

Remarks by Dag Hammarskjöld – to be read by Adhiratha

UN Day observances have traditionally included music. Following are excerpts from Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld's statement on 24 October 1960 – his last United Nations Day – when the Philadelphia Orchestra performed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. I quote:

...This concert is in celebration of United Nations Day and it has been felt that a few words may remind us of the purpose for which we have assembled....

On his road from conflict and emotion to reconciliation in this final hymn of praise, Beethoven has given us a confession and a credo [CREED-O] which we, who work WITHIN and FOR this Organization, may well make our own....

The road of Beethoven in his Ninth Symphony is also the road followed by the authors of the Preamble of the Charter. It begins with the recognition of the threat under which we all live, speaking as it does of the need to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which has brought untold sorrow to mankind. It moves on to a reaffirmation of faith in the dignity and worth of the human person. And it ends with the promise to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and to unite our strength to maintain peace...

We are indeed still in the first movements.  
But...we have too much in common,  
too great a sharing of interests,...  
ever to weaken in our efforts to surmount the difficulties  
and not to turn the simple human values,  
which are our common heritage,  
into the firm foundation on which we may unite our strength  
and live together in peace....

Remarks by U Thant – to be read by Pragati

*U Thant also drew a parallel between music and the United Nations in his remarks on United Nations Day, 24 October 1967, during a concert in the General Assembly Hall by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.*

At a time when international relations are marked by discord and disharmony, it is a pleasant respite to all of us to listen to the kind of music that we are hearing today. Such music not only pleases the ear, but also elevates our spirits. Besides, it also points to an important lesson.

The functioning of a major orchestra requires cooperation on the part of the performers and leadership from its conductor.... In the field of international relations, the performers are the member states. The score is the Charter of the United Nations. If we are to replace the present dissension by harmonious cooperation, we have to be faithful to the score: we have to observe not only the letter, but the spirit of the Charter in our international relations.