

A New Style Takes Office

No Rudy flair at Bloomberg party

By Robert Polner

STAFF WRITER

Michael Bloomberg launched his mayoralty with a soapbox under his black tasseled loafers, a TelePrompTer in front of his gaze and a civil tongue.

In style and tone, he cast himself yesterday against type: not as the brash founder of a financial-news company who has five homes, a helicopter and \$70 million he could spare for his campaign, but rather as a pennywise public manager determined to lead other New Yorkers by example.

"The facts are clear," Bloomberg said, looking out over 5,000 people in front of City Hall, a red scarf peeking out from his overcoat. "We will not be able to afford all that we want. We will not even be able to afford everything we currently have."

In the same sobering spirit, perhaps, and in keeping a campaign promise, Bloomberg rode the No. 6 subway to the City Hall ceremony from his landmarked brownstone on the East Side. He favored the guests with gift bags containing a package of tissues, a coffee mug, and a cellophane-wrapped glazed doughnut.

The pickings at the mayor's inaugural parties, which he funded with his own money, were almost as slim. As a successful businessman, Bloomberg once was known for throwing lavish parties for his employees. But the gathering he sponsored at the Tweed Courthouse near City Hall featured peanut butter and jelly half-sandwiches.



Newsday Photo / Daniel Goodrich

Bette Midler sings "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Mayor Michael Bloomberg's inauguration on the steps of City Hall yesterday.



Photo by Robert Mecca

Wynton Marsalis performs "America the Beautiful" for the city's 108th mayor.

What was less calculated than the modest trappings was the inaugural ceremony's tameness — a much different style than the pep rally adrenaline that characterized Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's outdoor addresses.

Instead of having "New York, New York" blaring through loud speakers, or hundreds of balloons sailing skyward, there was the noted trumpeter Wynton Marsalis playing a jazzy, solo version of "America the Beautiful."

Bette Midler sang a plaintive rendition of the national anthem.

Only the jumbo screens on the east and west sides of City Hall Plaza and a huge American flag hanging on the front of the building evoked Giuliani's stadium-crowd-pleasing style.

What was clear was that Bloomberg, who offered up none of the Spanish sentences with which he recently impressed Hispanic voters in TV ads and brochures, is still something of a new-

comer at the podium.

He spoke rapidly and evenly, to little or no dramatic effect, nearly fell off his footstool, which he used to elevate himself over his podium, and stumbled briefly over his words ("please honor me in joining Rudy Giuliani").

But Bloomberg's style, if mild, was not indistinct from that of his outsized predecessor. As Giuliani looked on from his seat in the front row on the dais, wedged between his "very good friend" Judith Nathan and Puerto Rico Gov. Sila Calderon, Bloomberg disavowed divisiveness as a tactic in these difficult times.

He just as pointedly reminded the White House of its \$20-billion pledge of disaster relief for New York, and hinted that the city could ill afford to build new stadiums for its baseball teams, for now.

In another Bloomberg-inspired twist, New York Met Al Leiter presided over the ceremony, representing a team that the accomplished pitcher lightly said received short shrift from the Yankees-loving Giuliani. On cue from Leiter, the teenage members of the Housing Authority Chorus, who would soon perform a foot-tapping musical interlude, donned Mets caps to the delight of the crowd.

A Risky Step

ANALYSIS from A3

you saying you're going to take down every line agency by 20 percent?

"I don't think that's going to happen. There are charter-mandated functions in the comptroller's office, for example, that can't be performed it seems to me by implementing a cut of that magnitude. But what do I know?"

But Bloomberg did manage to get the dialogue going about where to cut as he inherits multibillion-dollar projected deficits.

Right now Bloomberg may feel the ice cracking under one skate. He says he wants to give civil servants raises and that the city "cannot" raise taxes. What will give?

Bloomberg aides say the answers will be in the state-of-the-city message and the executive budget proposal later this month.

Vowing to Tackle Challenges

MAYOR from A3

Repeating a theme he struck during the campaign against Democrat Mark Green, Bloomberg declared in his speech yesterday that the city must find ways other than raising taxes to deal with a budget gap that could be as high as \$5 billion. He also said the administration will "go forward" on public safety and stimulate jobs.

"We will improve our public schools," he declared. "The public, through the mayor, must control the school system."

While concurring rhetorically with Giuliani's statements on those matters, Bloomberg departed at times. Some were on the lighter side. Al Leiter, the Mets pitcher, a

Republican who volunteered for Bloomberg's campaign, joked about shifting from Giuliani's pro-Yankee loyalties. On cue, youths from the Housing Authority chorus stationed on a veranda above the platform donned Mets hats.

Appearances by Wynton Marsalis, Bette Midler and former public advocate candidate Willie Colon, the salsa musician, spiced the frosty but sun-dappled event. Marsalis, coatless for his horn per-

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Web sites reflect changeover. **A15**

City's first black comptroller. **A16**

formance of "America the Beautiful," joked to those he passed on the dais about the cold.

Other delineations were more substantial. Bloomberg reiterated that he supports the world's best cultural and athletic facilities, but "when we can afford them," a reference to a deal Giuliani struck that the city would build new stadiums for the Yankees and Mets. And unlike Giuliani, who said the city has gotten all it requested from Washington, Bloomberg said, "Thank you, Mr. President for all you have done and all you will do to fulfill that explicit pledge" — that is to supply billions in federal aid beyond emergency services.

Staff writer Robert Polner contributed to this story.