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U.S. Chorus Tours Cuba with Songs of Peace



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Pinar del Rio, Cuba, Apr 22 (Prensa Latina) With songs to peace, the New York City Labor Chorus is touring Cuba with a show that includes Cuban favorites like "Guantanamo."

As part of its first visit to this island nation, the Chorus arrived in this western province after several performances by its more than 60 U.S. singers in Matanzas and Havana since arriving in the country on Apr. 17.

They planned to perform Friday in Las Terrazas, birthplace of the late singer-songwriter Polo Montañez, and then to return to Havana to give more concerts in auditoriums and outdoor plazas.

The chorus features members of 20 different labor unions and they sing songs from various countries that promote labor and civil rights and are against war.

"Down by the Riverside," an old standby of the peace movement, is now calling for the return of U.S. soldiers, the end of all military conflicts that kill innocent people and cause families to suffer all over the world, Barbara Bailey, president of the chorus, told Prensa Latina.

The African-American song, adapted by the New York crew, also asks for the end of the U.S. blockade against Cuba and the release of the five Cuban antiterrorists from U.S. prisons.

"We want to take that message to many people, so that they learn about efforts to end the hostile U.S. policy and bring home Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labañino, Fernando Gonzalez, René Gonzalez and Gerardo Hernandez," she said.

Their show, Fiesta of Friendship and Love, aims to present some of the melodies that back the demands of workers all over the world, she said.

"I love Cuban music," said the chorus's musical director, Jana Ballard, who plans to add more Cuban numbers to their repertoire.

mh/rab/lac/ap

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