



AFRICAMÉRICAS II
WE ARE THE ROOT OF CHANGE

SEPTEMBER 16 – 20, 2014

NINE CUBAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN PITTSBURGH

SPONSORED BY
PLATFORM FOR CUBAN INTEGRATION
CITY OF ASYLUM
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY-
PROGRAM FOR DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY
720 RECORDS

AfricAméricas II 2014: We Are the Root of Change

AfricAméricas II week, “We Are the Root of Change,” from September 16th-20th, 2014, is the result of a close collaboration and exchange between a number of organizations and institutions, among them: the Platform for Cuban Integration, Citizens’ Committee for Racial Integration and Nuevo País projects (both in Cuba) and others, and Pittsburgh institutions like Carnegie Mellon University, City of Asylum, La Roche College and 720 Records.

A group of Cubans is back in ‘Da Burgh,’ bringing us new photos, films, art and music through which to dialogue with the city’s residents. The focus is on the plight of marginalized people on the island, particularly Afro-descendants, and the effect of marginalization on children. Pittsburghers are invited to join as at numerous events, e.g., art and photo exhibits, film presentations, workshop on deliberative democracy, hip hop concert and public mural painting. They will be able to chat with Cuban civil rights and democracy activists, among them, two preeminent hip hop, artists, photographers, historians, and the leaders of several Cuban civil rights organizations on the island. The goal is to have a true exchange, for Pittsburghers to learn more about Cuba, its culture, and the daily challenges and perspective of its inhabitants, and for the Cubans to learn from the experiences of their hosts here in the city, their work and legacy regarding civil and human rights activism, the arts and technology.

The Pittsburgh-Cuba Connection

What do Cuba, civil rights and cultural activism have to do with Pittsburgh? More than one might think! Well, it might be the fact that Pittsburgh and its citizens are the model of a city and population that have successfully turned themselves around through the arts, culture and technology! Why Cuba? Actually, Cuba has held a great fascination for Pittsburghers for decades, not just for political scientists, economists, labor experts and historians, but also for artists, musicians, civil rights activists, politicians, farmers, religious groups, and even foodies. One need only review a few highlights in the Pittsburgh-Cuba relationship that has been going strong for at over 25 years:

- the preeminent journal about Cuba, *Cuban Studies*, was published at the University of Pittsburgh Press from 1986-2011;
- the *IFCO/Pastors for Peace* humanitarian group that travels the country and ships aid to Cuba every year has rolled through Pittsburgh for 25 years;
- In 1998, a group of 17 Pittsburghers visited Matanzas, Cuba, the island's third largest city, and spent a week meeting with Cuban counterparts and visiting schools, hospitals, daycare centers, etc.;
- in 1998, a group of 12 professional Cubans visited Pittsburgh to meet and shadow their disciplinary counterparts (a doctor, special education teacher, artist, architect, school administrator, hospital administrator, etc.). During this visit, they received the Keys to the City from Mayor Tom Murphy;
- Pittsburgh has been a Sister City to Matanzas, Cuba, since 1999, through the U.S. Sister Cities Project;
- Matanzas, Cuba, Pittsburgh's Sister City in Cuba, is known as the City of Bridges; it has 3 rivers with a total 17 bridges crossing them;
- Pittsburgh-based, B'nai B'rith Jewish Cuban Relief Project Stanley Cohen has been taking Jewish groups and aid to Cuba since 2005;
- The University of Pittsburgh's Pitt in Cuba study abroad program has been running since 2009;
- a number of Pittsburgh cultural organizations have brought in top Cuban musical talent, e.g., The Buena Vista Social Club (2003), Omara Portuondo (2010); Cuban-born classical guitarist Manuel Barrueco (2010); Los Muñequitos de Matanzas (2011); Afro-Cuban All-Stars (2013), Paquito D' Rivera (2014);
- the State of Pennsylvania and the Port of Philadelphia have had limited commerce with Cuba since 2004;
- the Mattress Factory Museum hosted a ground-breaking exhibit titled "Queloids," with works by 13 Cuban artists from the island, from October 15, 2010 to February 27, 2011;

- in 2013, Pittsburgh's Conflict Kitchen, a sociocultural-culinary project to explore the cuisines and cultures of countries with which the U.S. is in conflict, or vice-versa, offered Pittsburghers a menu of Cuban food and information about Cuba and its people.

These are only some of the Cuba highlights Pittsburgh has to its name so, clearly, Pittsburgh has a special place in its heart for Cuba, and island Cubans have found a home away from home in 'Da Burgh.' Here they have found a place where they can share their stories of struggle and triumph in the human and civil rights arena with extremely willing interlocutors, people who have both participated in and witnessed a social, cultural and economic renaissance—through art, music and humanistic fellowship.

