Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a great singer and humanitarian, John Mastrangelo, known to his fans, friends, and fellow musicians as Johnny Maestro. Johnny would have been 73 years old this week, and his influence on popular music and on the New York neighborhoods he loved so dearly is still being felt.

John Mastrangelo joined four teenage singers from Manhattan’s Lower East Side to form The CRESTs. Their vocal harmony was innovative, combining elements of jazz, R&B, and early rock ’n’ roll to become true pioneers of rock and roll music. They were one of the first integrated popular vocal groups. While the rest of the country was still struggling with the legacy of Jim Crow, The CRESTs—Johnny Maestro, who was Italian-American; three African Americans: J. T. Carter, Talmadge Gough, and Patricia Van Dross; and older sister of R&B great Luther Vandross); and Harold Torres, who was Puerto Rican—were recording groundbreaking music. With Johnny Maestro as the lead singer, The CRESTs recorded hits like “16 Candles,” “Trouble in Paradise,” “The Angels Listened In” and “Step by Step.”

Following his time with The CRESTs, Johnny Maestro had a short solo career, and then joined another popular New York group, the Del-Satins, as lead singer. In 1968, they merged with a Long Island group, The Rhythm Method, to form The Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge recorded a series of hits, including “Welcome Me Love,” “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” and “Your Husband, My Wife.” They had their biggest hit with Jimmy Webb’s “The Worst That Could Happen.” Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge continued to perform for forty-two years. Johnny Maestro’s exceptional tenor voice won accolades from fans and fellow musicians alike. His distinctive voice remained vibrant and strong throughout his fifty-three-year career.

Johnny Maestro was more than a great musician; he was also a great humanitarian. Johnny and the Brooklyn Bridge gave generously of their time, performing benefit concerts for numerous good causes. He performed at many fundraising events on Staten Island such as the Borough President’s “Back to the Beach” concert. He also performed for the New York City Fire Department and Police Department, the United States Military, Italian American Association, as well as church and school fundraisers. He performed on the Jerry Lewis Telethon and as part of “We Are the World,” which raised funds for worldwide hunger relief.

Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2005, the Long Island Hall of Fame in 2006, and the South Carolina Rhythm and Blues Hall of Fame, just to name a few of their many honors.

On March 26, 2011, the City of New York honored him by renaming the intersection of Mason Avenue and Midland Avenue on Staten Island as “Johnny Maestro Way.”

Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge were unwavering supporters of our police, fire, military, and Italian-American benevolent associations. The concertgoers of the time will remember the benefit concerts Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge participated in to aid 9/11 responders and their families. In 2007, Johnny Maestro sang at a concert digitally filmed and sent to bases of our Armed Forces overseas. Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge ended their concerts by singing “You’ll Never Walk Alone” and dedicated the song to the men and women in uniform. Today, the surviving members of The Brooklyn Bridge continue to honor Johnny’s legacy by performing the songs he sang with The CRESTs and The Brooklyn Bridge, and supporting the humanitarian causes he held so dear.

Sadly, that great voice was stilled when Johnny Maestro died at the age of 70, following a valiant struggle with cancer. He continued to perform up until two months before his death.

Mr. Speaker, Johnny Maestro was the consummate New Yorker. He was talented, and he gave of his gifts and his success for the betterment of his City and those most in need. His life and his art are an example of what is best in our City, in our Nation. I urge all members of the House to join me in remembering and honoring Johnny’s Maestro’s life and work, and to remember a man whose musical accomplishments and humanitarian deeds have touched the lives of so many people.

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