

2023-J1368

Senate Resolution No. 1368

BY: Senator HINCHEY

MOURNING the death of Karl Berger, internationally renowned master musician, composer, and educator

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger of Woodstock, New York, whose pioneering concepts and ground-breaking orchestral works changed the way music can be taught and learned, died on Sunday, April 9, 2023, at the age of 88; and

WHEREAS, Born March 30, 1935, in Heidelberg, Germany, Karl Berger was a prolific, award-winning musician, composer, and educator, heralded worldwide as a transformative pioneer in the way music is taught, heard, and learned, based on the commonality of all music; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger earned a double Ph.D. in Philosophy and Music, and held high-level University positions, including Head of the Music Department and Dean of Jazz Education at the University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth; Professor of Composition and Dean of the Jazz and Music Department at the Frankfurt Conservatory in Germany; and taught innovative Jazz and contemporary music theory for several years at the New School university in NYC; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger founded the internationally renowned Creative Music Foundation and Creative Music Studio (CMS) in 1971 with his musical partner Ingrid Sertso and Jazz legend Ornette Coleman, which brought students from all over the world to the CMS campus in Woodstock, New York; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger was a celebrated master musician on piano and vibraphone, a five-time winner of the prestigious DownBeat International Critics Poll for his innovative work on vibraphone, and recorded no less than 26 albums under his own name, with extraordinary musical artists including some of the most revered in Jazz and New Music including Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Eric Dolphy, Pharoah Sanders, Dave Holland, Ed Blackwell, and Jack DeJohnette; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger was equally recognized as a master arranger of a variety of music including pop, rock, contemporary, classical and world music, composing and conducting arrangements for such stellar artists as Jeff Buckley, Natalie Merchant, Better Than Ezra, Angelique Kidjo, Coheed & Cambria, and The Cardigans, among others; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger brought new musical trains of thought developed at the Creative Music Studio in Woodstock, to the worldwide musical community via tours through North and South America, Europe, Africa, and myriad of other countries including Japan, India, and Turkey, particularly focused on the art of Improvising Orchestras; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, Karl Berger reinforced the Creative Music Studio's significant position in the history of modern American music through a digital archival project with Columbia University to preserve and make available recordings of historic performances by prominent artists who had taught at and worked with CMS; with this endeavor, supported by the Grammy Foundation, hundreds of hours of archival recordings were

digitized over several years by CMS in the Sertso Recording Studio in Woodstock; Volume One received rave reviews, including one from Cadence Magazine, which called it the best historical jazz record of 2014; and

WHEREAS, The legacy and teachings of Karl Berger and the Creative Music Studio were profiled in the 2018 feature documentary film "Music Mind," and three books charting the pioneering thought and methods of Karl's teachings have been published: Music Universe, Music Mind and All Kinds of Time: The Enduring Spirit of The Creative Music Studio by Robert Sweet; and The Music Mind Experience by Rick Maurer; and

WHEREAS, The musical communities of New York State continue to benefit from the work and teachings of Karl Berger and the Creative Music Studio through current student orchestra workshops, concerts and events held in New York City and the Hudson Valley, contributing to the peace, happiness and innovative musical education of all New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger is survived by his wife and muse, Ingrid Sertso (vocalist and award-winning poet); and his daughter, Savia; his youngest daughter Eva Berger predeceased him; and

WHEREAS, Karl Berger, imbued with enormous talent, foresight, and a deep well of compassion, leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time, and will remain as an inspiring spirit to all the students, musicians, audiences, families, and communities his music continues to serve; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Karl Berger, and to express its deepest condolences to his family and friends; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Karl Berger.