Last year, in her eye-opening article about the first AfricAméricas events held last year, Post-Gazette writer Diane Nelson Jones writes: "A group of Cubans attending AfricAmericas, a six-day event being held here, told stories that most U.S. blacks would find familiar, 'but as Manuel Cuesta Morúa said...'it is not like here. In Cuba, we are all equal, but [blacks] can't be in the media. We have the same education, but we can't have that job.'" (Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2013/05/11/Six-day-event-in-Pittsburgh-targets-discrimination-in-Cuba/stories/201305110119#ixzz3BRhnjNru>)

This year's **AfricAméricas II** events include:

- a seminar on deliberative democracy
- a hip hop concert and separate roundup night
- a community mural painting
- a presentation on citizen empowerment and technology
- two photo exhibits and a documentary film showing the current situation of poor, disenfranchised people in the capital city's 'hidden' neighborhoods and how people are dealing with it, with Q&A.

All the events are designed to draw in and engage a broad cross-section of Pittsburgh community members—blacks, whites and Latinos—with black Cuban life in contemporary Havana and the current civil rights struggle there being led by Afro-Cubans.

Events will be taking place at 720 Records, La Roche College, CMU and City of Asylum.

AfricaAméricas II presents the ‘We Are the Root of Change’ Schedule of Events

Tuesday, September 16th • 7PM

720 Records, 4405 Butler St, Pittsburgh, PA 15201, (412) 904-4592.
Free and open to the public.

“We Are the Root of Change” hip-hop round up with Escuadrón Patriota, David D. Omni and local rappers

“Silencing Africa: The Negation of Abakuá Heroes in Cuba” photo exhibit & presentation

“The Other Cuba” short documentary film with discussion

Afro-Cuban art exhibit, paintings by David D. Omni, featured artist

Wednesday, September 17th • 7PM

La Roche College Zappala College Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 (412-536-1300). Free and open to the public.

“Inspiring Smiles: Brightening the Lives of Cuba’s Invisible Children” photo exhibit and presentation

“The Other Cuba” short documentary film with discussion

Thursday, September 18th • 4:30PM

Carnegie Mellon University, Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Baker Hall 250, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (412-721-9208).

Free and open to the public.

“Deliberative Democracy in Pittsburgh and Cuba” workshop and conversation offered by Dr. Robert Cavalier (Program for Deliberative Democracy), Tim Dawson (Art of Democracy) and Mohammed Burney (S4DD), with special guests, nine, Cuban civil rights and democracy activists.

Thursday, September 18th • 7PM

City of Asylum, Alphabet City Tent™, 330 Sampsonia Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (412-323-0278). Free and open to the public.

“We are the Root of Change: Cuba in the Heart of Pittsburgh” hip-hop concert with preeminent, Cuban rapper *Escuadrón Patriota* (Raudel Collazo) and David D. Omni (David Escalona), both from Havana. An evening of socially conscious hip-hop in Spanish with English translations.

Saturday, September 20th • 11AM-4PM

City of Asylum, Alphabet City Tent™, 330 Sampsonia Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (412-323-0278). Free and open to the public.

“From Alamar to Alphabet City” Public mural painting with David ‘D. Omni’ Escalona, member of the Havana artists’ collective OMNI Zona Franca. Open to community participation.

720 RECORDS PRESENTS...



AFRICA SILENCING

The Negation of Abakuá Heroes in Cuba

- Photo exhibit and discussion about Cuba's Abakuá, members of an all-male, initiatory, mutual aid society.
- Short film presentation "The Other Cuba" and discussion of current situation of Afro-descendants in Havana's shantytowns with Cuban civil rights activists
- Hip-hop roundup with Cuban rappers Escuadrón Patriota and David D Omni

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH, 7PM • FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

date

9/16/14

location

720 RECORDS

time

7:00PM

4405 Butler St., Pgh, PA 15201

Deliberative Democracy in Pittsburgh and Cuba



A Workshop and Conversation

Join us for an informative workshop and conversation with Professor Robert Cavalier (Program for Deliberative Democracy), Tim Dawson (Art of Democracy) and Mohammed Burney (Students for Deliberative Democracy).

Also hear about efforts in Deliberative Democracy in Cuba from visiting Cuban civil rights and democracy activists Manuel Cuesta Morúa (Socialist Democratic Current, Cuba), Leonardo Calvo Cárdenas (Progressive Arc Party, Cuba), Veizant Bolo González (CubaLex Legal Aid Society, Cuba), Eleanor Calvo Martínez (Citizens' Observatory Against Discrimination, Cuba), Juan Antonio Madrazo (Citizens' Committee for Racial Integration, Cuba), Rafel Campoamor (*EmpoderaCuba* Technology NGO) and Juan Antonio Alvarado (Platform for Cuban Integration, U.S.A.).

