

SENATE RESOLUTION 97

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Stax Music Academy upon its twentieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is our pleasure to recognize those institutions that educate and inspire the youth of Tennessee through music; and

WHEREAS, Stax Music Academy is one such institution, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, Stax Music Academy is a registered 501(c)(3) organization that helps instill soul in the next generation of Memphis artists through its after-school program and summer music institute; and

WHEREAS, students who attend Stax Music Academy take classes in music theory and are required to participate in moderated juries at the end of each semester that test their performance acumen and their western theoretical grasp of music; students not only learn the art of storytelling and composition to create their own music but also music business, thereby assuring that each young artist understands how to make a living in the music industry; and

WHEREAS, programming at Stax Music Academy began on June 1, 2000, with 125 children enrolled in the inaugural six-week SNAP! Summer Music Camp, with instructors who included Stax legends Rufus and Carla Thomas; graduation was held at LeMoyne-Owen College, and the Music Camp Grand Finale was held at the University of Memphis with Watoto De Afrika; and

WHEREAS, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on July 24, 2002, to celebrate the academy's newly constructed building near the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, formerly the legendary 1960s and 1970s soul record label Stax Records; and

WHEREAS, since 2006, Stax Music Academy students have performed at the annual Summer Soul Tour Presented by FedEx; international performances include the opening festivities at the Porretta Soul Festival in Porretta Terme, Italy; a concert and cultural tour of Australia, with stops in Melbourne, Canberra, and Sydney; the Memphis Exhibition Berlin in Berlin, Germany; and a tour through the United Kingdom and France performing all Stax music that included stops in Cahors and Bordeaux, France, and Hitchin, Manchester, London, Milton Keynes, and Gateshead/Newcastle, England; and

WHEREAS, closer to home, Stax Music Academy students have performed at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; the Kennedy Center; Disney World; the 19th Annual Trumpet Awards in Atlanta, Georgia; the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, during the festival's first-ever salute to R&B music; the Lincoln Center; Berklee College of Music; and the grand opening festival of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, among others; and

WHEREAS, Stax Music Academy students have had the privilege of performing with a number of Stax legends, including Mavis Staples and William Bell, and had the opportunity to open for B.B. King at his annual King Homecoming Festival in Indianola, Mississippi, in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Stax Music Academy students have performed live on the BBC and been featured in a number of major European and American press outlets, including features on NBC's *Today* and print and video in *USA Today*; and

WHEREAS, in the last two decades, Stax Music Academy has graduated more than 4,000 students, and since 2008, all high school seniors have been accepted to a college or university, many on a full scholarship; academy alumni can be heard around the world as they teach, perform, and record at the highest levels of the music industry; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the academy formed its first alumni band, which provides members with paid summer employment and further opportunity to hone their musical performance skills as they perform at the Stax Museum of American Soul Music and B.B. King's Blues Club on

Beale Street; the band is formed annually and is one of the most sought-after musical acts in the city; and

WHEREAS, the Soulsville Foundation elected its first Stax Music Academy graduate, Kirby Dockery, to its board of directors in 2018; a prolific songwriter, Ms. Dockery has established the Stax Music Academy Songbird scholarship for students who create new, original music; and

WHEREAS, in August 2019, Justin Timberlake visited the academy for a two-day songwriting workshop, and at its conclusion, students performed a concert for him and his team of collaborators, including songwriter/producer Timbaland. On October 15 of that year, Mr. Timberlake and Levi's® announced the creation of "The Song Lab," a remodeled facility for songwriting workshops, and a new songwriting class; and

WHEREAS, Justin Timberlake has also established a \$100,000 scholarship fund to allow more youth in Memphis to take their talent to the next level; and

WHEREAS, for twenty years, Stax Music Academy has helped students enhance their character by teaching skills in leadership, teamwork, and discipline, and it is fitting that it be recognized at this time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and commend Stax Music Academy upon its twentieth anniversary, applaud its two decades of music education for the children of Tennessee, and extend our best wishes for every continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.