



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2022, 10:00 AM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH
UNIVERSAL HIP HOP MUSEUM FOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIP HOP IN 2023**

Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Strategic Initiatives: Good morning, everyone.

Audience: Morning.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Good morning. Good morning. In case you didn't know it, November is National Hip Hop History Month. Can I get a holler or something?

Audience: Woo.

Deputy Mayor Wright: All right. And I'm sure City Hall has never had this energy and enthusiasm.

Chuck Chillout: Believe that.

Deputy Mayor Wright: That's right, believe that. So just so you know, next year marks the 50th birthday of hip hop. For nearly five decades, hip hop has been one of the City of New York's proudest achievements. I know I grew up on hip hop.

Audience: That's right.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Right? It's the innovation, the creativity, as well as the industry that it created. Every borough in the city lays claim to hip hop. But first, the Boogie Down Bronx, give me a holler — where I'm from.

Staten Island in the house?

Audience: Yes.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Staten Island?

Audience: Yes.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Queens, the Storytellers? All right. Brooklyn?

Audience: Yeah.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Okay.

Audience: Hey, hey, hey, hey.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Wow. Harlem? Harlem in the house? Okay. All right. Brooklyn is strong. I think there's a reason. Every borough has —

Audience member: Harlem.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Harlem? Okay. Every borough has their own connection and lineage to hip hop. Hip hop was the oral tradition of our people, a way of telling our story and our style and our voice. That's why the city is proud to really announce our formal partnership with the Universal Hip Hop Museum, which is going to be dedicated —

Audience: Woo.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Yes. Dedicated to preserving and telling that history for generations. And we are partnering with the museum to really have a host of events and activities during 2023 — the 50th anniversary of hip hop. So with that, I'd like to introduce our next speaker who had the vision for the Universal Hip Hop Museum. Mr. Rocky Bucano.

Rocky Bucano, President and Chairman, Universal Hip Hop Museum: Thank you, Deputy Mayor Wright. And thank you Mayor Adams for inviting the hip hop culture to your home, your house. Listen, 50 years of hip hop history, New York City is the only city in the country that can actually claim 50 years of hip hop history. The Universal Hip Hop Museum is dedicated to the preservation and celebration of hip hop history and culture, past, present, and future. And I am just so thankful that we have a strong representation from all the pioneers, the practitioners that have made this culture the most important art form in the entire world. Starting with my boy over here, my brother Grandmaster Flash. He and I used to do the parks back in the day, and then the formation of the ZooNation. Give it up for the ZooNation too. (Applause.)

And all of the men and women here, Roxanne, they have given so much to make this culture what it is today. They have been true ambassadors of hip hop, started from the streets, and here they are, a multi-billion dollar industry, founded by brown and Black brothers and sisters, and now embraced by every racial background and ethnicity in the entire world. You can't go anywhere in the world and not experience hip hop.

So I'm just so proud that the City of New York and the state of New York have given their support to the Universal Hip Hop Museum. We will open in 2024, and it will be the greatest celebration in 2023 to really demonstrate how hip hop has touched every part of today's society. We want to empower and uplift our communities using hip hop. We want to show truth to power

in our storytelling, and we want to bring people together. Hip hop is about unity. It's not about creating this diverse friction between each other. We want to make sure that we are all united with hip hop and the hip hop people that you see behind me. So without further ado, I'm going to pass the mic to...

Deputy Mayor Wright: Uh oh, pass the mic.

Bucano: To my sister over here, Roxanne Shanté.

(Crosstalk)

Deputy Mayor Wright: Before — I have a special introduction for Roxanne Shanté. You know, I got a special introduction for. But before her, we actually want to turn it over to Ralph McDaniels, one of the fathers of this movement and a key leader in our partnership.

