

# HUMAN RIGHTS FOR MUSICIANS



## **FREEMUSE – The World Forum on Music and Censorship**

Freemuse is an international organisation advocating freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide.

### **OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES ARE TO:**

- Document violations
- Inform media and the public
- Describe the mechanisms of censorship
- Support censored musicians and composers
- Develop a global support network

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**TEN YEARS WITH FREEMUSE**

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# INTRODUCTION

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**Marie Korpe**

Executive Director of Freemuse

Music censorship – what censorship? This was the typical reaction we got ten years ago while preparing and identifying speakers for the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Music and Censorship.

Today the media frequently ask us: Since you started Freemuse, has the problem of music censorship become better or worse?

The answer is: It is much worse and more complex than we envisaged when we started.

When the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference was organised in 1998, in collaboration with the Danish Institute for Human Rights, neither the organisers nor the participants of the conference realised what lay ahead of us.

Gone was the South African apartheid regime. Censored artists could provide testimony about the repression of their music and talk about it as “the past”. But 1998 was also the year that Berber-spokesman and musician Lounès Matoub was killed and the Taliban had established a total ban on music in Afghanistan. So everyone agreed that an organisation that could advocate freedom of musical expression was needed.

Since the establishment of a Freemuse secretariat in 2000, and the dedicated work of employees and individuals, we have contributed in revealing music censorship through research, reports, conferences, video clips and an offensive media strategy in more than 100 countries.

One of our major goals, to put ‘Music – a Human Right’ on the agenda, has partly been fulfilled. Media coverage in more than 80 countries and more than a million unique visitors at [freemuse.org](http://freemuse.org) speaks for itself.



However, we still have a long way to go to convince decision and policy makers, other international organisations and not least international artists to speak up in defence of the rights of musicians to freedom of expression.

Freemuse was a pioneer project and is still the only freedom of expression organisation for musicians all over the world. The website [www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org) is the largest documentation of violations of freedom of expression as they apply to musicians and composers.

Our task goes beyond collating and disseminating information on music censorship. Campaigns or support for musicians on trial is also part of our work. The conferences and seminars provide a platform for analysis and discussions on the mechanisms and effects of censorship. Whenever possible, dialogue between the censored and their censors are included in our programmes.

Ten years of the advocacy and struggle for freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide has unfortunately not led to the end of prosecution of individual artists or the lifting of bans on their musical pieces.

But given the funding and the possibility to set up a secretariat which could devote full time research to an issue that was unexplored 10 years ago, we have been able to document a serious global problem.

Banned artists have met colleagues through Freemuse. Censored artists have been provided a platform to talk about their experiences. A global network of artists, media people, researchers and human rights advocates has been established, and we are not going to be silent in the future.

Ten years! Anything to celebrate? Certainly not censorship, but we would like to share with you statements from some of the artists and people that we've worked with. Individuals, who have contributed to the unveiling of music censorship or have personally experienced censorship in the past decade.

I would like to express my thanks to all of you who have collaborated with Freemuse:

Heinrich Böll Foundation, Middle East Office & IRAB, Lebanon, Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Bilgi University & Bant Magazine/Turkey, CODESRIA, Gorée Institute & Panos/Senegal, Mannenberg Jazz Café/Zimbabwe, Zanzibar International Film Festival/Tanzania, Cutting Grooves & Grahamstown University/South Africa, International Theatre Festival & Al Balad Theatre/Jordan, Nagam Productions, ICTM, IASPM, Index on Censorship, WOMEX, Roskilde festival, International PEN, Danish PEN, Swedish Helsinki Committee, Like Publications/Finland, EDT/Italy, Songlines, SOAS University of London, Zed Books, Kufa Gallery & Index on Censorship/UK, FreeDimensional, ZAPP Magazine, European Council of Artists, Re:Orient, SEAMN, Film Doc, Nobel Peace Center, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, Rikskonsertene/Norway, Ann MacKeigan at CBC, Björn Afzelius International Culture Foundation, European Live Music Forum, ICORN, ICPJ, Festival Against Censorship in Gernika, Roy Eldridge, MISA, Anonymous Records, Cram Disc, IMC and IFEX.

Thank you to the Danish Broadcasting Corporation for hosting during the research phase in 1997 and to the Danish Institute for Human Rights for hosting Freemuse secretariat 2000-2004. Freemuse is grateful for core-funding from Sida for 2001-2012 and to Danida 2000-2006.

Special thanks to Freemuse report writers; John Baily, Garth Cartwright, Banning Eyre, Jean-Christophe Servant, Eric Nuzum, Lemez Lovas, Maya Medich, Mark Levine and to Michael Drewett, the producer of the documentary “Stopping the Music”.

And last but not least a heartfelt thanks to all musicians for sharing your experiences in writing, through testimonies and through your music. ■





## TEN YEARS OF FREEMUSE – A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

**Martin Cloonan**

Chairperson of Freemuse

Anniversaries tend to elicit some common responses: Can it really be that long? What did we do right/wrong? How have we changed? What does the future hold? And so on. And these have certainly been amongst my thoughts as I contemplated ten years of Freemuse. Was it really over ten years since I was invited to a conference in Copenhagen and then on to a committee that was formed to address some of the issues identified at the conference? What has happened since then? What was good? What was bad? How has the world changed? And how has Freemuse contributed to those changes? All this and more went through my mind when I was invited to write a contribution to this booklet. In the end I decided to just say how it felt to me, and so I beg the reader's indulgence in this.

For me Freemuse began when I was invited to attend the first World Conference on Music and Censorship in Copenhagen in 1998. I had done some research on pop music and censorship in the UK and the organisers had somehow come across my name. So I was invited and I went. As an academic I go to quite a few conferences, but nothing compared to this. In one of the early sessions the black South African musicians Ray Phiri and Sipho Mabuse told their stories of life under apartheid. In this they were accompanied by Cecile Pracher, of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, who told of her life as an apartheid censor. The censored and the censor met. The atmosphere was electric and I had the privilege of witnessing truth and reconciliation before my own eyes.

In many ways this set the tone for what was to follow. As I look back on my involvement in Freemuse what strikes me is the amazing human beings I've encountered. The musicians who have been totally forbidden to play and those who have been imprisoned for singing in their own language. The women who challenged their society's norms and performed music in public. The former South African cop and the musician he persecuted who are now friends. Musicians across the



world who have stood up against injustice and for freedom. The list goes on and on and encompasses a wide variety of human experience. But at its centre is a wonderful humanity which seeks merely to pass on thoughts and feelings to other human beings free of governmental or economic intervention. That Freemuse has helped to facilitate some of these exchanges in difficult circumstances is an achievement worthy of celebration. And gratitude. So to all those musicians who have helped Freemuse, I say thank you.

Meanwhile if on one hand Freemuse has been informed by a deeply humane spirit, it has also been highly practical. Following the first World Conference a committee was formed to see what could be done to protect and enhance musicians' freedom of expression across the globe in line with the rights attributed to all individuals under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was quite an agenda!

That committee mutated into an Executive of an organisation which formed in October 1999 and, after some debate, became known as Freemuse – Freedom of Musical Expression. Funding was secured from the international development sections of the Danish and Swedish governments and staff was employed. What had been a dream of two Scandinavian journalists was now a reality. Now there was an organisation which could *do* things.

So what *did* Freemuse do? It monitored, reported and lobbied. It worked tirelessly for the freedom of expression of musicians, generally seeking to advise but also intervening directly when it was deemed necessary and possible. With a small staff and limited resources what Freemuse could do was frequently less than what it would like to have done. But it was there. It was a resource which activists, researchers, embattled musicians and those simply interested in freedom of musical expression could draw upon. In numerous debates on the right of individuals to freedom of expression, Freemuse was there saying “And don't forget musicians”.

At a practical level Freemuse published a number of important reports on the situation of musicians' freedom of expression in a number of countries, once again drawing attention to the plight of musicians in places where freedom of expression was being denied. The

reports are also vital resources in the history of musical censorship which provide further focus for education and debate. This has been aided by the website being nominated for a prestigious Webby Award and the ability to respond to countless media requests for information. It was further enhanced by the publication of the book *Shoot the Singer* edited by Freemuse's Marie Korpe. In 2007 Freemuse held the first Music Freedom Day, which in 2008 featured performances by international stars.

Freemuse also held two more World Conferences (in Copenhagen in 2002 and in Istanbul in 2006). At these events musicians told of their experiences, researchers reported the situation across the globe, and debates about the nature of censorship and whether it was *ever* justifiable were held. For me these events have been the highlight of Freemuse's work and I consider myself privileged to have been invited to attend them. Once again simple, common, humanity was expressed and left me with feelings of hope and determination. Freemuse has also held successful workshops across the globe on music censorship and attended music industry events such as WOMEX (where it won an award in 2003). It has brought people together, often when other forces were trying to keep them apart.

But this is not to idealise Freemuse. This organisation is made up of human beings. It is therefore imperfect and prone to error. It is also dealing in matters of censorship. It is therefore inherently controversial. Freemuse has always taken its lead from international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and sought to (get others to) apply these rights to musicians. But it has not been absolutist. It has never taken a position that musicians should be free to say or sing anything under any circumstances. To some this has made Freemuse itself a censor. However, from a personal point of view, it seems to me that Freemuse is operating in a world where human beings "censor" themselves all the time. In our daily lives we choose our language carefully, we conduct ourselves in ways which show consideration for others and we do not simply do or say whatever we want regardless of the feelings of others. At our best we seek to live by values which respect the rights of others and which are sometimes enshrined in legal codes. In many ways this is what Freemuse seeks to do or seeks to get others to do – to respect musicians'





rights as enshrined in international treaties.

On another personal note, what Freemuse has also meant is weekends spent in various European capitals trying to determine priorities, raise funds and give substance to Freemuse's aims. Freemuse Executive meetings take place over two days and the agenda is always full. The Executive has consistently been made up of committed, thoughtful people who are forthright and opinionated – and used to being listened to. As chair I always see my main task as simply getting through the agenda – and that is not always easy! Executive members have views on what it should be doing. They also have expectations of Freemuse's full time staff which sometimes go beyond what they can reasonably be expected to achieve. So Executive members argue with one another, they fight their corner and they do not always agree. What do they *do* agree on is Freemuse's aims. They also share the humanity I mentioned earlier. So, to all the Executive members – thank you.

I would also like to thank all those who have worked for Freemuse, and two in particular. Freemuse would never have existed without the commitment and hard work of two people – Marie Korpe and Ole Reitov. It was Marie and Ole who had the vision for the first conference and for the organisation which followed. For ten years they have worked tirelessly for Freemuse. In recent years the organisation has been fortunate to be able to employ them both and harness their skills and commitment on a full time basis. This has been a key factor in Freemuse's success and I would like to express my sincere thanks to Marie and Ole for the key role they have played in Freemuse. They have kept the flame glowing on numerous occasions when it appeared that it would be extinguished.

