



In Gaza, a UN Messenger of Peace conducts a concert for peace



World-renowned conductor Daniel Barenboim (left) with young musicians on his first visit to the Gaza Strip

3 May 2011 –

The sounds of Mozart floated out of a music hall in the Gaza Strip today as the renowned conductor and United Nations Messenger of Peace Daniel Barenboim led a concert aimed at promoting harmony in the war-scarred region.

Mr. Barenboim and the recently formed Orchestra for Gaza, comprising musicians from various leading European orchestras, performed a series of pieces by Mozart to an audience of several hundred people – including many schoolchildren – at the Al-Madha Cultural Centre near Gaza City.

The event was jointly **organized** by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (**UNRWA**) and Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The aim of the performance, said Mr. Barenboim, was to give a concert of peace for the people of Gaza. It was the 68-year-old maestro's first visit to Gaza.

"Maybe by doing this, all of the people of this area, Palestinians, Israelis, Egyptians, will realize that we are here to live somehow next to each other in this part of the world and we can live together or we can live side by side but we mustn't live back to back," he said.

The Orchestra for Gaza is drawn from the ranks of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, La Scala of Milan and Staatskapelle Berlin.

"They are musicians who care about humanity; they are musicians who care about the problem," Mr. Barenboim said.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, **Secretary-General** Ban Ki-moon applauded the efforts of the artists "who gave their time and talent to bring music to Gaza."

Robert Serry, Mr. Ban's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, opened the concert, telling the audience that the event was a "gesture of artistry, humanity, friendship and harmony."

At the event a group of young musicians from the Al-Qattan Foundation also performed traditional Palestinian music and works by the famed Lebanese singer Fairuz.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

UN agency honours young artists who promote Arab-Western cultural exchanges