

2021-J2692

Senate Resolution No. 2692

BY: Senator CLEARE

COMMEMORATING the Centennial Anniversary of the purchase of the New Amsterdam Musical Association's headquarters building on June 25, 2022

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those cultural institutions and organizations whose commitment to promoting the richness and diversity of the arts and entertainment world has contributed to the strength, vitality, and cultural enrichment of their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of the purchase of the New Amsterdam Musical Association's headquarters building, to be celebrated at an event on Saturday, June 25, 2022, at the Harlem School of the Arts in New York, New York; and

WHEREAS, This momentous occasion will take place in conjunction with the observance of June as African American Music Appreciation Month, which was initiated by President Jimmy Carter on June 7, 1979; three decades later, President Barack Obama gave the month its current name and proclaimed that African-American music and musicians have helped the country "to dance, to express injustice and defend our country's enduring promise of freedom and opportunity for all"; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1904, and incorporated on January 9, 1905, the New Amsterdam Musical Association (NAMA) is the oldest African-American musical organization in the United States; and

WHEREAS, NAMA became a key cultural reference point for jazz music during the Harlem Renaissance from the 1920s through to the 1950s, serving as a place for many musicians, such as James Reese Europe, Eubie Blake, and Langston Hughes, to gather after performances to socialize and to practice; and

WHEREAS, After relocating seven different times, NAMA moved to its current location, a tall brownstone on 107 W 130th Street in 1922; named a Historical Landmark, it remains a tribute to the story of African-American musicians in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Today, NAMA is no longer a union, however, it continues to serve as a gathering place for residents and musicians through community events such as weekly Monday Nite Jam sessions, NAMA Legends sessions, fundraisers, and various holiday programs; and

WHEREAS, NAMA also offers voice and instrumental lessons on a sliding fee scale, keeping with the organization's mantra, "I have this, I will share with you. Take it and make yourself better"; and

WHEREAS, Many features remain intact from the original 1922 structure; visitors enter through a red door underneath the main entrance's stairway, which leads to the performance area on the

building's lower level; photographs of notable members line the walls and rows of chairs lead up to a small stage where a piano sits on the back left and to the right, a drum kit; and

WHEREAS, The success of NAMA is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated members, such as Buster Bailey, Will Marion Cook, Rafael Escudero, Craig S. Harris, John E. Johnson, Brooks Kerr, Larry Lucey, Willie J. Mack, Henry Minton, Gladys Seals, Zutty Singleton, Fred Staton, Dickie Wells, and Fess Williams, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those organizations and individuals whose commitment and creative talents have contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of the citizens of the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of the purchase of the New Amsterdam Musical Association's headquarters building on June 25, 2022; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the New Amsterdam Musical Association.