So, Freemuse has had ten years of monitoring, reporting, archiving, lobbying and intervening. It has sought to ensure that musicians' rights are respected and provided a forum where issues of musical expression can be debated.

But Freemuse has always had a hand-to-mouth existence. Funding has dominated too many Executive meetings and has never been secure. So, if you are a music fan and want to help musicians' freedom of

expression, please do what you can to help. Join. Donate. Get involved. In order to do any of these you can contact Freemuse via the website.

Looking to the future, I would venture to suggest that Freemuse will have succeeded when it is no longer needed or, perhaps, when only its historical work is needed. When musicians' rights to freedom of expression are respected across the globe and taken for granted, Freemuse will no longer need to exist. Until that happy day Freemuse will continue its work and in this I wish it well. I also hope that you, dear reader, will help by contributing in whatever way you can. So, Happy Birthday Freemuse, but I hope that you don't have to live too long! ■





## Impressions & Descriptions







## Deeyah

Musician and composer, Norway/Pakistan

Music has been an intrinsic part of not only my life but human life and the development of every people, society and culture throughout history. Music possesses the power to cross social, racial, cultural, economic and religious barriers and has the ability to truly touch people on a personal and emotional level which is why some even today fear the influence and impact of music.

Music is the most honest, boundless and potentially truly free form of expression that conveys tradition, hope, love, despair, history, emotion, ideas and opinions. The cultural and social relevance of music is paramount.

This beauty and power of music has throughout history also been followed by persecution and social or legal punishment of its performers and composers for its very nature and capacity to affect people.

As a result of the various forms of censorship, artists have faced extreme and even violent consequences. In many cases musicians have been made to pay with their life for exercising their individual right to freedom of expression risking not only their own life and livelihood but also that of their loved ones.

Silencing music would be to deprive us all of our very basic human rights as individuals and musicians, specifically our rights to free expression and the exchange of ideas and the right of the audience to their freedom of choice.

We unfortunately still live in a world where this precious form of expression is in danger of being “sanitized” and compromised for the political, social and so called religious agendas of some.

This is where the work of Freemuse in highlighting the cases of cen-





sorship affecting artists, musicians and composers worldwide is so preciously valuable to us all.

I first became aware of the work of Freemuse in 2006. I have spent half of my life either being directly affected by externally imposed and expected censorship or the most creatively paralyzing being required to constantly having to exercise self-censorship in fear of violent reactions or cultural excommunication.

Learning about the existence of an organisation like Freemuse has been a great source of comfort and inspiration. In the past two years I have had the opportunity to get to know more about the work that Freemuse does and also become friends with some of its members. This connection with Freemuse has given me the support and sense of community that I was especially desperate for through the harsher experiences in my career. Not only is the independent voice of Freemuse essential for artists like me but the platform they have provided to address the situation of music censorship is vital in the fight for the freedom of artistic expression.

Across the world music is under the constant threat of being muzzled and silenced. Music is the pulse of life – which with the continued help, passionate campaigning, commitment and voice of Freemuse – will not be stopped.

I stand in solidarity with Freemuse and would like to thank this wonderful organisation for their crucial work.

I am forever grateful for your support and kindness. Thank you for being there for me through my struggles and for standing up for the human rights of musicians and fighting for freedom of expression. ■









## **Marcel Khalife**

Musician and composer, Lebanon

Freemuse stands for music and the reaffirmation of the rights of musicians and their protection from prohibitions, censorship and threats.

Freemuse is an expression of our responsibility towards our musical culture and the protection of our music and musicians from the censors since music is part of the inalienable right of the humankind.

On this occasion, I salute the founders and the staff at Freemuse. Since its inception Freemuse has worked diligently on documenting all cases of censorship and prosecution of musicians. They have brought their plight to the attention of the mass media, various human rights organisations and the public at large, defended them in the courts and supported needy and struggling musicians.

Freemuse is a little torch of light in spite of the darkness and hardships that surround us in this current state of world affairs.

The support of Freemuse to musicians and their defence of their right to freedom of musical expression create the necessary conditions for creativity and the renewal and enrichment of our musical heritage in our constant search for a new musical language.

I call on musicians everywhere to rally round Freemuse to protect our little torch of light and hope. Let us unite in support of Freemuse which has given lot of musicians that have endured banning, exile, trials, oppression and war a new lease on life with its flicker of light and hope.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my sincere expression of LOVE to Freemuse. ■







## Roger Lucey

Musician and composer, South Africa

The singer's voice has always been the strongest. Not through bombast or verbosity like the politician. Or through brute strength or bullying like the law enforcer. The singer's voice goes straight to the heart of the listener and it is that simple strength that so terrifies the politician and the law enforcer. And yet when the singer's voice is silenced, the void is quickly filled by the mindless hum mass produced by multinational jingle makers keeping the peace on behalf of the State. History is awash with those silenced voices remembered only by the informed few.

For the past decade Freemuse has crashed into this fearful terrain and spoken out for those whose lives have been ambushed and whose voices have been choked by power and tyranny. Not content to heckle from the sidelines, Freemuse has lobbied and probed, even enlisting the voices of the politically powerful in their efforts to take to fight to those who wish to oppress the voice of the singer.

For more than a decade, I lived with the pain and shattered self confidence that came from trying to raise my voice against the Apartheid State. Their covert action against me left me in a half world, illusive as truth, as I carried the shreds of my past, and tried to make sense of my future. Through the work of Freemuse I have managed to navigate through that tortured history and find a positive future. I have rediscovered my voice, my life and my passion.

**MUSIC WILL NOT BE SILENCED. ■**







## Ferhat Tunç

Musician and composer, Turkey

My relationship with Freemuse started in 2003. In August that year I was imprisoned and was released again soon afterwards. This drew attention both locally and internationally. Through this incident, the Freemuse members that got in touch with me had the chance to get first hand information on the situation in Turkey. This solidarity has been improving ever since.

One of the Freemuse World Conferences was held in our country in November 2006 with the participation of guests invited from all over the world. The barriers of musical expression were discussed for two full days at Bilgi University. Many musicians uttered their experiences of repression in their own countries. Turkey was on the agenda as well, and Turkish and Kurdish musicians of Turkey concisely talked about the bans and repressions they experienced.

My relationship with Freemuse has continued afterwards, be it in Turkey or in Europe. The activities of Freemuse have great importance for me, and have since the beginning. The example of solidarity exhibited under the Freemuse roof with repressed and censored artists and musicians – who have to cross barriers and difficulties while presenting their intellectual and artistic works to people – is the primary reason for this importance.

In August 2007 Freemuse proposed a number of important artists around the world to become Freemuse Ambassadors. I was chosen from Turkey, and I accepted this invitation that I take great pride in. In this way I am now required to take a more active role in the international activities of Freemuse. As an artist from Turkey, to be rewarded with such an honorary degree is the result of the values that made me Ferhat Tunç and my strong ties with my people. I live for these values; and without a doubt, the attention and love showed to me is a value that cannot be compared with any degree. ■







## **Farhad Darya**

Singer, songwriter and lyricist, Afghanistan

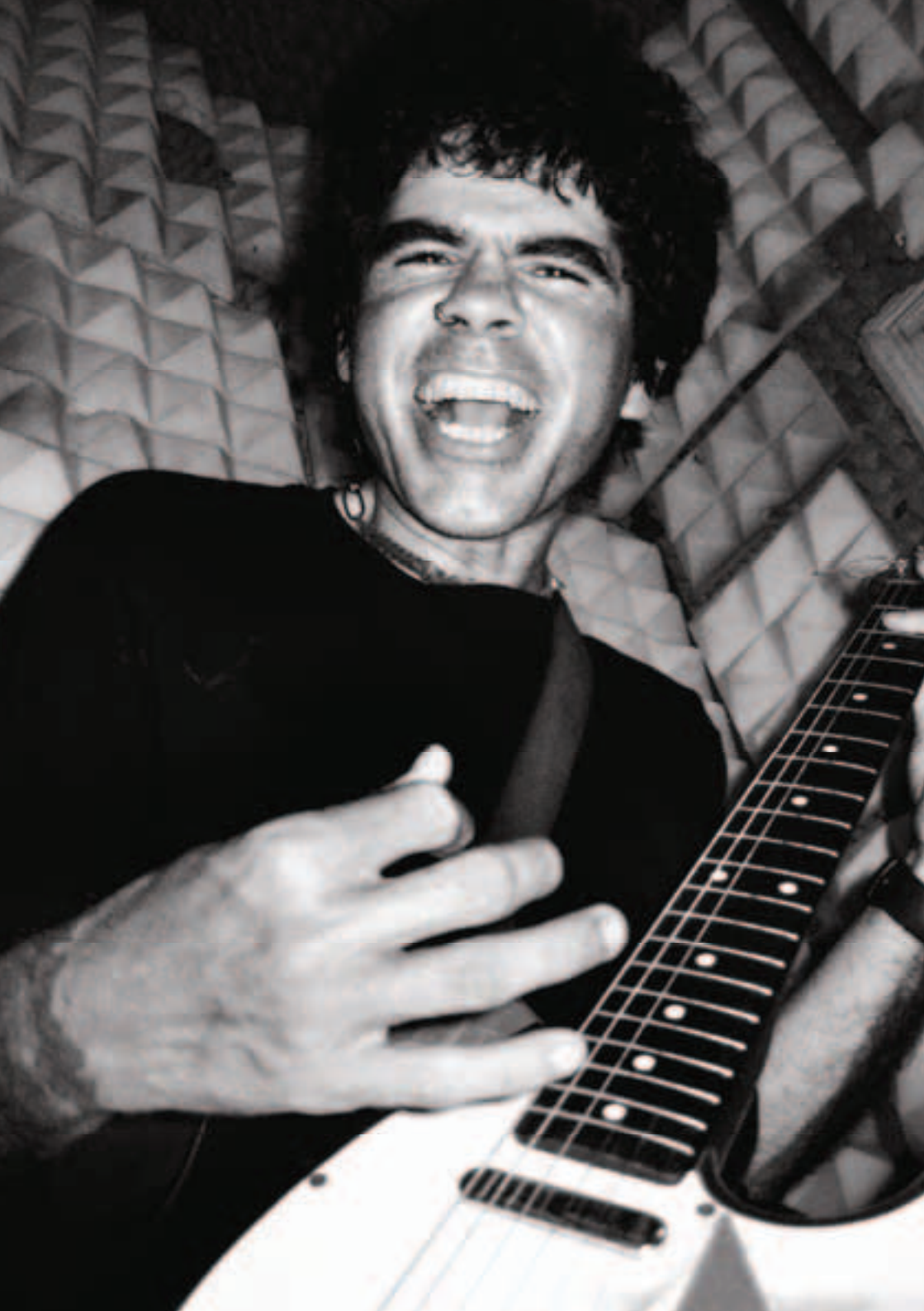
My relationship with Freemuse goes back to August of 2001 when I met Mrs. Marie Korpe, the founder of Freemuse, for the first time in Copenhagen. It was the day I was recognized as the best Artist of the Year in Afghanistan. Mrs. Marie participated in distributing the award to me. During my later meetings with her, I came to realize that Mrs. Marie Korpe is not only an extremely nice and gentle soul, but she is also a very determined, serious and highly cultured person. I found her like a kind mother who cares for the freedom of speech just as much as she cares for her children.

