

Pioneering Black filmmaker Melvin Van Peebles dies at 89

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New York, September 28 (RHC)-- Filmmaker Melvin Van Peebles -- praised as the godfather of modern Black cinema -- has died in New York City at the age of 89.

Van Peebles is best known for his iconic 1971 film "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song," which is credited with launching the blaxploitation movie genre. Van Peebles was also an actor, novelist, playwright and composer.

He followed this up with the musical, "Don't Play Us Cheap," based on his own stage play, and continued to make films, write novels and stage plays in English and in French through the next several decades. His final films include the French-language film *Le Conte du ventre plein* (2000) and the absurdist film *Confessionsofa Ex-Doofus-ItchyFooted Mutha* (2008). His son, filmmaker and actor Mario Van Peebles, appeared in several of his works and portrayed him in the 2003 biographical film *Baadasssss!*.

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