the Hollywood Chamber correcting what occurred more than 30 years ago with unveiling and installing the star awarded to Leo Robin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame?**

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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 my 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," Ms. Lee quoting me. Leo Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a star in 1988 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.

In the wake of the release of this story last year by The Times, Leo Robin Music was appalled 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 the Sunday print edition of The Times issued on May 26, 2019, midway in the article "A Walk of Fame star still in limbo," Ms. Ashley Lee posed this question to the Chamber, "It's been decades since Robin was named to the Walk of Fame...what would it take to get the star installed? Martinez explained that Robin would need to be reinstated by the current committee at the next annual meeting. She didn't anticipate problems with that part of the process." This was all, apparently, an insincere PR stunt being that I never heard a word from the Hollywood Chamber since the meeting took place in June 2019.

Queens has always served as one of music's epicenters and the borough has produced icons like you along with Run-DMC, and 50 Cent. Long before, while Harlem and 52nd Street in Manhattan remained the center of jazz clubs, the most celebrated figures of jazz settled in Queens including Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie, pianist Fats Waller and Lena Horne. Anecdotally, band leader Count Basie's house on Adelaide Road was renowned for its pool parties.

The outstanding contributions Leo Robin has made to The Great American Songbook are celebrated time and again including recordings by all of these great jazz artists from the stomping grounds of Queens such as trumpeters Louis Armstrong with "Love Is Just around the Corner" and "No Love, No Nothin'" and Dizzy Gillespie with "Hallelujah" and "If I Should Lose You" and pianists Count Basie with "Easy Living" and "Thanks for the Memory" and Fats Waller with "Hallelujah," "Hate to Talk about Myself," "I Adore You," and "Rhyme for Love" and vocalists Billie Holiday with "Easy Living," "Havin' Myself a Time" and "Miss Brown to You" and Ella Fitzgerald with "Easy Living," "Hello Ma! I Done It Again," "Hallelujah," "Hooray for Love," "It

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Was Written in the Stars," "Thanks for the Memory," "Vote for Mr. Rhythm" and "Wishful Thinking" and *Lena Horne* with "Havin' Myself a Time," "In Love in Vain" and "Prisoner of Love."

The featured song "Hallelujah!" was written by composer Vincent Youmans during World War I when he was serving in the U.S. Navy. It was heard by famed bandleader John Phillip Sousa who was known as "March King" and liked it so much that soon it was being played as a march at bases around the country. In 1927, lyrics by Leo Robin and Clifford Grey were added and the song was renamed "Hallelujah!" and was introduced in the original production of *Hit the Deck* staged at the Belasco Theatre on Broadway, opening on April 25, 1927, and running for 352 performances.

The show was a hit and its song Hallelujah! achieved worldwide success. It turned out to be no less popular with civilians and has been around ever since -- its call to meeting hard to resist. Two films based on the musical were made. The first was in 1930 and starred Jack Oakie. It was remade in 1955 with a slightly different screenplay and differently named characters starring Jane Powell, Tony Martin, Debbie Reynolds, Vic Damone, Ann Miller, and Russ Tamblyn.

This set the tune on its path to becoming a jazz standard and it has since been recorded by many of the greatest jazz artists such as pianists George Shearing, Oscar Peterson and Fats Waller, saxophonists Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, violinist Stéphane Grappelli and The Tatum Hampton Rich Trio -- pianist Art Tatum, Vibraphonist Lionel Hampton with drummer Buddy Rich and vocalists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Al Bowlly, Hank Jones, Earl "Fatha" Hines and Steve Lawrence with Eydie Gormé.

The Hollywood Chamber recently made an announcement of the 35 new honorees from the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2021. With awards season around the corner, everyone will be tuning in to watch the winners announced at the Grammy Awards and the Academy Awards. The recent announcement of honorees by the Hollywood Chamber would be tantamount to announcing a winner at the Grammy Awards or at the Academy Awards and then not giving the winner a Grammy or an Oscar to take home. As a two-time Grammy Award winner, can you fathom being announced the winner at the Grammy Awards but not being given the Grammy to take home?

Can you imagine if multi-Grammy winner Tony Bennett winning the Grammy Award for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Performance in 1997 for his album *Here's to the Ladies* - which theme of the album was songs made famous by female singers and included "My Ideal" with lyrics by Robin to pay tribute to Margaret Whiting for performing her theme song - but not being given the Grammy to take home or multi-Oscar winner Robert De Niro winning for Best Actor the Oscar in 1980 for the film *Raging Bull* - which used a few songs with lyrics by Robin including "Prisoner of Love" performed by Perry Como (1946), "Prisoner of Love" performed by Russ Columbo (1934) and "Bye, Bye Baby" performed by Marilyn Monroe (1953) - but not being given the Oscar to take home.

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Meanwhile, the Hollywood Chamber along with the Walk of Fame Committee have mislaid their moral compass. What happened after I spoke to the Hollywood Chamber over the past three years - where it obstructed installation by ignoring emails from me for a whole year and failing to honor its promise for the Walk of Fame Committee to consider my request for the star to be placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and toying with me - is just plain wrong. What happened 30 years ago - when the acceptance letter was returned to sender and there was no follow-up letters and no calls to notify co-sponsor Bob Hope - is wrong as wrong can be. The 1990 Walk of Fame Committee awarded a star to a deserved honoree and then the Hollywood Chamber and subsequent Walk of Fame Committees would take it back. These actions over the years that resulted in the failure to install the star awarded to Robin are manifest of a moral wrong.

LL Cool J , I urge you, as a member of the Walk of Fame Committee, to find the moral compass that guides the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee and set a new course. Right now, in contradiction to its mission, the Hollywood Chamber is not doing justice to the award to Leo Robin. Instead we are witness to the moral injustice of Leo's long-lost star and the Hollywood Chamber's refusal to honor their commitment to Robin's memory. I want to reaffirm my deepest level of commitment to achieving that all of you - the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee - uphold the strictest moral authority in fulfilling your commitment. This is your moral imperative.

The Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee have exercised wanton disregard of its own rules for the star awarded to Robin but never installed. Throughout the past sixty years, the 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 Leo 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 Committee. Leaving Leo Robin, over and over again, off the list of honorees to have their stars installed and "unveil(ed)...on the world's most famous walkway!" is unconscionable.

The failure of the Hollywood Chamber to install the star awarded to Robin is hard to fathom but remember that my grandmother who was the sponsor passed away before receiving notification and that the co-sponsor, actor Bob Hope, was never notified. It is high time for the Hollywood Chamber to preserve their integrity and honor the decision of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee and its obligation to put Leo's long-lost star in its rightful place on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. LL Cool J, when "Going Back to Cali," borrowing this from the name of your 1988 hip hop hit song, you have the stature to make this happen. It is my hope that you, as a member of the Walk of Fame Committee, will take the necessary steps to correct this moral wrong and award my grandfather, the legendary songwriter, Leo Robin, his long-overdue star.

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In Leo Robin's lyrics from *Gulliver's Travels* -1939,

"Faithful Forever,"

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Enclosure