

Press release

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More than thirty years ago American piano tuner Ben Treuhaft founded Send A Piano To Havana, after seeing that Cuba's pre-Castro or Russian pianos were deteriorating, despite the country's extraordinary musical tradition. The lack of trained technicians, tools and parts threatened the future of these instruments.

A side-effect of the US embargo is a blockade on pianos to that musical island. Pro-music or anti-embargo Americans with spare pianos in the basement, or spare cash for shipping, contributed 237 pianos to Send A Piano To Havana, which were landed in Cuba and distributed to schools throughout the Island.

Ben assembled seven International Tuners' Brigades, bringing volunteer piano lovers from the United States, Europe, and beyond, to work alongside Cuban tuners and students in Havana. Together they restored and maintained the pianos, while training a new generation of Cuban piano tuners and repair specialists. Their workshop/school was stocked with tools, machinery and supplies, and was accredited by the National Centre for Art Schools.. When Cuba ended the project in 2006 for reasons unknown, the island was again left without the technical infrastructure needed to maintain its instruments.

Two short films, Sarah Harbin's [Sonata for the Left Hand](#) and Channel 4's award-winning [Tuning With the Enemy](#) document the project.

Now, 20 years on, Ben, with Indian architect/piano technician Mirra Kannan, American pianist Anne Taffel, and Cuban collaborators including the National Museum of Music and the Cuban Institute of Music, are working to re-establish a permanent workshop/school for piano tuning and musical instrument repair.

During a visit to Havana in July 2026, Ben, Mirra and Anne assessed a spacious venue offered by the National Museum of Music as a home for the project. The proposed workshop/school will be more than a repair facility. It aims to become a centre for training, conservation and international collaboration, where Cuban students, piano technicians and visiting specialists can work together to preserve Cuba's musical heritage. In between meetings with the music hierarchy Ben and Mirra tuned every piano in sight.

A crucial next step is to open discussions with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Havana. As a global leader in piano manufacturing, China has valuable expertise that could support the project through technical exchanges, tools and materials,

and connections with manufacturers such as Pearl River in Guangzhou. The initiative hopes to involve piano technicians from China, North America, Europe and elsewhere in a long-term international network of knowledge-sharing.

China and Cuba are natural allies. The workshop/school, if it succeeds, should be an impetus for China to eventually build a Cuban piano factory. 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

Ben and Mirra are seeking collaborators and technical specialists interested in supporting the re-establishment of the workshop/school in Havana. They will contact the hundreds of past supporters of Send A Piana To Havana, tuners and civilians, to ask them to help restock the project with piano tools and supplies. They'll also put the word out to the huge, wealthy diaspora of Cuban Americans who may hate Fidel Castro and his beard but who love Cuban music. They are also seeking philanthropic support.