In a world where freedom represents an Artist's major weapon and the essence of his existence, the fight Freemuse is leading in order to re-establish the freedom of speech for Artists, is worth gold.

If there were a paradise in this world, freedom holds the key to it. This is exactly the root of my attachment with Freemuse. Today Freemuse has become the hope of countless talented and freedom loving artists. I wish them courage and success and I am sure that we will be fighting side by side to obtain and preserve our freedom. ■









## **Gorki Aguila**

Musician and composer, Cuba

With respect to my trip to the Freemuse conference in Copenhagen in 2002:

To me it was both eye opening to travel abroad and get to know such a special city in terms of history, architecture and people – as well as a revelation to meet people who had experienced censorship in ways similar to me. The work of Freemuse was touching: its goal was that musicians like us could meet each other and express and denounce our frustrations publicly. There were really terrible testimonies, candid reports, and a lot of solidarity. I will never forget when I spoke and my band's poster was projected behind me in an enormous size – the likes of which I had never seen before. I had to pause and look, with pride and emotion, at that huge graphic image of ours – something that the audience understood.

I am very grateful to Freemuse and to all the people involved with it, not only for allowing me to have that experience in 2002, but also for always showing me, ever since then and to this day, their utmost solidarity. ■

Translation from Spanish to English by Ariana Hernandez-Reguant.







## **Mahsa Vahdat**

Singer, Iran

*Singing is a blessing  
A voice that finds its way to the arteries of life,  
Now flowing like a whisper by a baby's cradle,  
Now like a lover, perhaps standing against the rays of a future,  
A blessing indeed, is singing ...*

I live in a country which has a vicissitude history of art, especially in music. In some periods of the history of my country, Iran, music was banned and musicians had very difficult times. The music that I inherited is brimful with pain, love, beauty and the sorrowful stories of the lives of the people of this country, their hopes and aspirations, their attempts to preserve their culture. It is the voice that has been transmitted from many throats full of pain and love.

As a singer my musical expression is a reflection of these stories. But in the present situation in my country I am faced with two general kinds of censorship, the censorship that is applied to the whole music life of my country and also the elimination of the female voice. The only place that lullabies are heard in my country is at the cradle of the baby. These beautiful lullabies and the voice of women is a part of emotions that should fly freely. It is a gift from heaven and it is part of the heritage of human society. Banning it is a cultural genocide that is not a small crime. The women of Iran never stopped singing and they continue to sing many lullabies for the awakening of the people.

I started to know and cooperate with Freemuse when I was invited to the Freemuse Beirut conference in 2005 and also later to the Istanbul conference. From the beginning of the cooperation I felt myself as a member of the family of Freemuse that is moving forward to one common aim without regarding any geographical, cultural, religious, or any other kind of limit. This aim is to fight against every kind of



ensorship of music that is practiced by humans who rule and is a harm to the free improvement of music and expressions of the emotions of human beings.

The efforts and patience of Marie Korpe and Ole Reitov in connecting all the members of this family is for me admirable because their aspiration is the same as that of every person in the world who is hurt by censorship. I am honoured to serve as a member of this family for these aspirations. ■



## Stephan Said

Musician and singer, Iraq/USA

Music brings us together in times of joy as well as in times of urgent need. Since the beginning of civilization, it has been a central mechanism for expressing ideas imperative to human survival while reaching across age groups, gender, religions, class, and ethnicities. In our now globalized and interdependent society, music can and could play a pivotal role in reaching across borders with the needed understanding that a paradigmatic socio-economic shift is necessary for the sustainability of the Planet. By protecting musicians who challenge the status quo, Freemuse helps to ensure that Music continues to lead us to water when policy proves too slow to the call. Today, we need Freemuse.

As an Iraqi-American, I am straddled between the oppressor and the oppressed; a taxpayer to the country that is bombing my family purely for global economic dominance, an individual who, like too many others, has grown up in the crosshairs of our generation's defining war. As an Arab-American, I was prematurely forced to understand that global equality, the age-old dream advocated by every major religion on earth, was no longer a moral obligation, but an imperative for our mutual international security.

As a singer, my efforts to popularize this universal truth have continuously been confronted by prejudice, narrow-mindedness, and market-censorship merely because my identity conflicted with the false caricatures of good and bad, black and white, east and west, left and right, Arab and American, by which the entertainment and media industries ignorantly and tirelessly segregate us.

As I struggled to understand the forces beyond my control, I found Freemuse while writing an article for the San Francisco Chronicle on the censorship and ineffectiveness of protest in contemporary music. Attending Freemuse's World Conference in Istanbul in November 2006, I realized that what I faced in market-censorship had many cor-





relations with what artists who had been censored the world over faced in various regimes, religious extremism, and socio-economic forces.

Whether Afghani musicians digging up their instruments long buried under Taliban rule, Kurdish and Anatolian folk singers maintaining songlines older than Turkey's current Republic, Palestinian rap artists crying out for justice in a country where they remain unrepresented on their own land, or Arab-American's like myself trying to give voice to the world's silenced majority wanting peace – if we shall give a better world to the next generation, it will be because a group like Free-muse protected our musicians so that they could help lead the way. ■









## Salman Ahmad

Musician and composer, Pakistan

Music, I believe, is the strongest dialogue you can make with other people. Music lifts the veil of darkness from the Truth. Maybe this is why some mullahs are afraid of music. They are afraid that if people are free to access the Truth they would lose their high paying gig and power over the young. They see music as a competitor. Thus they wish to ban music. As a believer I'm a passionate promoter of a Musical Jihad against fanaticism, hate and bigotry from all sources: Muslim and Non-Muslim, secular or faith-based.

Freemuse has for years documented the clashes between music and power groups – politicians, radical religious forces and states. But Freemuse has not only defended freedom of expression for musicians, composers and the public, I've experienced several times how Freemuse creates platforms for dialogue and understanding.

As a musician who has faced censorship in my home country Pakistan there is no conflict between my faith and my music. You can be a Muslim and play electric guitar. During a Freemuse conference in Beirut in 2006 I was pleased to be part of one of the rare occasions where music and religion is taken seriously and where discussions on music and Islam focussed on theology and not just social and cultural patterns.

I've played at the Roskilde Festival in 2000 under the banner of Freemuse, a couple of years after my band Junoon was banned in Pakistan because we protested against the nuclear power tests in India as well as our own country. Why escalate the arms race when people still need water? Why see our neighbours as enemies when we are so close to each other?

I've taken part in Freemuse dialogue meetings and press meetings. They have always been great meetings places for musicians, researchers and journalists and I've always felt that understanding the motiva-



tions behind and the mechanisms of censorship have been in focus – not just condemning censorship. Having said that, we, the artists, should always be ready to defend our colleagues when the rights to freedom of expression are attacked, and thus we need an organisation such as Freemuse to help us do this. ■

## Interactions & Reactions





**Krister Malm**

Member of Freemuse Executive Committee

### Why Freemuse?

Music exists in all known human societies. This shows that music is something that is part and parcel of human nature. Music has many forms and manifestations. It is an expression of the ideas, traditions and emotions of individuals and of peoples. It is used to transmit knowledge from generation to generation. It expresses hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows, people's core cultural identity.

Imagine the world without music. Or imagine a world where we are told what to play, what to sing and even what we may listen to in the privacy of our own homes. That world already exists. In more countries that you might imagine, musicians and composers are under threat. And that threat is growing.

In countries like Sudan, Afghanistan and China, violations of musician's rights to freedom of expression are commonplace. In the USA and Algeria, lobbying groups have succeeded in keeping popular music off the concert stage, and out of the media and retail. In former Yugoslavia, Turkey and other places musicians are pawns in political dramas, and the possibility of free expression has been adversely affected.

In spite of all the blatant cases of censorship of music over the years there has been little attention to it. During the fight against apartheid in South Africa authors, journalists and actors who were jailed got international support. Jailed musicians didn't get much such support. Very little news about these musicians reached the media.

Freemuse was formed in 1998 as a remedy for this situation. Freemuse was formed to act as a watchdog in cases of music censorship around the world. Freemuse was formed to build and disseminate knowledge about the mechanisms at work when music is censored.



## How Freemuse?

The activities of Freemuse are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially on the rights to freedom of expression and to participate in cultural life.

All music makers should have the right to freely express themselves as long as they do not violate the rights of others as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Everybody should have the right to participate in musical activities as performers, listeners or in other capacities.

As can be seen from the content of this booklet Freemuse has accomplished quite a lot in the past 10 years. The hub has been the Freemuse secretariat with the Freemuse website [freemuse.org](http://freemuse.org) where a wealth of information about cases of music censorship has been posted. On the website you can find reports from all over the world, video and audio clips, readymade radio programs and much more.

When Freemuse acts in response to acute cases of music censorship, the news is generally quickly spread through the website and by other means. Some cases are more sensitive than others and have to be handled with “silent diplomacy” while acute. But when it’s over the information can be found on the website.

A lot of new knowledge about music censorship has been created at the many conferences and seminars organized by Freemuse. This new knowledge disseminated in printed reports and by other means has contributed substantially to a better understanding of the workings of music censorship in past and present cases.

The Freemuse reports on the state of music censorship in specific countries have put the spotlight on the plight of certain musicians and music audiences in these countries. These reports as well as the conference reports are often accompanied by a CD or DVD with samples of forbidden music, interviews, etc.

The many facets of how to Freemuse is illustrated by the testimonies in this booklet from individuals who in some way or another have been embraced by Freemuse. The long list of Freemuse activities at the end of the booklet also shows the manifold approaches of Freemuse.

The encounters of musicians, journalists, researchers, politicians, censors and others in Freemuse activities over the years have built an extensive network of people with a vast knowledge of music censorship. Although Freemuse is formally a membership organisation with a charter, Executive Committee and other bodies, it is this widespread network connecting people around the globe that is the essence of Freemuse. ■





## THE ORGANISATION THAT WAS MISSING

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### **Morten Kjærum**

Director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark  
&

### **Klaus Slavensky,**

Member of Freemuse Executive Committee

It is not often these days that a movement, an institution or an organisation, which the world simply cannot do without, is missing. This is also true within the human rights field. The rights are already here, and so the main task is the implementation of these rights in daily life.

