

UK Effort to Donate Piano to Cuba Runs Afoul of U.S. Blockade



San Francisco, August 23 (RHC/teleSUR)-- A project by a British non-governmental organization to send a grand piano to Cuba's music conservatory Amadeo Roldan in Havana, clashed with the United States' nearly 60-year blockade against Cuba.

Cubanos en UK, a British group that organized a fund raising classical music concert five months ago, had hoped to raise roughly US\$15,000 to buy a second-hand grand piano when the online crowdsourcing service they were using, Eventbrite, seized their funds.

"That money was confiscated by Eventbrite's bank under the embargo rules," Helen Yaffe, an author and professor at the London School of Economics, told teleSUR in an email. But the action, she said, is in violation of British and European laws.

Cubanos en UK sought legal advice from the U.S. attorney general of Iowa, Tom Miller, who has years of experience working with regulations with regards to the Cuba blockade. Miller said the transaction was legal.

But Eventbrite charges that it is in violation of OFAC regulations, and it has returned the money to the people who bought tickets.

"We refuse to (get the license) because we don't want to be complicit (in the blockade against Cuba)," said the group's director Daniesky Acosta in an email. "All we were trying to do," he said, "was help the Conservatory."

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