Ralph McDaniels: Thank you, Deputy May Wright. Thank you Mayor Adams for allowing us to come in to City Hall and have this amazing announcement about hip hop's 50th anniversary next year in 2023. It's been a long time coming. We are super happy to have all these entertainers here, but I'm here to talk a little bit about some of the educational facilities that'll be involved from all the libraries in New York City to the museums. All educational facilities will be involved in this because I think it's important. Hip hop uses the most words out of any genre of music, and I think it's important that our young people know how to use those words and make them work for them so they can go further. So just so you know, education is the fifth element of hip hop, and that will be represented in this celebration as well.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Thank you. The founder and creator of the Video Music Box. So now we are going to hear from the legends that created it, that started it, and of course with a woman-led administration, like we have here, it's going to be ladies first. So with that, I want to introduce Roxanne Shanté.

Roxanne Shanté: Thank you, deputy mayor. Thank you, mayor, for having us here. It is definitely an honor. When they first approached me and told me, "Listen, what we're going to do is we are going to do 50 events, 50 days celebrating 50 years of hip hop," I was like, "That's a lot of 50s." But I am honored to be able to participate knowing that seeing the spin that has been taken with New York City and knowing that we're getting ready to celebrate something like hip hop here in New York City, where it was. A lot of people want to debate whether it was created here or not, but where we have perfected it. Don't you agree?

Audience: Yes.

Shanté: Absolutely. So because of that, and also having the Universal Hip Hop Museum, I am looking forward to participating in these 50 events. So I'm telling everybody, listen, let's all get excited, let's all get ready because next year we will be celebrating hip hop's birthday. So we will be 50 places doing 50 things with over 50 people, and we hope to see 50 million. Please believe it.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Thank you so much. And next up, he goes by the name of the unforgettable name of the man they call Master Gee. Where's he? And I tried. I tried.

Master Gee: What's up, everybody? How you all doing? I am the M-A-S, the T-E-R, the G with the double E. And I am truly, truly, truly honored to be here in New York City with the mayor with all of this hip hop love, all this hip hop excitement. When I was in the studio cutting Rapper's Delight, there was no way on the planet Earth that I thought that I'd be sitting here in City Hall with the mayor and all of this.

And so the fact that we are 50 years, the fact that we're going to do this celebration, the fact that we are here with so many incredible individuals. This is just so profoundly, phenomenally wonderful. And I thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you to everybody that's been a part of it. All the places that we've been in the world. That's the other crazy thing. I've been... Singapore and Russia and all these different places to doing this thing, and this thing has been some kind of wonderful. So thank you so much. Thank you, mayor. And it's good to see everybody, and I appreciate you all, man. Let's make this 50 happen.

Deputy Mayor Wright: And as Master Gee said, hip hop has changed the world, but started right here in New York City. And next up we have our hip hop mayor. He didn't tell me we were wearing outfits. Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Oh man. As I moved throughout the city, people try to figure out who am I? And you go back and you look at when these brothers and sisters were starting this amazing genre of music, no one wanted it. It was denied. It was bastardized. You could not see it anywhere. And it was even criminalized. But they pushed ahead. They pushed ahead, and they were just bold enough to be true to their arts and their crafts.

And when you see here... I remember running home, rushing to see Video Music Box. Ralph and I went to high school together. And he had that vision of allowing, when other stations did not want the artists to perform, Ralph McDaniels laid the platform and turned it into a conversation. And when you look at Eric B. Eric B. When I started running for mayor, I sat down with Eric B. And Eric B, who has also helped Governor Murphy doing his run for governor.

And so what we are saying in hip hop is 50 is that hip hop has grown up in a manner that they're not going to be exploited. Many of these legends, as we embrace some of the new artists that are coming on board, they're respecting the legends who participated in the birth of hip hop. And now we must make sure that that 50 million that we are going to raise in the product and all that we produced from the Hip Hop Museum, all of that goes to those legends who were here and who paid the way and allow this industry to move forward.

So as we talk about education in school, as we talk about the products that are going to be sold, we're looking at the economics of hip hop. And we are saying to the legends, "You have a right that you invested in something, and so now you should receive the equity that came forward from your investment." You should receive that.

