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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE UNIVERSAL
HIP HOP MUSEUM GROUNDBREAKING**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Actions speak louder than words. So, everyone's got their story. 1982, I was trying to make sense of the world as a young man. I was trying to find my purpose. And you hear a lot of things, and some things influence you powerfully. So, I heard these words – a child is born with no state of mind, blind to the ways of mankind. And it gripped me. It gripped me. And I listened to the message over and over. And I thought, if any song, if any work of art or poetry ever deserved to be able to be called the message, this was it. Think about that. Think about that. Something so powerful that it could claim to be the message. That's what it was.

[Applause]

So, I bet a lot of people here, you each have your own story, hearing that song and so many others. But that song I listened to over and over, I said, there is a truth we have to fight for and work for. Because that song was saying what so much of the rest of the world wouldn't acknowledge. And instead of sugar coating it or sweeping it under the rug, there it was right before our eyes. And it told me we had to do something different. So, to Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, God bless you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Applause]

Let me just do a really important official act here. Set some history straight. There are some good people on the West Coast, they did some good things but hip hop was born in the Bronx.

[Applause]

I don't think there's anything else to discuss. Do you? Think we covered that? Did we cover that okay? Done. We're done. We're done. Okay. Now everybody, this is one of those parts of who we are as New Yorkers, as Bronxites, that we need to celebrate. We need to say that this history is our history. And we did something here. You did something here. No one else created. No one else had the vision. It happened here and only here. And then it moved a nation, hip hop moved a nation, hip hop moved the world. And opened eyes and opened minds. And voices were heard that were never heard before. People got to express their artistry in their words. It was a revolution. Every one of you who participated in that revolution, God bless you. Thank you. Thank you for bringing the truth out.

But it's also a celebration of the Bronx. It's a celebration of a place forgotten for so many years. Put down, degraded, underestimated, but the Bronx was more than it was ever recognized to be. Remember when they say the Bronx is burning? Right around the same time as that powerful song came up. That's what they wanted to tell you about the Bronx. It was burning. Nothing else, no human beings, no community, people fighting back, no people helping each other believe in each other. But today we saw people in the Bronx did fight back, stand up, created the Bronx of today. And it is a beautiful, beautiful place.

[Applause]

But if we are going to honor the Bronx, if we're going to remember what makes New York City's history and personality and culture so special, we need this museum. We need this museum.

[Applause]

Universal Hip Hop Museum. Yes, we'll look at all of hip hop and respect all of hip hop at Universal because hip hop is a universal language. Every corner of the world. So, I'll finish with this. It was important for the City of New York to stand up and be a part of this. Thank you. Ron introduced me – Ron, Annie, everyone who did this, supporting this incredible idea. Thank you. Ruben Diaz Jr., work of passion this is for you. God bless you, brother. God bless you.

[Applause]

All the elected officials who believe in it and we'll keep contributing, right? We want to keep contributing until it's done and it is great. And it is great as what it celebrates. All the members of my administration, thank you because this was a labor of love for you as well. But here's where I will finish, where we are going. As New York City comes back – let me see a show of hands. How many people believe after COVID, New York City is coming back? Raise your hands. How many people believe the Bronx is coming back?

[Applause]

Okay. Here's what I want to say. This museum is not accepting a broken status quo. When I heard that song in 1982, I heard the tale of a broken status quo we could no longer accept. So, when we come back, we do not want to repeat pre COVID New York City or pre COVID America. That is not our goal. This is a transformational historical moment. We are the actors in this moment, every one of us. We must have a more equal society. We must fight the disparities COVID displayed to all of us. Hip hop was a call for justice and is a call for justice today. We need to do the work of justice. I don't want the good old days because they weren't that good. I want a new New York City for everyone. That's what we will build here today. God bless you. Thank you all.

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