



American and Cuban Children Build Digital Bridge Through Song

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Over the weekend, the Obama administration [quietly eased travel restrictions](#) to Cuba. In addition to boosting the amount of money that can be given, it will be easier for educational and religious organizations travel and more airports will be allowed to fly directly to the country. What is often omitted in the reporting on this important policy shift is that the easing of restrictions also applies to those participating in cultural activities.

One of the unfortunate outcomes of the U.S. embargo on Cuba is that it has frozen the artistic and cultural dialog between our two countries. However, artists have been at the forefront of overcoming this gap. In the past year, artists stepped in where the politicians refused to go and conducted several noted acts of artistic diplomacy.

One such exchange was by American composer Sage Lewis. On December 18 in Santa Monica's Broad Stage, the US and Cuba's premier children's choruses premiered an innovative new musical work entitled "Far Away / Lejos" composed by Lewis. The National Children's Chorus (USA) and Coro Diminuto (Cuba) performed together, but not in the same space. The US choir performed live with a video and audio projection of Coro Diminuto to create a holographic fantasy of physically uniting the children in song. The libretto, a longing expression for friendship, was made of interviews Lewis did with both choirs, asking the children about their countries, the meaning of friendship, their fears, and their dreams.

This multi-media musical work is funded by Center Theatre Group's 2009 Sherwood Award celebrating innovation

in the theatre. It is Project Por Amor's second collaboration using new media and the performing arts to build digital bridges of communication and friendship between two societies caught in political and economic warfare.

Coro Diminuto will perform the Cuban premiere with a video projection of the National Children's Chorus on February 13 at Havana's Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.

For more information about this international choral collaboration, visit:

<http://projectporamor.com/dates.html>

<http://nationalchildrenschorus.com>