When we contributed to the creation of Freemuse in 1998, this seemed to be the exception to the rule. Freedom of speech was an integral part of human rights law and had been since the previous century but it was more or less tied to the written word. The musical expression had been almost forgotten in human rights work.

In 1997, we planned the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in Denmark and decided to put focus on those who often play in solidarity with others, namely the musicians. So the Institute for Human Rights was the facilitator and co-organiser of the world's first conference on music and censorship with the support of the Danish Ministry of Culture. Not only was it a success, it was also an eye-opener to the necessity of establishing a real forum for this important work. Thus Freemuse was born. Freemuse began as a part of the Human Rights Institute but went on to become an independent, international organisation.

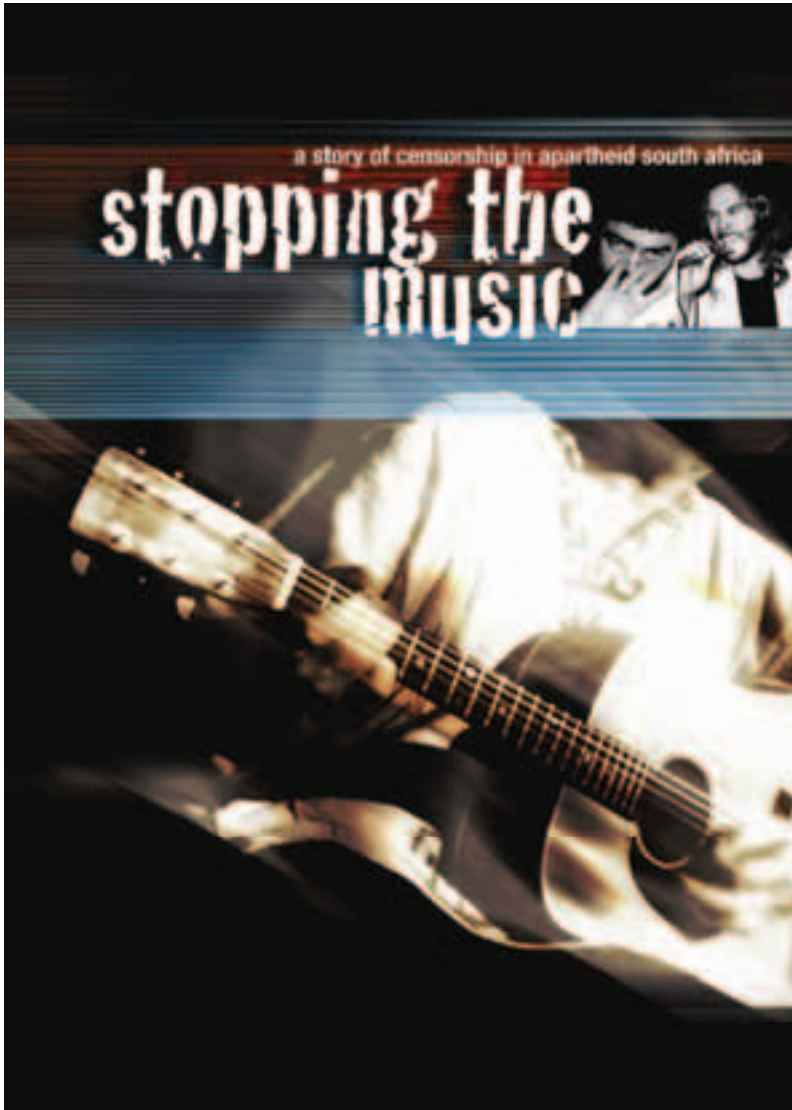
Freemuse had a competent board and group of staff to begin with, which of course is alpha and omega for any new enterprise. Marie Korpe has deftly secured an economical and substantial foundation that has enabled the organisation to take on a number of worthy activities.

Freemuse has also succeeded in creating a very impressive professional network as well as producing a number of agenda-setting reports. Freemuse was among the first to focus on the situation in

Afghanistan with the report *“Can you stop the birds singing?”* that became a prototype for the reports to come and which documented the regime’s censorship on music, which was unknown in many countries all over the world.

For 10 years, Freemuse has been a driving force in the debate on music censorship in South Africa, Cuba, China, Belarus and many, many other countries. An organisation that was lacking in the world community was created, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights is proud to have contributed to the upholding of this human rights perspective in the Freemuse board as well as in the international community. ■





*Stopping the Music*, DVD-cover.

**Michael Drewett**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology  
Rhodes University, South Africa

In the late 1990s, as part of my doctoral research, I began to research popular music censorship in apartheid South Africa. Fortuitously my work led to introductions to Martin Cloonan and Ole Reitov, two of the original pioneers involved in setting-up Freemuse. Right from the start Ole encouraged me to become involved in Freemuse's programme and he invited me to a landmark Freemuse workshop on South African popular music censorship held in Johannesburg in 2001.

The workshop included key musicians, policy makers, independent record company executives and others who explored the implications of South Africa's past for our present understanding of music censorship and to discuss ways forward. While there has been a frustrating lack of action from the South African participants since then, the workshop nevertheless acts as a crucial starting point to a process of exploring South Africa's censored music.

My research and Freemuse's interest in South Africa's transition from censorship under apartheid led to two meaningful collaborations which underline the importance of Freemuse as an organisation working towards free musical expression. The first was their sponsorship and active support of the documentary film *Stopping the Music*, about anti-apartheid protest singer Roger Lucey and Paul Erasmus, the security policeman assigned to end Lucey's career. The documentary traced their story and brought the two together for the first time since their confrontations back in the early 1980s.

The experience of making and watching the film has inspired many people around the world, not least of all the two central protagonists themselves. This was made possible because Freemuse have actively sought venues for viewings, from the United States to Turkey and Tanzania.



There is nothing more rewarding for a researcher than to know that one's work has reached a wide audience, and Freemuse has made this happen through continued effort and commitment.

After the launch of the film, I continued my collaboration with Freemuse through a second (related) project which took the film and the message of free musical expression into a rural township school in South Africa. Freemuse sponsored the production of a scholars' guide to the film, an accompanying teachers' manual and the production of a series of educational display posters on South African music censorship, put together by university students for the school pupils. Approximately 100 high school pupils attended a workshop in which they discussed music censorship, watched the film, met with Roger Lucey and Paul Erasmus, and heard Roger sing some of his songs. Not only did the participants praise the workshop but the scholars' guide serves as a useful pilot for a more developed book in the future.

The importance of these initiatives, along with Freemuse's various censorship reports, workshops and conferences, is that the organisation has done more than simply document popular music censorship – Freemuse has played and continues to play a crucial role in bringing central role players together in order to work towards greater awareness of and to combat infringements upon musicians' right to musical expression. Long may this important work continue! ■

**Layla Al-Zubaidi**

Director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation,  
Middle East Office, Lebanon

When Freemuse approached our organisation, the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Middle East Office in Beirut, Lebanon, in 2004, to inquire whether we would be willing to collaborate on a regional conference about freedom of expression in music, I was instantly thrilled. We have been active in human rights and we have been working on cultural expression, but to combine both sounded especially compelling. In the Arab world, infringements on the freedom of expression occur on a daily basis. To boil it down to a simple formula, from Morocco to Iraq, from Syria to Saudi-Arabia, taboos surface in three main areas: politics, religion and sex. And yet, censorship is an extremely complicated and multi-layered problem. The life-worlds in all these countries couldn't be fuller of shades and colours, and sometimes we are faced with surprisingly contradictory realities.

To map out a regional conference that would pay justice to all this diversity while at the same time single out some common threads and encourage more regional solidarity, appeared to be a particularly challenging undertaking. And since this would be a pioneer event for the Middle East and hence potentially pave the way for more of such engagement, it also promised to be particularly rewarding.

A long dialogue with Marie Korpe and Ole Reitov at Freemuse started, during which programs were drafted and re-drafted, names of potential contributors added and stroke out, priorities formulated and revised, ideas developed and criticism exchanged – and during which we became friends. We met and consulted with remarkable Arab musicians, lawyers, human rights activists, journalists, novelists, censorship employees, religious leaders, academics and filmmakers in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Iraq – among whom we encountered little scepticism and loads of enthusiasm. In Beirut, we had occasional doubts. Would these people with such different backgrounds really be willing to talk to each other? And how openly would they speak out? But Freemuse insisted,



and in November 2005, heavy metal heads shared the conference table with a Shaikh, Sufi musicians jammed with rappers, celebrities debated with students.

Looking at the various results that the conference triggered – from the dynamic discussions, to the output in terms of information and networking, to all those enjoyable performances that enriched Beirut’s cultural life for a few days – I can say that it has been one of the most demanding, but also most exciting and delightful events that I’ve ever been involved in. It however also created both the soil and the need for continuous engagement and follow-up in the Middle East. I therefore hope that there will be further opportunities for co-operations between the Heinrich Böll Foundation and Freemuse in the future, in order to build on the momentum this encounter created. ■

**Lingson Adam**

Journalist, Tanzania

To date I am enjoying the sense of feeling that has started to make my life meaningful by contributing to the restoration, defence and sustenance of the God given endowment to human beings, i.e. freedom of expression, freedom of choice if you like. Writing for freemuse.org has offered me an important arena to share with the world what happens in Tanzania which has been christened 'Island of Peace'.

Although little is heard from Tanzania as regards to Music Censorship, it does not signify that everything is going on smoothly. It does not mean that people are that free to express their feelings etc, albeit via music. It is probably more the matter of absence of evidence being no evidence of absence.

I started writing for Freemuse in 2007 following Freemuse Stringer Course in Johannesburg, South Africa in March 2007. The training was very informative, properly organised and very relaxed allowing for the highest level of sharing and getting the required inspirations. But why did it take so long to get started?

The training inspired me enough for an immediate take-off, bearing in mind that I had already been writing on other Human Rights issues here. However, it wasn't easy in a country like ours where most things are superficially alright to get started. I could not find it easy to solicit music censorship stories as they were not given coverage even in local media in Tanzania.

The touching, guiding and stern reminder from Freemuse Secretariat of 17 August 2007, reached me just after I had made my mind to start building up a contact book for musicians. This way I thought I would be able to get tips, which has been of some help as I got started October 2007. Then I started a research on several other stories. It is clear to date that there are lots of unheard music censorship stories in Tanzania.





It is now obvious to me that writing censorship stories in the context of my country demands much journalistic research and involvement. I have learnt that the best way to do this is to be open-minded, and have eyes, ears and a nose for censorship stories. My involvement has led me to appreciating art in general and specifically music.

