

BY: Senator COMRIE

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
June 2017 as Black Music Month in the State of New
York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those who seek to preserve and celebrate the musical heritage of our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2017 as Black Music Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National African-American Music Appreciation Month; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion will be celebrated with an appearance by celebrated singer, songwriter, and producer Eric Roberson at the Queens Library on Friday, June 9, 2017; this Grammy award nominee continues to break boundaries as an independent artist in an industry dominated by major labels, manufactured sounds and mainstream radio; and

WHEREAS, Described as the original pioneer of the independent movement in R&B/Soul music, Eric Roberson has achieved numerous major milestones in his career, from being a successful songwriter and producer for notable artists such as Jill Scott, Musiq Soulchild, Dwele, Vivian Green and countless others, to releasing nine albums under his Blue Erro Soul imprint; and

WHEREAS, African-American Music Appreciation Month is an annual celebration of African-American music in the United States, commemorated with special performances and multi-day festivals in musical genres ranging from soul to jazz to gospel throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, Observation of Black Music Month was initiated on June 7, 1979, by President Jimmy Carter, who decreed that June would be the month of black music; since then, American presidents have continued the practice and, for each year of his term, President Barack Obama has announced the observance under a new title, African-American Music Appreciation Month; and

WHEREAS, America's diverse musical heritage is a reflection of the creativity and optimism of our Nation; during Black Music Month, we celebrate the breathtaking talents and creativity of African-American vocalists, instrumentalists, and composers whose achievements have shaped our national culture and enriched our communities; and

WHEREAS, For the entire span of our Nation's history, African-Americans have created music that communicates across racial and social boundaries, giving voice to the full range of human experience; and

WHEREAS, During African-Americans' involuntary servitude, music often served as a means of expressing the inexpressible; when facing the cruelty of slavery and injustice, spirituals brought comfort to troubled souls; and

WHEREAS, These timeless declarations of hope and faith evolved into the more modern genres of gospel, blues, ragtime, and jazz, expressed in the musical genius of Scott Joplin, Marian Anderson, Eubie Blake, and Mahalia Jackson; during the Civil Rights era, African-American musicians such as Duke Ellington, Muddy Waters, and Ruth Brown conveyed the struggles of their communities while bringing people of all backgrounds together; today, this music continues to inspire America's citizens and advance its creative spirit; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the course of American history, black musicians have used their great talents to share the richness of the African-American experience and to develop a uniquely American style of music enjoyed throughout the world; in June 2017, we honor the pioneers of African-American music along with today's artists who continue their legacy; and

WHEREAS, From "Glory", the Academy Award winning best original song in the movie "Selma", to the historic success of Jay-Z and Beyonce, to the continual social impact displayed by artists such as Stevie Wonder and Prince who performed a Rally 4 Peace concert in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2015, we are reminded that Black Lives Matter; and

WHEREAS, A local component, the Harlem Renaissance, was the name given to the cultural, social, and artistic movement that took place in Harlem between the end of World War I and the middle of the 1930s; during this period, Harlem was a cultural center, drawing black writers, artists, musicians, photographers, poets, and scholars; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx is home of hip-hop, a cultural movement which formed during the late 1960s among African-American youths residing in the South Bronx in New York City; hip-hop legends who hail from the Bronx include Kool DJ Herc, Grandmaster Melle Mel and Kurtis Blow; and

WHEREAS, Queens, and in particular the neighborhoods of St. Albans and Addisleigh Park, were the traditional home to an entire spectrum of musical pioneers and legends, including: Count Basie, Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald, Illinois Jacquet, James Brown, Milt Hinton, Cootie Williams, John Coltrane and Charlie Parker among so many others; and

WHEREAS, Events which provide a means of preserving a part of our rich American past and which contribute to the community in such noble endeavors as aforementioned, are held in the highest regard by this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2017 as Black Music Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, Eric Roberson, and Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO of Queens Library.