

No. R-82. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College.

(H.C.R.62)

Offered by Representatives Greer of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Morrissey of Bennington, and Nigro of Bennington

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

Whereas, the journey to establish Black music as a focus of academic examination and respect owes much to the pioneering initiative of the Black Music Division at Bennington College, which was established in 1974 under the auspices of Bill Dixon, a Renaissance figure in the Black cultural scene, as a composer, educator, performer, and ardent artistic advocate, and

Whereas, this avant-garde jazz luminary was ideally qualified to take on this pedagogical challenge, having studied music at the Hartnett Conservatory of Music, organized the “October Revolution in Jazz” conclave in New York City in 1964, and later co-founded the Jazz Composer’s Guild, and

Whereas, a primary rationale for the creation of the Black Music Division was “to legitimize Black Music within the academic sphere,” a mission today’s faculty continues to promote with “courses that explore the depth and cultural significance of Black music,” and

Whereas, for nearly four decades, another prominent faculty member in the Black Music Division was the eminent percussionist, New York Art Quartet member, Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, and Doris Duke Foundation Impact Award winner, Milford Graves, and

Whereas, to celebrate and reflect upon this half-century academic odyssey and its historic and “transformative impact on the field of music, education, improvisation and culture,” the Black Music Division, with the support of Bennington College Alumni Relations, is sponsoring a Black Music Symposium, an event reminiscent of Bill Dixon’s “October Revolution in Jazz,” and

Whereas, Bennington College faculty member Michael Wimberly is organizing this grand gathering of “alumni, musicians, faculty, students, and members of the public” for two glorious days of exciting “live performances, lectures, panels, and workshops” that will highlight the past, present, and future of Black music, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Black Music Division at Bennington College.