

Speech delivered by Rabbi Harley Karz-Wagman (Temple of Israel, Wilmington, NC)
24 October 2010 - Peace through Music Concert
St. Mary Catholic Church, Wilmington, NC, USA

Harmony for Humanity – Back Stories

(Source: *Daniel Pearl World Music Days*) Daniel Pearl was a newspaper reporter, for the Wall Street Journal, and a violin player. He traveled the world and used music to make friends in many countries. In 2002, he was murdered by terrorists, while investigating a story in Pakistan. His family decided to carry on Danny's work and use music to help people learn to respect each other and honor diversity.

October 10 was Danny's birthday, and this performance is part of Daniel Pearl World Music Days. This month, all over the world, musicians of all kinds are dedicating concerts to our shared belief that even though we may have different races, religions or ethnic backgrounds, we can all work together to achieve a better, hate free world for everyone.

(Source: *Daniel Pearl Foundation*) In 2002, Danny's family and friends formed the Daniel Pearl Foundation. Its mission calls us to address the root causes of Danny's tragic murder. We strive to respond by Danny's core principles – uncompromised objectivity and integrity, insightful and unconventional perspective; tolerance and respect for people of all cultures; unshaken belief in the effectiveness of education and communications; and the love of music, humor and friendship. The Foundation funds: prizes; internships; fellowships; youth journalism programs; lectures; and interfaith dialogues, as well as world music day, which we now celebrate.

Since 2002, World Music Days has held 4,900 concerts in 102 countries. In 2009 alone, 1,720 concerts were held in 82 countries. They included: Sir Elton John in many European countries (Russia, Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands), Itzhak Perlman in South Carolina, and Herbie Hancock in Washington, DC. Last year, World Music Days once again saw a dramatic increase in faith group participation. This year, we add Wilmington to that trend. Concerts were also held in 23 U.S. Embassies around the world – with Miley Cyrus, Dave Matthews, Willie Nelson, and many more.

This May, President Obama signed the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act. Our President told us: "This act sends a strong message from the United States (government and from the State Department) that we are paying attention to how other governments are operating when it comes to the press. (Our) State Department each year chronicles press freedom, as one component of our human rights assessment. (We) look at countries (whose) governments condone or facilitate press repression. (We) single them out and subject them to the gaze of world opinion in ways that (have) extraordinary (impact0."

A bit of biography about Daniel Pearl may help us understand what we can take home from today's concert.

(Source: *Wikipedia*) Pearl was executed at the age of 38. He had worked for the Wall Street Journal from 12 years, before his death in 2002. He was kidnapped and beheaded by Al Qaeda in Pakistan, while investigating ties between them and the "shoe bomber." In 2007, Khalid Sheik Mohammed claimed he personally cut off Pearl's head. Pearl's father, Judea, teaches Computer Science at UCLA. His wife Marianne, gave birth to their son, Adam, just three months after Pearl was murdered. A 3 minute video was released, showing his "confession" and beheading. Among his last words were "I am Jewish." Many books have commemorated Pearl's life and legacy, including a collection of his own writings, his wife's memoir (made into a movie with Angelina Jolie), a book, Who Killed Daniel Pearl (with a movie in the works), and a book by his parents, I am Jewish, with reflections by Elie Weisel, Kirk Douglas, Shimon Peres and many scholars, celebrities, and political leaders.

After today, please consider how we, locally, can extend this amazing legacy for freedom, understanding, and mutual respect.