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FEATURED

TOP STORY

Jesse McCartney makes his debut in Blacksburg for Daniel Pearl World Music Days

Sameera Sunkara, lifestyles staff writer Oct 19, 2018

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On Oct. 23, Hillel at Virginia Tech is hosting musical artist Jesse McCartney, with The 5:55 as an opener, at The Lyric Theatre in honor of the 15th anniversary of Daniel Pearl World Music Days.

Daniel Pearl World Music Days is an annual series of concerts throughout the month of October held in honor of Daniel Pearl, a Jewish journalist with a love for music and the arts who was captured and killed in Pakistan in January 2002. The month of October was selected because Pearl's birthday was Oct. 10.

Every year in honor of Pearl, thousands of performances occur in hundreds of nations, using music to unify people of different races, religions and ethnicities to raise awareness all over the world.

Additionally, throughout the entire month, Daniel Pearl World Music Days presents an eStage, an online gallery with an internet radio station. The eStage also features original music, poetry, stories and other forms of art. The eStage exists in recognition of Pearl's belief that music, journalism and dialogue can connect different cultures together, leading to international friendship.

Hillel at Virginia Tech is a Jewish fellowship that consists of approximately 2,000 students, both undergraduate and graduate. It has been responsible for hosting this event at Virginia Tech for the last 13 years, and every year, a different band is chosen to perform. This year, the members of the Hillel executive board selected Jesse McCartney as the performing artist.

“Initially, we were given this huge list of artists, and we went through it and presented five to our executive board,” said Vice President of Programming and sophomore biology major Leor Clark. “We had a budget ... and he was one of the bigger stars that fell within the budget.”

McCartney is an American actor, songwriter and singer who was originally part of the boy band Dream Street and eventually emerged as a soloist. His debut solo album, “Beautiful Soul” was released in 2004, featuring four songs co-written by McCartney himself. Since then, he has released several solo albums. He just released his new single, “Better With You” in March 2018, which will be part of his upcoming album.

Furthermore, McCartney has been featured in multiple Disney soundtracks and guest-starred in several Disney Channel sitcoms, making him a celebrity favorite among college students who were children when he acted on Disney Channel. Because of McCartney’s popularity with college students, his concert tickets sold out in less than a week.

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“I had a feeling (the show) would sell out just because of the name Jesse McCartney,” Clark said.



Hillel at Virginia Tech has been working toward this event since January, when it chose the artist. Afterward, the organization searched for a sponsor, who helped it acquire and organize the necessary funding. Contracts were negotiated during the summer and then finalized and signed this early fall semester.

“It’s kind of like a timeline, so we have to start it early in the year to be ready for October,” Clark said.

In previous years, the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concerts have been held at The Lyric Theatre. The location was selected based on the budget; however, Hillel has booked Burruss in the past and may possibly book concerts there in the future.

Overall, Hillel hopes to bring the community together and promote music, just as Daniel Pearl would have hoped to do. The doors open on Oct. 23 at 6:30 p.m. at The Lyric Theatre; McCartney will follow his opener, The 5:55.

“I’m really excited. I think it’ll be a good time,” Clark said. “I think it’ll get good word of our name as Hillel out on campus.”