Free and open to the public

**Thursday, September 18th
4:30-6:00PM
Baker Hall 150**

Light refreshments will be served

Sponsored by Students for Deliberative Democracy (S4DD), Program for Deliberative Democracy and Platform for Racial Integration (PIC)

AfricAméricas II Presents



Veizant Boloy González is an attorney with a degree from the University of Havana. He has worked at the National Association of Collective Legal Offices, as a Provincial Judicial Consultant, is an expert in Cuban Penal Law, a freelance journalist, and is currently working at the CubaLex Legal Aid and Information Center in Havana and on Human Rights in Cuba with the UN's Human Rights' Commission.



Manuel Cuesta Morúa is an anthropologist, historian and political scientist. President of the Progressive Arc Party, National Coordinator of the *Nuevo País* Platform, Secretary General of the Socialist Democratic Current, all in Cuba, and a freelance journalist. He is a regular contributor to publications around the world on the subjects of racism, discrimination and democratic reform. He was nominated for the Václav Havel Award for Human Rights last year.



Eleanor Calvo Martínez is a graduate of the University of Havana. She is a spokesperson and moderator at the national conventions of the Progressive Arc (Social Democrat) Party in Cuba and co-founder of the Citizens' Committee for Racial Integration and the Citizens' Observatory Against Racial Discrimination in Havana. Calvo Martínez is also a freelance writer.



Leonardo Calvo Cárdenas is a historian and political scientist, and a civil rights activist and freelance writer. He is Vice-President of the Progressive Arc (Social Democrat) Party, Secretary of the Socialist Democratic Current, National Vice-Coordinator of the Citizens' Committee for Racial Integration and General Director of the *Consenso* Media Group. In recent years, he has participated in international meetings on racial discrimination at the Organization of American States (OAS).



Juan Antonio Madrazo Luna has a degree in business administration from the University of Havana. He is currently the National Coordinator of the Citizens' Committee for Racial Integration, Coordinator of the *Animando Sonrisas* project (promoting education for children in marginalized neighborhoods in Havana, in collaboration with the Network of Independent Libraries in Cuba), an international human rights activist and a freelance journalist.

Nine Cuban Civil Rights Activists in Pittsburgh

Raudel “Escuadrón Patriota” Collazo has a degree in psychology. While in his 20s, he embraced hip-hop music in Cuba after a ‘spiritual’ awakening that convinced him that Rasta philosophy *and* rap music were the path he should take to communicate his thoughts and philosophical ideas. He is now Cuba’s preeminent rapper. His lyrics and performances are often censored in Cuba due to their overt social content, as it talks about racism, freedom and self-empowerment.



David “D. Omni” Escalona is a multidisciplinary painter, musician, poet/writer and rapper/performance artist member of OMNI Zona Franca (an artists’ collective in Havana). He has exhibited work and/or performed at galleries and venues in cities such as Havana, Miami, Atlanta, Philadelphia, NY, Washington, DC, New Orleans and Warsaw. Escalona co-founded the *Poesía Sin Fin* Festival in Cuba. Escalona firmly believes that he is planting seeds for Cuba’s future through his music and art.



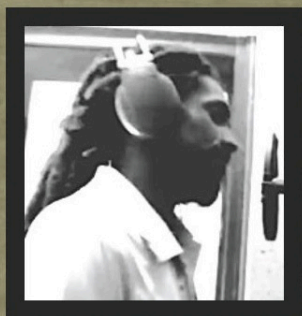
Rafel Campoamor studied engineering in Cuba, economics in the USSR and information technology in France. He has spent over 20 years managing IT project for companies around the world, and has traveled extensively through the developing world promoting technology as a tool for citizen empowerment. In Cuba, he organizes a technology meeting called *Festival CLIC*. Presently, he is President of the *EmpoderaCuba* technology NGO, Vice President of the Platform for Cuban Integration, webmaster for the organization’s Internet site, www.cubaintegra.org, and designs its journal, *IDENTIDADES*.



Juan Antonio Alvarado has a doctorate in anthropology and history from the University of Havana. He is President of the *Plataforma de Integración Cuba* (PIC), in the US, Editor-in-Chief of the journal *IDENTIDADES* and the US representative of the Cuban Citizens’ Committee for Racial Integration (CIR) in Cuba. He was the author of the *Ethnographic Atlas in Cuba*, at the Center for Anthropology at the University of Havana, and has published extensively on race relations on the island, the history and ethnography of slavery in Cuba, interracial relationships, and racism and discrimination in Cuba.



