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Annual Concert Honors Life of Pearl

Thursday, October 25, 2007 | By [Gerry Shih](#)

The St. Lawrence String Quartet performed in Memorial Church last night for the Daniel Pearl memorial concert. The show featured works from Bach to performances by Stanford Taiko and even a “sonic meditation” of random pitches led by Music Prof. Mark Applebaum.

Judging by the audience that gathered last night at Memorial Church, the legacy of Daniel Pearl ‘85 is far from forgotten at Stanford.

Several hundred community members filled one of the University’s most impressive venues last night as the “Harmony for Humanity” concert showcased a broad range of music for over an hour. The event was part of a network of some 300 concerts held across the world this October in memory of Pearl — the slain journalist who was kidnapped and murdered in Pakistan in 2002 — whose life was highlighted by his inspiring, globetrotting reportage and a love of music.

“This affirmation of musical diversity envelops us as we recognize the humanity in the unfamiliar, the harmony of the human heart,” said Dean of the Office of Religious Life Patricia Karlin-Neumann in her opening remarks. “In memory of Daniel Pearl’s welcome across borders, his curiosity about the unknown, we are here tonight to reaffirm our own desire to reach out to those we may have feared and to listen for the strains of friendship and hope.”

The performances last night spanned across musical genres, physical borders and historical periods. Traditional Korean and Japanese drumming pieces by Hwimori and Stanford Taiko, respectively, bookended a concert that juxtaposed legends Bach and Beethoven with some contemporary stars of Stanford’s music department.

Sam Adams ‘08 debuted his composition “111,” performed by the Stanford New Ensemble. Music Prof. Mark Applebaum also received enthusiastic applause for his string quartet “20.”

A peculiar moment came toward the end of the concert when Applebaum led a “sonic meditation,” urging the audience to collectively sing at random pitches in a slow crescendo as he walked up the stage stairs. The expansive hall first fell into a deep silence before the several hundred audience members shrugged off their shyness and an eerie hum of barely recognizable human voices increased under Applebaum’s direction.

The voices diminished as Applebaum slowly walked back down the stairs, and at least a few contented smiles had lighted the faces of the audience as Stanford Taiko took the stage for a pulsating finale.