I want to convey my sincere appreciation of Freemuse's editorial style which is, to me, very inspiring. This editorial style is in itself a non censorship. It is full of dialogue, cautious and very much tied to accuracy. It has turned out to be my lifelong learning arena. ■

### Simon Broughton

TV director and editor of *Songlines*, UK

Freemuse came as a wake-up call. Censorship of the written word is understood – as organisations like PEN make clear – but the censorship of music has been beneath most people’s radar. That’s a problem of Western-style societies that are more attuned to literature than music. In much of Africa and Asia messages are conveyed through music – for evidence look at the control that’s been kept on music in Zimbabwe by the Mugabe regime. That’s why Freemuse’s website has been an increasingly valuable source of information about music censorship – collating stories from around the world, and as a place where musicians themselves can air their problems.

But, as editor of *Songlines*, the world music magazine published in the UK, the issue was driven home by the publication of the first Freemuse report in 2001. “*Can You Stop the Birds Singing?*”, by John Baily, was about the prohibition of music in Afghanistan by the Taliban – probably the most severe music censorship in history. I read the report and asked John Baily to write us a story for *Songlines*. That was published in Autumn 2001 with the cover-line *SILENCE, Music in Afghanistan*. “The ban amounts to the prohibition of all musical instruments and of the sounds they make”, wrote Baily. “The Taliban claims that music has a corrupting influence on people, distracting them from their real duties, which are to pray and to praise God.”

It was a timely and disturbing story. *Songlines* is a magazine that gets read in the media world, and after 9/11 and the fall of the Taliban, I was contacted by the BBC. They were interested in a film about the return of music to Afghanistan.

The film was shot in January 2002, just two months after the fall of the Taliban. Kabul was still a mess, but the radio and TV had leapt back into action and cassettes and CDs of Afghan music were being shipped in lorry-loads from Pakistan. On the streets of the city crowds gathered around cassette-stalls in large numbers and people



groomed and dusted down their ghetto-blasters. There was a hunger for music and a sense of reclaiming an identity.

The documentary, *Breaking the Silence*, captures a unique moment in Afghanistan's history as it re-engages with its soul. It's been shown at several Freemuse events and film festivals and Mashinai, one of the 'stars' of the film and a formidable player of the *sarinda* fiddle who had to work as a butcher during the Taliban years, came to perform in Copenhagen for a Freemuse conference. This is all part of connecting a circle that began with Freemuse's work. Hopefully, drawing different media organisations together around the Music Freedom Day can spread the word further. ■

**John Baily**

Professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

When in 2000 Marie Korpe first asked me to write a report on music censorship in Afghanistan, I was not keen. I had been in Pakistan recently, and applied to the Afghan Consulate for a visa, a request which was refused. I realised the photo I had submitted was wrong, I was clean-shaven and sporting a loud check golfing jacket. Writing for Freemuse was not going to help me with the next visa request. But I changed my mind some weeks later when I was in Switzerland to introduce a group of exiled musicians at a series of concerts, describing what they did as “the music you cannot hear in Afghanistan today.” And at one concert I received from a Herati living in Switzerland news of how two of my former music teachers in Herat had recently been arrested and savagely beaten. So I agreed to work with Freemuse.

No systematic research was involved in writing this report. I based it in part on my knowledge of music in Afghanistan acquired from two-and-a-half years of field research in the 1970s, mainly in Herat. This formed the base-line against which to measure the effects of the outlawing of music and musicians. I had visited Herat again in 1994, in the Coalition period, when music making was severely constrained, though not banned entirely. There were John Simpson’s remarkable BBC television reports from Kabul, Kate Clark’s BBC radio reports, especially concerning the clandestine popularity of the film *Titanic*. I had first hand testimony from two Afghan friends, one in San Diego, the other in Dublin. The first had been in Herat at the time of a public burning of musical instruments, and his evidence was corroborated after the publication of my report by a cutting he sent me from the local Herati newspaper. There was Ahmad Rashid’s book *Taliban, Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, which reproduced some of the Taliban edicts, including those concerning music, and I had a number of newspaper cuttings, some from English languages papers in Pakistan, provided by a UN contact in Islamabad. On the basis of this “rag-bag of old research, newspaper clippings,



JOHN BAILEY

"Can you stop  
the birds singing?"



THE CENSORSHIP OF MUSIC  
IN AFGHANISTAN

F R E E M U S E

"Can you stop the birds singing?", report-cover.

academic sources personal contacts and others,” I wrote my report, illustrated with a CD of recordings, including two Taliban *taranas*. In my report I was keen to explain why for many Afghans the Taliban at least provided security after a period of extreme chaos and lawlessness. I was also interested to draw parallels between Taliban attitudes to music and those of George Fox, the founder of The Society of Friends (The Quakers).

When “*Can you stop the birds singing?*” was launched in the spring of 2001 I had every expectation that the Taliban would remain in power in Kabul for the foreseeable future, with dire consequences for the music culture of Afghanistan. The unexpected change in the political horizon that took place at the end of 2001 meant, amongst other things, that a lot more information became available about the censorship of music under Taliban rule, and the continuing censorship of music in many parts of the country. I made periodic visits to Kabul after 2002 and have updated my account in “Music and Censorship in Afghanistan, 1973-2003”, in Laudan Nooshin’s forthcoming *Music and the Play of Power: Music, Politics and Ideology in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia* (Ashgate). Today, the situation remains fluid, there is plenty of musical activity in the major cities like Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar, but in many rural areas one suspects that music is tightly controlled by local “warlords”.

Several matters remain unclear and require further research. For example, according to Taliban edict 13 “To prevent the playing of music drum. The prohibition of this should be announced. If anybody does this then the religious elders can decide about it” (the English is the Taliban’s own). I had assumed this referred to the frame drum (*daireh*), very much an instrument of women’s domestic music in Afghanistan, but now I think it referred to the *dobol*, a double-headed barrel drum used to play rhythms for the *Atan* dance, a virtuosic and high energy outdoor group performance strongly associated with the Pashtun peoples. When I visited the frame drum seller in Kabul’s old city in 2002 I was told that the frame drum had been banned by the Taliban. A year later, in the same shop, I was assured that this drum had not been banned, because, according to tradition, Prophet Mohammad is said to have sanctioned its use on a festive occasion.



I would also like to know more about the Taliban *taranas*, their so-called “chants”, which to my ears sound very like traditional Pashtun folk songs, performed without musical instruments, and using religious texts. No doubt there is a “musical” aesthetic which can be applied to this singing, and it is known that certain professional singers of popular music were made to record such songs for the radio. Radio Afghanistan has retained the archive of sound recordings made during Taliban times, and no doubt these contain many lessons for the researcher of music censorship. ■

## FOLK SINGER FERHAT TUNÇ ACQUITTED IN IZMIR

**Jens-Peter Bonde**

President of EU Democrats  
Danish member of the European Parliament from 1979-2008

On 2 October 2007 I went to Izmir in Turkey and joined a small delegation, which had flown in to observe a trial against the popular singer and composer, Ferhat Tunç.

The courtroom was completely packed and the front row was occupied by ten armed police officers. Initially Tunç was up for three years of prison, according to the prosecution authority. His only crime was to have expressed his compassion with dead soldiers on both sides of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict during a concert, which has cost the lives of 34,000 people. Tunç and his lawyers called the case “a disgrace” and that the prosecution “lacked proof”. After an hour the prosecutor very surprisingly chose to withdraw the charges against Tunç, leading to his acquittal.

I was and still am very delighted with the good result of the court case. A lot of attention helped. Our small delegation was comprised of the Danish folk singer and entertainer Niels Hausgaard, secretary general Poul-Henrik Jensen from the Danish Society for Jazz, Rock and Folk Composers (DJBFA), and Ole Reitov from Freemuse. There was also a representative from the European Commission’s office in Ankara, who wanted to pursue the case. They follow 140 other cases, some of which are about the violation of Turkish artists’ rights to freedom of expression as well. It helps to have a representative of the Commission present.

When we went to Izmir we had not imagined that Ferhat Tunç could participate in the massively attended press conference directly after the trial. But he could, and afterwards I could hand over to him my “Play Danish” prize from DJBFA. They awarded the prize to me earlier in 2007 – not for singing and playing – but for my continuous support for composer rights in the EU. Around 1400 euro also came with a statuette and after having consulted DJBFA and Freemuse, I decided to hand over the money to a composer in need or in prison.







After the trial: Press meeting outside the court house in Izmir.

The choice was obvious – Ferhat Tunç, as our Turkish and Kurd sources confirmed that he had no connections with the PKK, but continues to be targeted and harassed by Turkish authorities.

Freedom of speech is one of the fundamental freedoms in the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, which Turkey has joined and is therefore obliged to follow. It is also a condition for EU membership. This membership moved closer with Ferhat Tunç's acquittal. ■





Music Freedom Day 2008: Chiwoniso Maraire, Ferhat Tunç, Mari Boine, Kris Kristofferson and Mikael Wiehe at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway.

### **Bente Erichsen**

Director of Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway

During 2007, The Nobel Peace Center produced an exhibit about freedom of expression, called “Freedom of Expression – How Free is Free?”. This exhibit featured all aspects of freedom of expression, including whistle blowing, revelation of military secrets, religion, human rights activists, hate speech, and the freedom of cultural expression such as literature, films, pop culture, and of course music. In our work with this exhibit, we benefited from invaluable help and assistance from Freemuse. They provided both cases and texts for the exhibition, and have thus been a very important collaborating partner for the Nobel Peace Center in 2007.

Because we see freedom of musical expressions as so inherently important, in 2008 the Nobel Peace Center in collaboration with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) and Concerts Norway (Rikskonsertene) organized a seminar on March 3, the day known as Music Freedom Day. Music Freedom Day was established in 2006 by Freemuse. In this project as well, Freemuse played a very important part in providing input and information about the current situation for musical freedom of expression, and direction as to which are the most important challenges we face today in this important field of human rights work. The seminar featured international artists such as Kris Kristofferson, Ferhat Tunç, Chiwoniso Maraire and Mari Boine. Freemuse also handed out the very first Freemuse Award at the seminar. The Award was given to reggae performer Tiken Jah Fakoly from the Ivory Coast.

The Nobel Peace Center sees the freedom of musical expressions as an extremely important human right, and we are concerned about the situation for musicians and composers today. The Nobel Peace Center recognizes the important role Freemuse as an organisation plays internationally in the fight for freedom for musical expressions, and we are very grateful for their work. We look forward to continuing this important collaboration with Freemuse in the years to come. ■





Poster: Zentsuraren aurkako jaialdia / Festival contra la censura / Festival against censorship.

**Jose Angel Serrano Fernandez**

Festival Director, Spain

Music is a free representation of ideas, traditions and feelings of individuals and societies. It expresses the hopes and desires of musicians, their joys and sorrows, their cultural identity. And these expressions may cause conflicts with people in power. The visions of the musicians may plainly not be popular or are far from the mainstream of thinking of a government or a group with vested interests. Because of this, there are people all over the world who feel threatened only because they practise a free exchange of ideas. Some people will use any means to stop them. As Orson Welles has said: "If freedom means anything it is the right to speak to those who don't want to listen."