WE ARE THE ROOT OF CHANGE



ESCUADRÓN PATRIOTA

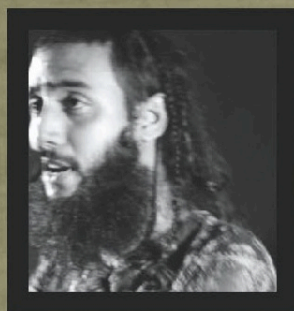
UNDERGROUND

HIP-HOP

STRAIGHT

FROM

HAVANA, CUBA



DAVID D OMNI

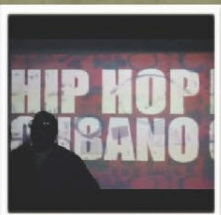
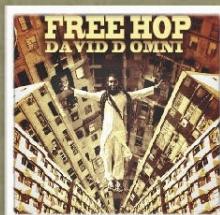
HIP-HOP CONCERT BY CUBAN HIP HOP PIONEER RAUDEL (ESCUADRÓN PATRIOTA) COLLAZO AND DAVID D. OMNI (FROM OMNI ZONA FRANCA). HOSTED AND SPONSORED BY CITY OF ASYLUM (PITTSBURGH) AND THE PLATFORM FOR CUBAN INTEGRATION (HIALEAH).

TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETING WILL BE PROVIDED. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

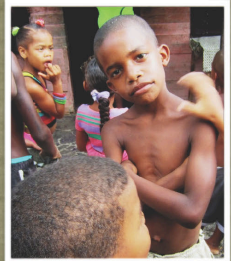
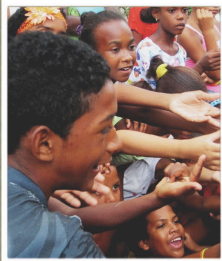
DATE: SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2014

LOCATION: ALPHABET CITY™ TENT @ CITY OF ASYLUM

TIME: 7:00PM



CITY OF ASYLUM, 330 SAMPSONIA WAY, PITTSBURGH, PA 15212 (412) 323-0278



INSPIRING SMILES

Brightening the Lives of Cuba's Invisible Children

A unique opportunity to meet Cuban civil rights activists, see a photo exhibit and short film presentation, and hear about the current situation in Havana's shantytowns and its impact on children. Q&A and light refreshments to follow.

DATE & TIME: WED. SEPT. 17TH @ 7PM

LOCATION: ZAPPALA COLLEGE CENTER

WE ARE THE ROOT OF CHANGE - ESCUADRÓN PATRIOTA

It's been about 10 months since I debuted the song "Decadence" for Cuba and the world. In it, I made clear my position on the reality of my island. Ten months later, I've had to take up my pencil once more to reaffirm my position/considering that we love our island and want the best for everyone/And ensure a life of tolerance, equilibrium and harmony/with all the nation and Diaspora's families. But also with progress, opportunity and great spiritual growth/because there are many dreams/much will and much faith.

Escuadrón manifests: I am an Afro-descendant/And Cuba is my nation/This is my declaration

We are a danger to no one/Pay attention/We don't want violence, nor a confrontation

They insist that our message is counterrevolutionary/NO, this is what's called reality and commitment to the nation.

Love conquers fear/words are protection/We are giving people back their voice/Not resignation

Revolution is change/It's progress/And it's transformation

(Chorus): YES!

It's not about chilling the hopes of millions for no reason

Conspiracy against Escuadrón/Why? Because of my vision.

**The one who speaks to you knows the nation's worst face/No bourgeoisie/
No family in the States/No good position/I live in the heart where people suffer and swallow their pain.**

I don't sing to politics. (Chorus): Wrong!

I have a critical conscience and that's my projection/And of course I worry/I live at the center of the cyclone.

**The country's debacle is clear without much study/Inequality/Shortages/
Little food/Crowding/Isolation/Depression/Disoriented generation/
Banality/ Separation/Racism/Destruction and a list with no definition.**

But they keep seeing us as a provocation

And what justifies that millions support us in the country?

We are blood that spills from an open wound. Redemption!/The flag of the urban soldiers.

C'mon! Action!

Look at the mountain, see the light/Something is being revealed

(Chorus: Cuba!!! We are the root of change!!!

Too much time thinking without acting/What are waiting for?

(Chorus): Todos!!! [Everyone] Todos!!!/We are the root of change!

