

Peace as Practice (reflections on the world premiere of *Dí Mi L'amore*)

by Sarah Luft

What does peace mean to you? *Dí Mi L'amore*, an artistic offering created by Petru Canon and Britt Hewitt with The Peace Studio and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLo), explores this question. And while no one work of art is meant to have all the answers, the artists and organizers offer some insights.

Dí Mi L'amore reminds me that peace is a practice. The Corsican song title translates roughly to “*Tell Me Love*” or “*Say You Love Me*”—and both begin with a verb. I’m reminded of the kind of radical love critical for peace. It’s an action to take and a commitment to reaffirm, again and again.

Corsican singer, songwriter, and poet Petru Canon wrote lyrics largely about his grandfather’s horrific experiences as a prisoner of war. And yet, like any good poetry, it’s clear the song is about all of us too.

As I listen to Petru and New York-based singer/songwriter Britt Hewitt, I find myself asking: Is this not what we spend whole lives searching for? A world that shouts belonging from the rooftops. Systems and structures that validate our humanity in full. Workplaces that honor our dignity and complexity. Families (chosen and biological) that wrap us in care. How often are we really asking “*Say You Love Me*” to a world that often looks the other way?

The moving auditory experience is paired with a moving visual one: sand art by Colette Dedyne. Her hands sweep across the screen—shaping and reshaping landscapes and lives. It’s a reminder that peace is not a given, but something that must be nurtured into existence actively and intentionally. As Coretta Scott King said, “Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win in it in every generation.” If justice, love, and freedom are requisites for peace, then peace too must be worked towards.

Sonya Reines-Djivanian, the Executive Director of EPLo who helped organize the making of *Dí Mi L'amore*, reminds us that this work is effortful. It requires an investment in time, resources, and peacebuilding approaches that address root causes with long-term solutions, from mutual care networks to policy decisions.

In a world fraught with enough injustice to despair, both art and peacebuilding remain radical acts: daring acts of hope. One such act is naming our children. A beautiful stanza that Britt and Petru sing reads: “We are a voice as strong as storms / We are the love to keep us warm / We name our children when they’re born / We are the peace on every shore”. I think of the ways in which naming shapes our world. Language can harm or hold, assume or question, destroy or build.

Perhaps, that’s why art and peacebuilding are not all that distinct. Philip Stoddard, the project manager of the *100 Offerings of Peace* campaign, says, “Artists are professional imagination offerers. They offer up an imagination and a way to be that has not yet been seen.” This work is not new, but it is ever-critical. Sonya says, “If our governments viewed peacebuilding choices as viable, as strong, as efficient... then we would have better ways to solve problems.”

I hope this offering inspires just that. I hope we continue the work of imagining and building a world for *all* people—a world that when asked “*Say You Love Me*” gives a resounding yes.

About the Author



Sarah is a writer, digital storyteller, and lifelong learner. She currently tells stories of transformation and belonging at the nonprofit [SeriousFun Children's Network](#), where she engages with a global digital audience. She has written for [Born This Way Foundation's Channel Kindness initiative](#) and held a [Newman's Own Foundation Fellowship](#). Sarah can commonly be found experimenting in the kitchen or outside with a book.

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