The censorship of music has been and is executed by states, regions, educational systems, families, conquerors and pressure groups. In most cases this is a violation of the international human rights conventions.

In our case, in our very house, there are a lot of artists who have experienced censorship, have had their concerts stopped, been denied justice, been banned... We can refer to Su Ta Gar, Soziedad Alcoholicola, Fermín Muguruza, Berri Txarrak, Lehiotikan, the film director Julio Medem for his documentary film "La Pelota Vasca: La Piel contra la Piedra", Negu Kortatu por su tema "Sarri, Sarri"... This listing is not concluded and the list grows from day to day.

Because of all this we organized a festival as a celebration of all the artists that for some reason, at some time, in some country... have been censored. Our relation to Freemuse is one of sincere respect and support in all the activities it undertakes to reach its goals: to make the problems caused by censorship of music known and to fight for the rights of all people to express themselves. This is also the reason why we embarked on organizing our *Zentsuraren aurkako jaialdia / Festival contra la censura / Festival against censorship* in Gernika. ■



## FREEMUSE INSPIRES RESEARCH AND TEACHING

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### **Annette Kirkegaard**

Associate Professor in Musicology,  
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Since the very start of Freemuse in 1998 I have been closely following the development of the organisation. I work as an ethnomusicologist and have always felt the need to expand the field of research so it can become directly related to the conspicuously difficult conditions for people doing fieldwork in almost all parts of the world. Therefore I have introduced some of my students to research on music censorship. They have all been very happy to use their academic skills in a practical way related directly to the composers and musicians. Some of them have attended the two Freemuse world conferences in Copenhagen. Through this the contact with Freemuse gave the students a chance to meet international scholars and guests without expensive travel.

I have given two formal series of lectures on censorship at Copenhagen University and both have dealt with a wide range of topics, covering popular music, world music as well as art music. The knowledge of the students, their different qualitative choices and their fieldwork has made the courses very inspiring and lively. Covering topics like the death accident at the Roskilde festival in 2000 to the development in South African post apartheid music culture, students have taken the risk and the chance to enhance their interest in ethnomusicological fieldwork by addressing questions of freedom of expression and the role of music when coping with life.

For me as a trained ethnomusicologist some of the perspectives in the study of musical censorship seem quite familiar. The context based study of music which since the 1960s has dominated the discipline, provides a strong platform for the study of music censorship. Gender and race are crucial aspects and in this way the study of music censorship is clearly related to what is called postcolonial studies, in which the formerly colonised and dominated areas of the world have risen in a cultural movement claiming respect, equality and rights to freedom of expression. I believe that the cases which Freemuse documents

give very important insights into the intricate relations between power and music, even if this may not be a common view in musicology, where some colleagues argue that censorship is not about *the music* but rather about everything else – texts, dresses, places and dance.

In their work the Freemuse people always directly involve musicians and journalists, and this in my view becomes a very strong demonstration of how to use an interdisciplinary approach to bridge the unwanted gap between scholars and the people who make music.

So in conclusion I can say that my involvement with Freemuse has also brought many new and fascinating kinds of music to my life. Music which we hopefully, by combining the different perspectives of performers, journalists and scholars, can support; music which should not be silenced! ■





## CENSOR MEETS CENSORED – FREEMUSE IN HARARE

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### **Maxwell Sibanda**

Journalist, Zimbabwe

Fifty personalities who included journalists, musicians, government officials, music administrators, radio and television presenters spent a historic day locked in a discussion on music censorship.

The personalities converged at The Mannenberg Jazz Club, Harare, Zimbabwe in April 2005 for the one-day seminar sponsored by Freemuse. At the time, music censorship was rife in Zimbabwe as the ruling party tried to silence all alternative sources of information. Government had itself recorded more than six propaganda music albums. Two cabinet ministers composed most of the songs on these albums. A number of musicians had their music blacklisted and some including Thomas Mapfumo had fled the country. Radio and television continued to play pro-government musicals while blacking out independent songs. Disc jockeys who could not toe government directives left the state broadcaster in droves, some were fired.

The timing of the seminar was crucial and testing to the participants who had come from as far as Sweden, Denmark and South Africa. For the seminar to take place, a clearance letter was sought from the police. According to Zimbabwe's Public Order And Security Act any grouping of more than three people requires police clearance.

This was the first time that the Zimbabwean music industry had met face to face with government officials to discuss music censorship. The government censorship board which had been elusive sent its official while the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe sent its Deputy Director, Elvas Mari.

There were eight keynote presentations on varying aspects of music censorship in Zimbabwe presented by former radio disc jockeys, record company executives, music journalists and testimonies by musicians who had been affected. The censor was in defence of his board saying they have never banned a song "but left the decisions to

individual broadcasters.”

The seminar screened a music censorship documentary featuring Roger Lucey who had been a victim of music censorship during apartheid South Africa. After screening Lucey talked about his experience in apartheid South Africa and how music censors destroyed his once illustrious career. The documentary opened up the eyes of the gathering, some of whom had never dealt with any issues of music censorship.

It was interesting to note that an ensuing discussion by the group showed that music censorship was rife in Zimbabwe and more so on the political and religious fronts. Music censorship was traced back to rural and community villages. There were abundant examples of particular songs only sung at funerals.

The grouping deliberated on the definition of music censorship with others pointing out that what could be censored in Africa may pass in the West. Others were of the opinion that censorship was good as it protected society from dirty or obscene music compositions.

The personalities were grateful to Freemuse for holding the seminar. They bemoaned the absence of data on music censorship in Africa and hoped the gathering would usher a new era.

Ole Reitov, a Freemuse representative gave an insight into the work of Freemuse. The personalities were appreciative of Freemuse’s work although some had initially thought the organisation was only against governments that censored musicians. It became apparent that music censorship was a broad subject, not only covering political or religious issues. Censorship could be found in homes, at school or work.

At the end of the seminar it was enlightening to note that most could now identify music censorship which they had always passed on. For the personalities it was a triumph to hold the heated discussion in a country under deep repression. It was recommended that there should be more research on music censorship in Africa, Freemuse should open an office in Africa, a follow-up seminar should be held, and that journalists and musicians should link and update each other on music censorship issues. ■





## APPENDICES

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## MEDIA COVERAGE & WEBSITE

Since 1998, when the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Music and Censorship took place, Freemuse activities have been covered by a large amount of media.

The media coverage includes more than 1000 articles in magazines, newspapers and on websites from all over the world. There have also been close to 200 radio broadcasts about Freemuse. Freemuse has also appeared on TV stations such as CNN in Turkey and the US, the Arab satellite channel Rotana and Arte as well as national TV stations in Spain, Afghanistan, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

[www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org) was launched on 31 January, 2001. It was the first website to deal with banned music around the world. Today it is the world's largest database on music censorship. In early 2008, the total number of people visiting [www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org) reached 1,000,000.

The website covers incidents of censorship of music as well as death threats and serious ill-treatment of musicians on every continent. The website is regularly updated and includes records of censorship in more than 80 countries. ■

Visit [www.freemuse.org/sw372.asp](http://www.freemuse.org/sw372.asp) for complete lists of the Freemuse media coverage over the years.





## TEN YEARS OF FREEMUSE ACTIVITIES – A LIST OF MAIN EVENTS

### 2008

#### **Nordic Middle East Meeting**

14 January. Meeting for researchers, journalists, musical and cultural producers from the Nordic countries specialised in music in the MENA region.

#### **Music Docs – Film screenings & seminar**

23-24 February. "Sounds of Silence", a documentary about the underground hip-hop scene in Iran, is screened at Music Docs film festival in Sweden and in Denmark. The film show is followed by a seminar in presence of the film directors and Freemuse.

#### **Music Freedom Day – 3 March**

The Nobel Peace Center in Norway hosts a seminar on music and freedom of expression and a concert with artists from four countries. The concert is broadcasted live in Norway, web-casted and offered to members of the European Broadcasting Union.

#### **Freemuse Award**

The first Award winner, Tiken Jah Fakoly from the Ivory Coast, is announced at the Music Freedom Day. The award is financed through a donation from the Björn Afzelius International Culture Fund.

#### **Film screening at the Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg**

6 March. The Freemuse sponsored documentary film "Stopping the Music" is screened at the Museum of World Cultures and at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The screenings are followed by a discussion between the two main characters and the audiences.

#### **Meeting the International Music Council in Brno**

19 April. Freemuse holds talks with the Advocacy Working Group and Board of the International Music Council, IMC, regarding common ground for future projects.

#### **Seminar for journalists from Sri Lanka**

24 April. A half-day seminar on music and freedom of expression for 23 journalists at a training course in Copenhagen.

#### **Campaigns in support of arrested musicians**

Between March and August Freemuse joins several campaigns in support of arrested artists:

**Cameroon:** Lapiro de Mbanga and Joe La Conscience are arrested in Cameroon on 9 April and 20 March 2008 for criticising constitutional amendments allowing the country's president unlimited terms of office. Freemuse joins the international campaign launched by the Media Foundation for West Africa.

**China/Tibet:** Singer Jamyang Kyi is reported to have been held without charges by Chinese authorities since 1 April 2008. International PEN fears that Jamyang Kyi may be held for her activism concerning Tibet.

**Myanmar/Burma:** Win Maw, lead guitarist in the music group Shwe Tan Zin, is arrested by Burmese authorities on 27 November 2007. His arrest is thought to be part of the wider crackdown on pro-democracy activists.





**Cameroon:** Another appeal for songwriter Lapiro de Mbanga detained for his lyrics. The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of International PEN and Freemuse protests the four-month detention of the well-known singer-songwriter. International PEN Writers in Prison Committee sends the appeal on 7 August 2008.

**Cuba:** Gorki Aguilá, a punk-rock musician, is arrested on 25 August 2008 and faces up to four year's imprisonment for 'peligrosidad' (social dangerousness). A campaign in his support catches international media attention at his trial in court. On 29 August the court dismisses the charges.

#### **Somalia seminar and report**

4 July. Freemuse facilitates a seminar on restrictions and censorship of music in Somalia. The seminar organised by Somali PEN, is attended by musicians and journalists from Mogadishu. The seminar report is published on the Freemuse website in September.

#### **Human Rights & the Middle East – Lecture**

7 August. Freemuse lectures on Music & Censorship in the MENA region (Middle East & North-ern Africa) attended by international students at Lund University, Sweden.

#### **Freemuse Award Ceremony in Dublin**

23 August. Tiken Jah Fakoly receives the Freemuse Award statuette in connection with his Ireland debut concert at Dublin's Festival of World Cultures.

#### **White Paper on Visa issues – Presentation**

3-5 September. "VISAS/the discordant note" is presented at the Creole Festival in Dortmund.