They can't stop us/The truth is with the people/They know it/We are the root of change.

(Chorus): Pa' los niños y los ancianos [for the children and the old ones]/Pa' los negros y pa' los blancos [for blacks and for whites].Cuba!!!!

We are the root of change

I'm not lying when I say they lost control

Rap concerts invaded by security agents in action

Give the impression it is what it is not/A tense atmosphere/And each presentation talks about more respect and reconciliation.

I know it takes a lot of work to wake up/No one evolves the same way/I was a fatal victim/If the information was only partial, the ignorance is total/Isolation is lethal/I can actually prove it.

I'm incapable of promoting hate/Or of manipulating anyone/Nor of giving totally false testimony

I have a family/friends and God is my domain/And I'm betting on a change for prosperity.

Restrained/Because what most people think/I know! What most people hide/I know! What most Cubans think/I know!/But with fear of what might happen, they say nothing.

From every corner of my home they tell everyone that Escuadrón is a threat/See those who are blind the image that they most like.

In silence and with tears, thousands support me

Perhaps the truth is relative, but we don't believe ourselves.

We are reality/The dawn of a new day being born between music and rhythm/This is a tired nation that is now awakening.

After this declaration I raise my eyes to the sky/God, I am calm/And in silence I ask God/That every tear spilled in tribulation bring us miracles of joy and give us back our faith and love.

Brothers, look at the mountain. See the light?

That something's being revealed/We are the root of change

Too much thinking without acting/What are we waiting for?

(Chorus): We are the root of change/They can't stop us/The truth is in the people/They know it/We are the root of change.

Pa' los niños y los ancianos [for the children and the old ones]/Pa' los negros y pa' los blancos [for blacks and for whites]/We are the root of change/Each child in each neighborhood/En each town/With a fist raised high. We are the root of change

Too much time thinking and not enough time acting/What are we waiting for?

(Chorus): We are the root of change

They can't stop us/The truth is with the people/They know it

(Chorus): We are the root of change

And from my ascendance: Ethiopia/To my line of descent: Cuba
Love/Peace and Faith

All of Latin America/All peoples/All neighborhoods/All of us who sacrifice ourselves, and work for this/We are the soul of the nation

And no one can change that

WE ARE THE ROOT OF CHANGE

WARRIORS FOR PEACE - DAVID D OMNI

Listen up, my people/don't take sides/get the heck out of those divided groups/we are united like it or not/that's how God wanted it, he made us with love/ok, my people/enough with the bitterness/the false fears/false pain/I am here, my people, praying to God to wash away all the pain that Man himself has brought upon himself/my heart has broken in half because there are people who no longer want to change/who latch onto power/to meanness/I want light for you/I want peace for you.

Are we down or are we not?

Where are my warriors for peace?

I know I'm not alone/come on over/we are now going to win.

All the talk about oppressor and tyrants/that's ok for hiding/for washing one's hands well/brothers, let's get to the point/let's you and I be against our own insolence/We are light in the shadow/but we sometimes forget and we darken our work staring at the darkness in the shadow of another brother.

I've been struggling for a long time to bring peace to people who hate each other/I've said the same thing backwards and forwards/I've gone around the world/I've never stopped seeking/wherever, there is a prison/wherever, there is freedom/one feels sadness out there/one feels truth out there/only in my heart was I able to find peace/it was my light amidst all that darkness.

Are we don't or are we not?

Where are my warriors for peace?

I know I'm not alone/come one over/we are now going to win.

ALAMAR - DAVID D OMNI

Marginal zones/holes in the streets/rebars and glass/that's where I'm from/I had chances and saw the money flow/but I decided to stay to raise my voice/my fraternal brothers/immortal friends/very lethal sisters/you are my inspiration/Alamar forged me/Alamar made me/Alamar, I owe you who I am. Free in your streets I becae better/this guy loves you, dear hood/I have no country/I have no nation/I have you in my heart/cradle of what's beautiful/cradle of what's new/few love you like I do/one song is not enough to sing your praises/this is your second song.

First rock festival

First rap festival

First love festival

First peace festival

They've wanted to close you off/they've wanted to take you apart/censoring your culture/wanting to kill your art.

You

Only you

You and no one else.

**FROM ALAMAR TO ALPHABET CITY:
CUBA IN THE HEART OF PITTSBURGH**

**THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER**

**18
7:00PM**

**@
ALPHABET
CITY™
TENT**

COMMUNITY

MURAL

PAINTING

WITH

CUBAN

ARTIST

DAVID

D

OMNI

CITY OF ASYLUM 300, SAMPSONIA WAY, PGH, PA 15212 (412-323-0278)