

"Oh the Pity of it All" : The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce's Failure to Install the Star, ("#Leosloststar"), Awarded to the "Thanks For The Memory" Oscar-Winning Lyricist on the Hollywood Walk of Fame More Than 30 Years Ago

SHERMAN OAKS, CA / ACCESSWIRE / October 27, 2020 / "Oh the Pity of it All," the title and lyrics of the song by Leo Robin, describes the controversy between Leo Robin Music and the Hollywood Chamber over the star awarded to lyricist Leo Robin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame more than 30 years ago but never installed. This dispute arises because the Hollywood Chamber is not honoring the decision made by the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee to award a star to Robin. Rita Hayworth and Victor Mature performed the song "Oh the Pity of it All," which was composed by Ralph Rainger, in the 1942 film *My Gal Sal*. Rita Hayworth, who what would have been 102 a week ago on October 17, will always be remembered as the most glamorous screen idol of the 1940s. She achieved fame during the 1940s as one of the era's top stars, who the press coined the term "The Love Goddess" and was the top pin-up girl for GIs during World War II.

Rita Hayworth and Victor Mature performing Oh the Pity of ...



Rita Hayworth and Victor Mature performing "Oh the Pity of it All" and "Here You Are,"

both songs composed by Ralph Rainger with lyrics by Leo Robin, in the 1942 film *My Gal Sal*

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 the grandson's serendipitous discovery on July 6, 2017 of Leo's long-lost star which he believe got lost because "[The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce]...made this 30-year-old mistake," Ms. Lee quoting him. In 1988, both Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They followed the instructions and mailed in the application approximately five years after Robin's passing so that he would be eligible to be nominated for a star as soon as possible. But all too soon after that, Cherie, herself, already grief-stricken, was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Tragically, Cherie Robin never received the good news about Robin's star because she passed away on May 28, 1989, a little over one year before the letter from the Hollywood Chamber was sent out on June 18, 1990 announcing that her husband had been awarded the star. As a result of these ill-fated circumstances, Leo's star was never installed. "I do think it was meant to be," said the grandson of discovering the star. "It's important to me because it was important to my grandmother to pay tribute to Leo's career in this way. And she took the time, she followed all the rules. My grandmother did everything right except live long enough."

In the wake of the release of this story last year by The Times, Leo Robin Music was outraged to learn that the Hollywood Chamber made a mistake with handling their own mail more than 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."

One would like to believe that 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 like one should find in a boardroom. Apparently, the Hollywood Chamber conducts its business in a different way based on the unprecedented situation with regard to the star awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago but never installed because of a mistake made by them. The lyrics written by Leo Robin of his song "Oh the Pity of it All" captures the mishandling by the Hollywood Chamber of the star awarded to him more than 30 years go but never installed.

My Gal Sal is a 1942 20th Century Fox musical starring Rita Hayworth and Victor Mature. Rita Hayworth is at her glamorous best and Victor Mature makes a very engaging leading man. The film is a biopic of 1890s composer and songwriter Paul Dresser and singer Sally Elliot. It was based on a biographical essay, sometimes erroneously referred to as a book, by Dresser's younger brother, novelist Theodore Dreiser, Dreiser being the original family name. Some of the songs portrayed as Dresser's work were actually written by him, but several were created for the film by the Hollywood songwriting team of Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger. The famous Hollywood songwriting team wrote an entertaining group of songs that included the fun song "Oh the Pity of it All" and the ballad "Here You Are" and spectacular numbers danced by Rita Hayworth including "On the Gay White Way" and "Me and My Fella (and a Big Umbrella)."



Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger with glamorous film star Rita Hayworth working on *My Gal Sal* in their bungalow on the Paramount lot in 1942

Leo Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a star because 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.](#)" Many young actors got their big break when they were given a Robin song to sing such as Bob Hope, who credited Leo's heartfelt lyrics for launching his career saying on January 2, 1985, "I owe an awful lot to Leo Robin. He and his partner gave me a memento that I've been carrying around me for 46 years. It's a melodic masterpiece called 'Thanks for the Memory.'... 'Thanks for the Memory' won the Academy Award that year and I've had a pretty exciting ride on its coattails." Mr. Trakin reported, "His impressive catalog includes signature tunes for Maurice Chevalier ("Louise"), Jeanette McDonald ("Beyond the Blue Horizon"), Bing Crosby ("Please," "Zing a Little Zong"), Dorothy Lamour ("Moonlight and Shadows"), Jack Benny ("Love in Bloom"), Eddie Fisher ("One Hour With You"), Carmen Miranda ("Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat") and Marilyn Monroe ("Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend")."

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. "Oh the Pity of it All" concisely expresses what the Hollywood Chamber did after the letter was "Return to Sender," which was not customary practice but smacks of disregard for the individuals honored by the Walk of Fame Committee.

What happened after the grandson spoke to the Hollywood Chamber over the past three years - where it obstructed installation by ignoring emails from him for a whole year and failing to honor its promise for the Walk of Fame Committee to consider his request for the star to be placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and toying with him - 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. "Oh the Pity of it All" succinctly describes the conduct by the Hollywood Chamber over the past 30 years that resulted in the failure to install 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, which was then successfully installed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame - except for Leo Robin. One would think that today's Hollywood Walk of Fame would honor the decisions made by those who served before them. 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. "Oh the Pity of it All" pithily sums up what's happened the past 30 years but it's now time for the Hollywood Chamber to honor the decision made by the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee 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/>

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