



Organization of  
American States



**for immediate release**

**contact:**

**Mariano Vales**  
**Music and Special Programs Coordinator**  
**Department of Cultural Affairs**  
**Organization of American States**  
**(202) 458-3173**  
**mvaales@oas.org**

**Benefit concert to present OAS/FEMCIDI Orchestra Program for Youths at Risk in the Caribbean (OASIS), and new partnership with the DC Youth Orchestra Program**

Friday December 11<sup>th</sup> the OAS/FEMCIDI Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk will be presented in Washington through a benefit concert featuring the Junior Philharmonic of the DC Youth Orchestra Program.

The concert will also celebrate the new sister-orchestra relationship between the Junior Philharmonic and the three newly created national youth orchestras. The relationship will lead to a student and faculty exchange between the 4 programs.

This concert will feature Beethoven's Symphony No. 1, and Merle Isaac's Gypsy overture, conducted by Mariano Vales, and Christmas music via a live feed from Saint Lucia, one of the three beneficiary countries.

The OAS/FEMCIDI program was successfully initiated in Castries, Saint Lucia on October 11<sup>th</sup>, in Kingston, Jamaica on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Program is modeled after the renowned Venezuelan Sistema, and has also partnered with the Colombian Batuta Foundation, the Youth Orchestra of the Americas, the Interamerican Cultural and Development Foundation, Yéle Haiti (created by Grammy-Award winning musician, humanitarian and Goodwill Ambassador to Haiti Wyclef Jean), and is starting a working relationship with Quebec's Jeune Musiciens du Monde.

The orchestral and choral training centers already started operations offering daily music instruction customized for youths at risk in urban communities.

Primary benefits attributed to this Program include improvements in academic achievement and in the psychological development and reducing the rate of youth violence and school dropout rates.

The DC Youth Orchestra Program students also tend to succeed outside the music world, while the graduation rate in Washington, DC is approximately 57%, it is almost 100% for DC Youth Orchestra Program participants