

LEO ROBIN MUSIC

May 12, 2021

Mr. Elvis Duran
iHeartMedia, Inc.
Z100 New York
32 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013

Dear Mr. Duran,

Leo Robin Music's Open Letter to Elvis Duran Re: Moral Wrong for Failure to Install "#Leosloststar" Awarded to the "Thanks For The Memory" Oscar-Winning Lyricist 30 Years Ago *(Released Wednesday, May 12, 2021 6:39 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 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.

On March 2, 2017, you received a star in the radio category on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, on the same block on Vine Street as your idols Jack Benny and Dick Clark. The outstanding contributions Leo Robin has made to The Great American Songbook are celebrated time and again by artists who are Walk of Famers including your idols. Dick Clark introduced James Brown on Bandstand in June 1963 showcasing "*Prisoner of Love*," composed by *Russ Columbo* with lyrics by Leo Robin and *Clarence Gaskill*. Comedian Jack Benny adopted as his theme song "Love in Bloom," composed by Ralph Rainger with lyrics by Leo Robin, and he was known for playing it off-key on his violin.

I enjoyed reading your book released this past year, "Where Do I Begin? Stories (I Sort of Remember) From A Life Lived Out Loud," In particular, because it was a parallel with my grandfather's career, I found of interest that one of the key moments in your life was a letter from your radio hero Ron Chapman of KVIL when you were merely 12: "Learn all you can about words, and how words can paint pictures in people's minds. That what we do in radio. It's the theater of the mind."

This made me think of my grandfather when a letter of introduction was sent from his drama professor at Carnegie Tech to playwright, director and fellow Pittsburgher George S. Kaufman. When Leo showed Kaufman some of his 'little plays,' Kaufman asked: "Is there anything else you can do?" Leo said, "Well, I've written some poetry." Kaufman said, "Maybe you could write

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lyrics." Leo used to joke that he didn't know what Kaufman meant by 'lyrics.'" "You know, words for songs," Kaufman explained and sent Leo to producer and songwriter Lew Gensler. Gensler advised Leo to become familiar with successful songs of the day and to practice, practice, practice. Leo followed his advice and sent song after song after song to Gensler. Eventually, Gensler was satisfied and showed Leo's lyrics to Buddy DeSylva, with whom Gensler was working at the time, on a show, Queen High. Songwriter Buddy DeSylva was Leo's idol and DeSylva offered him the chance to write a song with composer Richard Myers for The Greenwich Village Follies.

While Leo Robin music congratulates the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2021 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 have been a member for, at least, the past two years. 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."

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 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 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

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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.

Leo's songs were not only popular with the public but with individual artists as well, many of whom adopted them as their own personal theme song. Most famously, Bob Hope. He once said, "I owe an awful lot to Leo Robin. He...gave me a memento that I've been carrying around with 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." Similarly, comedian, Jack Benny, ended his weekly show with an out-of-tune "Love in Bloom" on his violin. Eddie Cantor, too, sang "One Hour with You" once a week to his TV show viewers and Margaret Whiting always sang her father's and Leo's lovely "My Ideal" every time she did a show.

Roy Trakin, who is the *crème de la crème* of entertainment journalism, in *his Variety* article on September 30, 2019, "Thanks for the Memory: How Leo Robin Helped Usher In the Golden Age of Song in Film," 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, 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.

Mr. Duran, 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 Leo 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

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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.

The failure of the Hollywood Chamber to install the star awarded to Leo 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. Mr. Duran, you are known for your trademark honesty and have the moral integrity 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.

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

"Faithful Forever,

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Enclosure