

MU symphony honors slain journalist as part of World Music Days

Joe Janowczyk

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The Miami University Symphony Orchestra (MUSO) had its first concert of the season Wednesday night in Hall Auditorium and incorporated a new twist into its musical lineup.

In admiration of Daniel Pearl, an American journalist and fellow violinist, MUSO participated in the 8th Annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days celebration taking place in October.

MUSO's performance was one of the 1,230 musical events being held around the world this year in 85 countries in honor of Pearl.

After his tragic death in 2002 while working as a Wall Street Journal reporter in Pakistan, Pearl's family and friends looked ahead to celebrate and share his work and life accomplishments by creating the concert series, Daniel Pearl World Music Days: Harmony for Humanity. Pearl was an accomplished journalist but had a devoted love for music.

Miami's Director of Orchestral Studies Ricardo Averbach was instrumental in having this kickoff to the Bicentennial season be a part of the Music Days annual celebration. Averbach felt it was very important to bring this to Miami.

"We are a university, we can't close ourselves just to Oxford, we need to open doors to our world," Averbach said. "This means we care about what is happening in the world, by playing music and putting it in context of these days, we make it more meaningful to the students and community."

Christina Wilson, executive assistant for World Music Days, said a good friend of Daniel Pearl suggested the concert series. George Pehlivanian, who is a conductor in Europe, decided to create and dedicate a scheduled concert to Pearl soon after learning of his death.

"The programs aim to capture what he did in his life," Wilson said. "We want to use his favorite bridge builder of



Members of the Miami University **Symphony** Orchestra perform Wednesday in Hall Auditorium for the first concert of the year.

creating music, to put our differences aside and bring countries together, like the sporting events at the Olympics."

A statement from the Daniel Pearl Foundation further explains its purpose as aligning "with the causes that inspired Danny's life and work - promoting unity, tolerance and cross-cultural understanding in innovative ways while addressing the root causes of the hatred that took his life."

This goes hand-in-hand with the musical works Averbach chose for his orchestra to perform Wednesday night and his reason for doing so.

The orchestra united the works of the First Symphony by Brahms with music from 2009 Oscar winning composer from India, A.R. Rahman.

"I felt it was appropriate, because Pearl was Jewish, and we're playing the music of a Muslim composer," Averbach said. "Rahman is very religious and is concerned with playing music to create peace among people and countries. When I listen to his music it sounds cross-cultural. I thought it was exactly what they were looking for in terms of the foundation."

President Barack Obama released a statement welcoming World Music Day Participants.

"Through artistic creativity and expression, music can build bridges between individuals and communities thousands of miles apart ... this month-long event to celebrate music and honor the legacy of Daniel Pearl is a fitting tribute to a man who promoted respect and dialogue throughout the world," the statement read.

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