#### **European Social Forum – Film screening**

19-20 September. Film screening and seminar at the European Social Forum, Malmö, Sweden.

#### **Danish Refugee Council – Concert Against Music Censorship**

24 October. Freemuse provides research and video clips for the event in Copenhagen.

#### **Festival Against Censorship**

21-25 October. Freemuse participates in seminars at the Festival Against Censorship in Bilbao.

#### **Art Venture Freedom to Create Prize – Freemuse is a nominating organisation**

31 October. Freemuse nominates three musicians. Out of more than 900 nominations, all the artists nominated by Freemuse make it to the final shortlist.

#### **WOMEX – seminar**

29 October-3 November. Freemuse hosts a seminar presenting "VISAS/the discordant note".

#### **Lecture for journalists from the MENA region**

6 November. Freemuse lectures on music and freedom of expression for 20 journalists from the MENA region at a course arranged by The Institute for Further Education of Journalists, Sweden.

#### **ECA Annual Conference – Artist Mobility**

8 November. Freemuse presents "VISAS / the discordant note" in Dublin.

#### **Aspen Culture Diplomacy Forum – "Culture in Conflict/Culture on the Move"**

13 November. Freemuse participates in the conference held in Paris.

#### **Freemuse Report**

Research and production of Freemuse report on heavy metal.

#### **CD – Banned Music**

A CD with banned music is being produced during 2008.

#### **Freemuse Anniversary Booklet**

Edited by Krister Malm. Publication expected in November 2008.

## 2007

### **Declaration demanding abolishment of Turkey's Article 301**

Freemuse joins 29 non-governmental organisations releasing a joint declaration demanding abolishment of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, and other articles which violate freedom of expression.

### **Music Docs – Film screening & seminar**

Pakistani rock star Salman Ahmad and editor of Songlines Simon Broughton take part in film screenings of "The Rockstar and the Mullah", "Breaking the Silence" and "Sufi Soul" in Malmö, Sweden, and Copenhagen, Denmark. Panel discussions are arranged after the screenings.

### **Music Freedom Day – 3 March**

Music Freedom Day is initiated by Freemuse in 2007. International magazines, radio and TV stations focus on music censorship. Freemuse produces video clips, sound files and a signature song.

### **Meeting with IMC**

Freemuse participates in a meeting organised by International Music Council with the aim of discussing a strategy for music sector development in developing countries.

### **Journalist workshop – Stringer course in South Africa**

Freemuse organises a two-day workshop addressing experienced journalists from Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the field of human rights and music. The aim is to develop a stringer network for online publication on freemuse.org

### **Safe cities**

In collaboration with Danish PEN, Freemuse joins a call to the Danish government for establishing "safe cities" for persecuted writers, musicians and artists.

### **"Spring of Culture" – Declaration in support of Marcel Khalife**

Freemuse issues a declaration in support of Marcel Khalife's banned performance at the "Spring of Culture Festival" in Bahrain. A news alert about the situation in Bahrain is distributed by e-mail to more than 1,500 journalists, organisations and governmental bodies.

### **Middle East report in Arabic**

Freemuse publishes an Arabic web-edition of the report "All that is banned is desired".

### **"The Cage is Singing" – Afghanistan**

Poet, musician, and human rights activist Samay Hamed produces a series of video interviews with censored musicians in Afghanistan for freemuse.org. Hamed further collects stories of music censorship in Afghanistan for a Freemuse book entitled "The Cage is singing!".

### **Swedish East African Music Network – Workshop**

Freemuse runs a workshop on music censorship for music organisations and music sector professionals from East Africa under the SEAMN network conference in Ethiopia

### **Freemuse enters MySpace**

[www.myspace.com/musiccensorship](http://www.myspace.com/musiccensorship)

### **"Shoot the Singer!" – "Sparate sul pianista!"**

Nobel Prize laureate Dario Fo introduces the Italian edition of the book "Shoot the Singer" edited by the Freemuse Executive Director. The book is launched at a seminar at the Torino International Book Fair.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Gathering – Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Istanbul**

Freemuse joins sister organisations such as International PEN, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and International Publishers Association at the "5<sup>th</sup> G" summit to discuss global and local freedom of expression issues.



#### **14<sup>th</sup> IASPM bi-annual conference, Mexico**

Freemuse presents its work at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music meeting held in Mexico City. The presentation includes speeches and music by Mexican corrido singer Andrés Contreras and musician/author Elijah Wald.

#### **Conference about the Music in the World of Islam, Morocco**

Freemuse advisory board member Annette Kirkegaard and Freemuse report writer John Bailly inform about Freemuse and raise questions about music censorship in the MENA region.

#### **"Music will not be silenced" – Launch of report**

The report summarises the sessions from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Freemuse World Conference on Music and Censorship in Istanbul. It also includes audio and video material with 13 musicians, speakers and two new songs recorded by artists who participated in the World Conference.

#### **Artists in residency – freeDimensional Network**

As a nominating organisation, Freemuse attends a network meeting with artists in residency centres, human rights activists and artists collaborating through freeDimensional.

#### **Clash within civilisations – Speech**

Freemuse speaks on "Music censorship – the Clash within Civilisations" at the international Grieg Symposium in Bergen, Norway.

#### **Nobel Peace Center – Exhibition about freedom of expression**

Freemuse assists and contributes exhibit texts about censored musicians to the exhibition "Freedom of Expression – How Free is Free?" at the Nobel Peace Center in Norway.

#### **Cultural studies, Switzerland**

Freemuse speaks at an international seminar panel organised by Kulturwissenschaft und Europäische Ethnologie der Universität Basel in Switzerland.

#### **Freemuse observes at trial in Izmir, Turkey**

An international delegation joins the Freemuse campaign to observe the court case against the Kurdish musician Ferhat Tunç at the Izmir 10<sup>th</sup> High Criminal Court on 4 October.

#### **Music censorship in China – Seminar**

Focusing on restrictions on artistic creativity in China, Freemuse moderates at the seminar Sound Around, The Øresund Biennale of Contemporary Music, Malmö, Sweden.

#### **Festival Against Censorship in Gernika**

Inspired by the work of Freemuse, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of "Festival against censorship" takes place in October in Spain. Highlighted by concerts, Freemuse joins the press launch with artists and intellectuals in a panel on censorship.

#### **Musician's visa problems addressed at Womex**

More than 50 professionals from the World Music sector attend a seminar at the Womex trade fair in Seville on 25-28 October and decide to make a joint attempt to address the complex European visa procedures for musicians from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Freemuse offers to host an organised collection of case stories to bring forward to the EU commission and the EU Parliament.

#### **"Music, War and Re-conciliation" – Conference**

Musicologist Andrew Weintraub from University of Pittsburgh presents the work of Freemuse at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference Society for Ethnomusicology in October in Ohio, USA. The overall theme of the conference is: "Music, War and Re-conciliation".

#### **Belarus report in Russian**

Freemuse publishes a Russian-language web-edition of the report "Hidden Truths – Music, Politics and censorship in Lukashenko's Belarus".

### **"Music, power, censorship and religion"**

Freemuse and Jonas Otterbeck, PhD in History of Religions, take part in the seminar "Music, power, censorship and religion", at the Festival of Sacred Music, Uppsala, Sweden.

### **Rewriting Music History**

At an International Symposium for Histories of Popular Music at the Sibelius Academy in Finland, Freemuse lectures on new ways of describing music history from the perspective of the effects and mechanisms of music censorship.

## **2006**

### **International campaign for Ferhat Tunç**

Freemuse and musicians worldwide request the Turkish State to drop its case against singer Ferhat Tunç.

### **Ferhat Tunç meets Danish MP's**

Freemuse organises meetings for Kurdish singer Ferhat Tunç with leading parliamentarians and high-level representatives from Danish Amnesty, PEN and Arts organisations in Copenhagen, Denmark.

### **"Singing in the Echo Chamber" – Launch of USA report**

The report on the censorship of music in the US post 9/11 is presented at the yearly meeting of IASPM, US branch, at the University of Murfreesborough, Tennessee, US.

### **Popular culture workshop in Istanbul**

Freemuse runs a seminar arranged by the European Culture Foundation in Istanbul.

### **Belarus report at Gothenburg Book Fair**

Freemuse presents the Belarus report at the international book fair in collaboration with Swedish Helsinki Committee. The report writer, Lemez Lovas and the Belarusian singer Rusia discuss the status of music censorship.

### **Artists in residencies**

In collaboration with the organisation freeDimensional, Freemuse provides artists in residences for the Lebanese composer Joëlle Khoury and the Afghan VJ Shakeb.

### **Lecture at Bilgi University, Istanbul**

Lecture for students at the Department of Law.

### **WOMEX**

Freemuse organises the seminar "New Horizons for Freemuse" presented by Freemuse and French-Lebanese rapper Clotaire K.

### **Bant Magazine**

A special issue on music censorship published by the Turkish magazine Bant in May 2006 is translated into English and published for the World Conference in Istanbul.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Freemuse World Conference on Music and Censorship**

200 professional musicians, scholars, and composers from 22 countries participate in the World Conference hosted by Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey.

### **"Hidden Truths" – Launch of Belarus report**

The report on music censorship in Belarus is published and launched at the World Conference on Music and Censorship in Istanbul.

### **Media Clip Book**

Freemuse media coverage 1998-2006 is compiled and scanned for later publication.



### **"All that is Banned is Desired" – report on music in the Middle East**

Freemuse publishes the report from the conference organised in Beirut, Lebanon.

## **2005**

### **Afghan Children's CD**

Production and release of the first Afghan children's CD "Alocha", produced by Dr. Samay Hamed and with financial support from Rebelle Records, Sweden.

### **Seminar in Amman**

Freemuse hosts a round table meeting in Amman with focus on music censorship in the Middle East.

### **Seminar in Zimbabwe**

A Freemuse seminar in Harare in the last week of April 2005 deals with musicians' fear of the political system in Zimbabwe, and the massive government control of radio and television.

### **Conference in West Africa**

Freemuse organises a seminar on music and censorship in West Africa, hosted by the Gorée Institute in Senegal. The seminar focuses on possible relationships between democracy and vibrant music cultures and how religious, political and other power structures play a significant role in repression of musical cultures.

### **"Stopping the Music" – Educational material**

A students and a teachers guide to a film about censorship of popular music during apartheid in South Africa is written by Michael Drewett. The film and educational material is used on a tour of South African schools.

### **Conference on Freedom of Expression in Music, Beirut**

The conference is organised in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Foundation/Middle East Office and the local music organisation IRAB.

### **Women and music censorship**

A study on women and music censorship – from past to present, is conducted by Freemuse intern Eva Fenn. The report is published on [freemuse.org](http://freemuse.org).

### **Campaign for Ferhat Tunç**

Freemuse launches an international campaign requesting the Turkish state to drop its case against singer Ferhat Tunç.

