

The Police Invited to Play Show in Cuba by Roger Friedman

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The Police may be giving their Cuban fans a free show this Christmas.

The super rock group, which recently reunited for a sell-out world tour, has received an invitation from the Cuban government to perform there in December.

The Havana show would be the last one in North America, ending the Police's massive tour that begins on May 28 in Vancouver.

The invite stems from a recent visit to Havana over the 2006 Christmas holiday by Sting and Trudie Styler where they met with many local musicians and poets.

"They were overwhelmed by the Cuban culture and the arts and the musicality," a source said. "The people were very generous to them with their time."

The couple evidently started out the vacation at one of Havana's large tourist hotels, but quickly moved to more intimate accommodations. Immediately, musicians started showing up every night, sources said, wanting to meet and jam with Sting.

Sting is not the only member of the Police who has been to Cuba and wants to go back. Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers each went there for a Music Bridges concert in February 1999 where they performed with an eclectic group including Bonnie Raitt, Peter Frampton, Gladys Knight, Lisa Loeb, the Indigo Girls, Joan Osborne, J.D. Souther and Burt Bacharach.

The Police's desire to play Cuba as an artistic message shouldn't come as too much of a surprise, since the group is very connected to the world music scene.

During their heyday in the 1980s, the group played many Third World countries. Sting, of course, is also the main force with Styler behind the Rainforest Foundation.

The group would not be the first to play Cuba. Audioslave was the first American rock act there, in 2005.

Several years ago, sources say, Paul McCartney was scheduled to give his own outdoor show in Havana, but his beer sponsor wanted to cover a historic statue with a huge plastic bottle. The show was summarily cancelled.

If the Police go through with their concert, they will not have a corporate sponsor, sources told me.

Meanwhile, rest assured that reports of a new Police album are untrue. Insiders tell me, as this column has reported, there are neither plans for an album of new material nor is there a demo of a new song.

The Police are currently rehearsing for their tour in Tuscany, Italy, at Sting's tranquil estate. Songs on the tour are and have always been just from the Police. No new songs and no songs from Sting's solo albums will be included.

"And the Police are and always will be signed to A&M/Interscope," a source added.