And to you, and to the legends, I say this over and over again, Don't discount yourselves, don't discount yourselves. We have Sheena Wright, deputy mayor. That's a hip hop child. You have David Banks, the chancellor. That's a hip hop child. Those who are running, Hakeem Jeffries, hip hop child. Jumaane Williams, Letitia James. We listened to your beats and your words and it became our energy. I started my day with Fight the Power, Fight the Power. I sat down with KRS-One when he wrote the tune Black Cop. I could just think of all those tunes that while I was studying my exams, before I studied my exam for sergeant, lieutenant, or captain, I would listen to the hip hop sounds and that gave me the energy that I have. Let's be clear, my story is your story.

Audience: Yes, sir.

McDaniels: Yes, sir.

Mayor Adams: My story is your story. (Applause.) Dyslexic, arrested, rejected. Now I'm elected.

(Applause.)

And so hidden in this moment, this celebratory moment, celebrate the fact that you made me mayor. With your lyrics poured into me gave me the inspiration. You told the story. You made me unafraid to tell my story because you were unafraid to tell our story.

Audience: Mhm.

Mayor Adams: And because you were unafraid, I was unafraid as I went throughout this city, said, "This is who I am." And you know what happened? People took me for who I am. So we have a message out there to those young people on Rikers Island right now. You can say your mayor was arrested so you can move forward. Those young people who are in homeless shelters, you could say your mayor lived on the verge of homeless. Those who are struggling in school, that are learning disability, your mayor has a learning disability. Those who said that you would be rejected, your mayor was rejected. So this is our moment. This is our moment.

(Applause.)

And nothing is going to get in our way in accomplishing this. So happy birthday to hip hop. Hip hop turning 50. We're going to have a celebratory party like we'd never witnessed before. The birth of hip hop is here in New York City and we are going to celebrate that birth throughout this entire city and go into venues, venues that historically denied your right to be there. And so from Maino to all of you who are here today, I want to say thank you. All I know is we started from the bottom. Now we're here. Thank you.

Any questions for the artists that are?

Audience: Slick Rick.

Mayor Adams: Oh, come on Slick Rick. Come on up here. Come on.

Slick Rick: Hi. I ain't going to say too much. What up, what up, mayor? What up, kid? Good? That's how we talk, that's the lingo. That's the billion dollar talk. You know what I mean, kid? Spreading all across the planet, like the way we talk. You know what I'm saying, kid? And yeah, love, love, love politicians, love family, love everybody. Melting pot. It's us, America. We the melting pot. You don't go fix all that all across the place. Fix that spirit that's trying to, all that. And then raise those kids like parenthood.

Audience: Absolutely.

Slick Rick: Yeah. So it's called dismantle and then parenthood, get kids, the white kids type, you know?

Audience: That's right.

Slick Rick: All right. That's it for me. Love.

Grandmaster Flash: Mayor Adams... It's been 49 years for me. I could remember times when it was absolutely nothing. No computers, no social media, no technology, just double copies of vinyl. This being said, words and music. I flip it and I say music and words because you cannot rhyme on nothing. I came up with a system called The Quick Mix Theory. It enabled me to extract a particular area of a song and repeat it and make a bed of music for human beings to speak on. This particular bed of music was in service of the rapper and the break dancer. I did this 49 years ago. Today they called it rap.

I've been called a legend a lot of times. Legends die young. A lot of times legends don't get a chance to see what they've done in full fruition. And I'm talking to all the hip hoppers there and all the hip hoppers around the world, I want to say thank you. Because when I did this, this thing could have been a hell no. Thank God the beat was in service and a rapper told their stories and the break dancers did their dance. It's a blessing to be here to see this. I want to say to Kool Herc, thank you for that first party. This other name I might not be allowed to say, but I must say to Afrika Bambaataa.

Audience: That's right. That's right.

Grandmaster Flash: What would hip hop be without the beat box, the turntables, the microphone and the parks? We did this for absolutely nothing.

Chuck Chillout: Word up. Word up.

Grandmaster Flash: And now it is unarguably the biggest music on planet Earth, and I want to say thank God we here.

Deputy Mayor Wright: Thank you all so much. And yeah, we're going to do a group photo. And we have many of our commissioners here from Parks, Education, NYCHA who will all be involved in the celebration as well. So we're going to do a picture.

###