## **2004**

### **Sida seminar – Lecture**

Freemuse representative lectures on Performance, the Aspect of Freedom of Expression and Democracy at a seminar organised by Sida.

### **"Shoot the Singer! Music Censorship Today" – Book launch**

New book on worldwide censorship of music, edited by Freemuse executive Director, is published by Zed Books, London. The book is presented at a combined book launch and one-day seminar on music censorship at SOAS, University of London, UK.

### **Freemuse @ SPOT 2004 – Speech**

Freemuse presents a speech on global music censorship at the annual SPOT festival in Denmark.

### **"Don't Stop the Music" – ZAPP Magazine**

Publication of theme issue of the Danish youth magazine ZAPP on global music censorship, co-edited by Freemuse. The magazine, published in English, is distributed to selected libraries and schools in Afghanistan, South Africa, Ghana and Palestine.

### **WOMEX – Conference sessions**

Freemuse takes part in the annual WOMEX (World Music Expo) and hosts two conference sessions: "Meet the banned! Music censorship in Turkey", featuring Turkish musician Ferhat Tunç and human rights activist Sanar Yurdutapan, and "9/11 - the World's All out of Tune", presenting the book of the same name and discussing freedom of musical expression post 9/11.

### **"Mixing Pop & Politics: Music Making Change" & "Horen, Zien en Schrijven"**

Freemuse contributes information material to the annual Mixing Pop & Politics conference, Montreal, Canada and to the Human Rights festival: "Horen, Zien en Schrijven (To Hear, to See and to Write) – artists for human rights". The festival, organised by the Lancelot Foundation, takes place in Den Haag, Netherlands.

## **2003**

### **Folk Alliance – Conference session**

Freemuse hosts a session on freedom of musical expression, and the Freemuse sponsored documentary film "Stopping the Music" is screened in Nashville, USA.

### **Action for jailed Moroccan musicians**

Freemuse alerts media and offers legal assistance in support of 9 musicians and 5 fans arrested at a heavy metal concert in Casablanca on 16 February. They are accused of practising Satanism because of the style of music they perform, their attire and CDs they own.

### **China – ASEM cultural seminar**

Freemuse lectures on "Regimes as musical vampires & blood transfusions to traditional music", at a seminar organised by the musicologist cultural wing of ASEM.

### **Lecture on freedom of expression in music**

Lecture for South African guest students at the Danish Rhythmic Music Conservatory.

### **"Which way Nigeria? – Music under Threat" – Launch of Nigeria report**

The report on music and censorship in Nigeria is launched at Centre Culturel Suédois in Paris. Nigerian master-drummer Tony Allen and composer Ray Lema, a member of the Freemuse advisory board, contribute to the event.

### **Roskilde Festival – Press conference**

Freemuse organises a well-attended press conference and debate on freedom of musical expression, with renowned musicians such as Damon Albarn and Tony Allen.

### **ZIFF, Festival of the Dhow-countries – Film screening and seminar**

Freemuse organises a film screening of "Stopping the Music" and the seminar "Music – a Human Right" at the Zanzibar International Film Festival.

### **IASPM (International Association for the Study of Popular Music)**

Freemuse organises a panel discussion on music and censorship at the IASPM conference in Montréal, Canada.

### **Durban International Film Festival – DIFF**

The documentary film "Stopping the Music" is screened at DIFF in Durban, South Africa. Freemuse is represented by Roger Lucey, one of the main characters in the film.



**Michael Drewett**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology  
Rhodes University, South Africa

In the late 1990s, as part of my doctoral research, I began to research popular music censorship in apartheid South Africa. Fortuitously my work led to introductions to Martin Cloonan and Ole Reitov, two of the original pioneers involved in setting-up Freemuse. Right from the start Ole encouraged me to become involved in Freemuse's programme and he invited me to a landmark Freemuse workshop on South African popular music censorship held in Johannesburg in 2001.

The workshop included key musicians, policy makers, independent record company executives and others who explored the implications of South Africa's past for our present understanding of music censorship and to discuss ways forward. While there has been a frustrating lack of action from the South African participants since then, the workshop nevertheless acts as a crucial starting point to a process of exploring South Africa's censored music.

My research and Freemuse's interest in South Africa's transition from censorship under apartheid led to two meaningful collaborations which underline the importance of Freemuse as an organisation working towards free musical expression. The first was their sponsorship and active support of the documentary film *Stopping the Music*, about anti-apartheid protest singer Roger Lucey and Paul Erasmus, the security policeman assigned to end Lucey's career. The documentary traced their story and brought the two together for the first time since their confrontations back in the early 1980s.

The experience of making and watching the film has inspired many people around the world, not least of all the two central protagonists themselves. This was made possible because Freemuse have actively sought venues for viewings, from the United States to Turkey and Tanzania.



**Jose Angel Serrano Fernandez**

Festival Director, Spain

Music is a free representation of ideas, traditions and feelings of individuals and societies. It expresses the hopes and desires of musicians, their joys and sorrows, their cultural identity. And these expressions may cause conflicts with people in power. The visions of the musicians may plainly not be popular or are far from the mainstream of thinking of a government or a group with vested interests. Because of this, there are people all over the world who feel threatened only because they practise a free exchange of ideas. Some people will use any means to stop them. As Orson Welles has said: "If freedom means anything it is the right to speak to those who don't want to listen."

The censorship of music has been and is executed by states, regions, educational systems, families, conquerors and pressure groups. In most cases this is a violation of the international human rights conventions.

In our case, in our very house, there are a lot of artists who have experienced censorship, have had their concerts stopped, been denied justice, been banned... We can refer to Su Ta Gar, Soziedad Alcoholicola, Fermín Muguruza, Berri Txarrak, Lehiotikan, the film director Julio Medem for his documentary film "La Pelota Vasca: La Piel contra la Piedra", Negu Kortatu por su tema "Sarri, Sarri"... This listing is not concluded and the list grows from day to day.

Because of all this we organized a festival as a celebration of all the artists that for some reason, at some time, in some country... have been censored. Our relation to Freemuse is one of sincere respect and support in all the activities it undertakes to reach its goals: to make the problems caused by censorship of music known and to fight for the rights of all people to express themselves. This is also the reason why we embarked on organizing our *Zentsuraren aurkako jaialdia / Festival contra la censura / Festival against censorship* in Gernika. ■





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#### **Action for imprisoned Cuban musician**

Freemuse launches an international campaign for a fair trial for Gorki Aguilá, and requests the Cuban government to reconsider the court case.

#### **Freemuse receives WOMEX AWARD**

Freemuse receives WOMEX AWARD 2003 and arranges two seminars on cultural boycott and post 9/11 effects on freedom of musical expression.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Gathering – The Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Istanbul**

On behalf of Freemuse, Roger Lucey and Paul Erasmus represents Freemuse at the seminar. The documentary film "Stopping the Music" about Paul and Roger is screened.

## **2002**

#### **Latin America and the Middle East – Minor surveys**

Freemuse conducts two minor surveys on Latin America and the Middle East.

#### **Webby Awards**

The Freemuse website is nominated for the prestigious Webby Awards (the Oscar of websites) and attends the award ceremony in San Francisco, USA.

#### **Roskilde Festival – Concerts**

A range of artists perform under Freemuse banner at Roskilde Festival, Denmark.

#### **WOMEX – Conference session**

Freemuse presents its forthcoming Nigeria report and screens the documentary film "Stopping the Music".

#### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Freemuse World Conference on Music and Censorship**

Delegates and speakers from 25 countries attend the conference organised in Copenhagen. The conference hosts a parallel one-day seminar on the status of music in Afghanistan organised by Malek Sitez. Afghan musicians and journalists living in the diaspora and in Kabul take part in the seminar.

#### **"Stopping the Music" – Film premiere**

The Freemuse sponsored video documentary on music censorship in apartheid South Africa; produced and directed by Michael Drewett and Douglas Mitchell world premieres in Copenhagen, Denmark.

## **2001**

#### **Freemuse attends the music fair Midem in France**

#### **Launch of [www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org)**

#### **"The 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Music and Censorship" – Launch of report**

#### **"Can you stop the birds singing?" – Launch of Afghanistan report**

Freemuse first report "Can you stop the birds singing?" – The censorship of music in Afghanistan" is launched in collaboration with International PEN at Kufa Gallery, London, UK.

#### **Arts and Artists Rights Network**

Founding member meeting of AARN (Arts and Artists Rights Network), London, UK.

### **Roskilde Festival**

Participation at Roskilde Festival, Denmark.

### **ICTM (International Council for Traditional Music) World Conference**

Freemuse arranges a panel session on music censorship at the ICTM World Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

### **IASPM (International Association for the Study of Popular Music), Finland**

Freemuse organises session on music and censorship at bi-annual IASPM conference.

### **WOMEX – Opening conference**

Freemuse hosts the Opening Conference at WOMEX in Rotterdam. The recently published Freemuse reports on Romania and Afghanistan are presented by their respective authors.

### **“Playing with Fire” – Launch of report**

The Freemuse report on Zimbabwe and music censorship is launched at a separate seminar at WOMEX.

## **2000**

### **Roskilde Festival**

Four bands play under the Freemuse banner and a Freemuse information booth is set up at the festival venue situated outside Roskilde in Denmark.

### **Freemuse secretariat**

The Freemuse secretariat is established, hosted by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in Copenhagen, Denmark.

### **WOMEX**

Networking at Womex in Berlin, Germany.

## **1999**

### **Fundraising.**

### **Preparation of Charter.**

**Freemuse – The world forum on music and censorship is founded.**

## **1998**

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Music and Censorship.**

**Co-editing of “Smashed Hits”, Index on Censorship Theme Issue 6/98.**

## **1997**

**Research, fundraising and preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Music and Censorship.**





FUNDING

**Core-funding**

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA  
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The Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2000-2006)

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The Danish Center for Culture and Development  
The Danish Ministry for Culture  
The Royal Swedish Academy of Music  
The Sonning Foundation  
Kopifon  
The Danish Musician's Union

Donations have come, from among others, the Oasis, Pet Shop Boys, Sibelius Academy of Music, Lutgard Mutsaers, Björn Afzelius International Culture Foundation and Rebelle Records. ■





**THE FREEMUSE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Daniel Brown  
Martin Cloonan  
Robin Gross  
Kristen Malm  
Tsigue Shiferaw  
Klaus Slavensky  
Layla Al-Zubaidi



**FORMER MEMBERS**

Nathalie Boudjerada  
Ariana Hernandez-Reguant  
Morten Kjærum  
Ray Lema  
Charles Onyango Obbo  
Ole Reitov  
Gerald Seligman  
Bashar Shammout  
Maxwell Sibanda  
Aung Zaw

The members of the Executive Committee are elected at the Freemuse General Assembly. The latest General Assembly took place in September 2008.











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