



**Daniel Pearl Memorial Violins Awarded to Youth Musicians from Texas and Connecticut
Winners to Help Spread "Harmony for Humanity" During World Music Days in October**

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 8 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Daniel Pearl Foundation congratulates teen violin and fiddle players Ian Stewart, 16, of Austin, Texas and Sam Weiser, 14, of Westport, Connecticut, winners of the 2008 Daniel Pearl Memorial Violins. Recently selected at the Mark O'Connor Strings Conference in San Diego, California, these up and coming musicians will have full use of the handcrafted instruments for a year, including appearances in October to be dedicated as part of the 7th Annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days (www.danielpearlmusicdays.org). The World Music Days event takes place October 1-31 each year, coinciding with Pearl's October 10th birthday.

The Daniel Pearl Memorial violins were crafted by Luther Jonathan Cooper of Maine, in honor of the international journalist and talented musician, who played violin and fiddle wherever he traveled prior to his murder at the hand of terrorists. Past winners from the U.S. and Canada have become ongoing musical ambassadors for Pearl's vision of building borderless friendships through music. The winners dedicate concerts each year to the World Music Days mission of spreading "Harmony For Humanity."

"Each year at my String Camp, students who demonstrate great potential and/or exceptional talent are awarded the Daniel Pearl Memorial Violins," said American classical and multi-genre violinist and composer Mark O'Connor, a member of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days Honorary Committee. "As these students practice and perform with the Pearl violins for a year -- until the following Camp, when new students receive the instruments -- they may come to appreciate the thirst for knowledge and message of healing that defined Pearl's life and career."

Sixteen-year-old violinist, fiddler, and mandolin player Ian Stewart began studying classical violin at the age of six in his hometown of Austin, Texas. His musical journey took a turn when he attended his first Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp at the age of 10 where he discovered traditional American and world music. He has excelled in regional and state contests and will be performing at the prestigious Midwest Clinic in Chicago in December. Ian is also one of the founding members of the cross-genre Americana band The Fireants, 2008 winners of the New Talent Competition at the local Old Settlers Music Festival and a regular fixture on the vibrant Austin music scene.

"Being this year's recipient of the Daniel Pearl Memorial Violin is an incredible opportunity for me to be part of this visionary mission," Stewart said. "The message is formed from the simple idea that music is one of the common languages of mankind and can bridge what divides us. I am overwhelmingly honored to have this award pass through my hands and I hope to bring Daniel's message to the widest possible audience."

Fourteen-year-old Sam Weiser began Suzuki violin at the early age of three. Talented on violin, viola, mandolin and guitar, he has played for numerous charitable and civic organizations at diverse venues including Carnegie Hall. Currently, the first violinist in the Apollo Quartet, he was Concertmaster for the Norwalk Youth Symphony from 2004-2007, and in 2008 became the youngest first violinist in its Principal Orchestra. A runner-up in the 2007 ASTA's National

Alternative Strings Competition, Sam has performed professionally with both Mark O'Connor and with Yale Strom, one of the country's leading Klezmer musicians, and is currently working on a jazz string quartet composition.

"It is an honor for me to receive the Daniel Pearl Memorial Violin," Weiser said. "It has brought upon me the determination and commitment to send a message of peace through the language of music. It also has inspired me to explore new ways of connecting to people and promoting Daniel's mission of tolerance."

Daniel Pearl's murder by terrorists in Pakistan in 2002 touched millions who never knew him. By developing international programs focused on journalism, music and dialogue, the Daniel Pearl Foundation seeks to counter the hatred and intolerance that took his life. www.danielpearl.org.

Daniel Pearl World Music Days is an awareness-raising network and there is no financial obligation to participate. Musicians of every genre -- professional, amateur, and youth -- simply register their prescheduled or specially planned October performances at www.danielpearlmusicdays.org, and make a statement from the stage or in the printed program in support of the "Harmony for Humanity" theme. Since its inception in 2002, more than 2000 concerts in 75 countries have been dedicated to these ideals for which Daniel Pearl stood.

SOURCE The Daniel Pearl Foundation

