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Honoring Daniel Pearl's Legacy

POSTED BY COURTNEY BEALE / OCTOBER 14, 2010



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Saturday nights in Islamabad are usually pretty sleepy. But on October 9, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad "overloaded" the auditorium at the Pakistani National Council of Arts in a concert to celebrate the legacy of Daniel Pearl.

The Pakistani band "Overload" played their mix of Sufi folk tunes set to modern rock to almost 500 local university students. It was one of hundreds of concerts held around the world in October in honor of Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* bureau chief who was brutally murdered by extremists in Karachi in 2002. In addition to being a journalist, Daniel was also a talented musician who joined musical groups in every community in which he lived, leaving behind a long trail of musician-friends spanning the entire world. After his death, his family set up the Daniel Pearl Foundation, which created World Music Days to promote dialogue and understanding, counter cultural and religious hatred, encourage responsible and balanced journalism, and promote peace through music. Commemorating Daniel's October 10 birthday, World Music Days organizes concerts around the world to use the universal language of music to encourage fellowship across cultures and build a platform for "Harmony for Humanity." Since World Music Days' inception in 2002, more than 4,900 concerts in 102 countries have been dedicated.

We asked "Overload" to play because of their unique blending of new and old and

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east and west. The band has brought traditional Sufi music and traditional drumming to younger crowds by adding electric guitars and vocals by lead singer Meesha Shafi. Their musical fusion is just one example of how young Pakistanis are building on their rich cultural heritage to create something new and positive.

Daniel Pearl stood for freedom of expression and the power of music to bring people across cultures and borders together. Extremists in Pakistan, like Daniel's captors, have always tried to silence music and personal expression when they take control of an area; they see musical influences as a threat to their ideology. They do so because Pakistani music -- a source of joy, a bridge between young and old, and one of many ways to worship -- can drown out their hateful ideology. I am proud that the U.S. Embassy supported the Daniel Pearl Day concert to connect our two countries through music and spread a message of hope and unity in the face of violence. The best part about the show -- even better than the music and dancing -- was the affirmation of life, tolerance, and pluralism shared throughout the evening.

For more information and photos from the show, visit the embassy's [website](#). And for those of you in Pakistan, check out the concert on Saturday, October 16 at 11 pm on the ARY Music Channel!

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Sounds incredible!

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