

SafeMUSE

Safe Music Havens

NORDIC PILOT - INFORMATION FOR HOST CITIES



Ramy Essam, Tahrir Square, Cairo (Photo Mark LeVine)

Ramy Essam, the creator of the famous '#Jan25 Tahrir' song that was played throughout the Egyptian revolution in February 2011, appeared with severe marks of torture after being detained by security forces, reported Egyptian bloggers...

(Freemuse 11 March 2011)

On 26 October 2011, Ramy Essam's concert at the Cairo University Medicine School was abruptly stopped by the Dean of the university.

(27 October 2011)

On 21 November 2011 the Egyptian singer Ramy Essam received the Freemuse Award 2011 at a ceremony in Södra Teatern in Stockholm, Sweden.

(21 November 2011)

....after publicly singing folk songs that were subsequently repeated by half a million demonstrators in the city of Hama, Ibrahim Kashoush was murdered by Assad's Shabiha, or thugs, who deliberately removed his vocal chords both to make a political statement and to prevent him from ever being able to utter Irhal ya Bashar (Bashar Get Out) again.

(“Silencing the singer”, Elie Chalala, Al Jadid, Vol. 16, no. 63, 2011)

“Everybody should be able to sing songs freely in their mother language. It cannot be a crime to sing a folk song...” Raziye Kızıl (known as Gazin) was sentenced to one year in prison for having sung two Kurdish songs and thereby “making propaganda for an illegal organisation”. A second trial now carries an extra five-year prison threat.

(Freemuse/BIA News Center on 11 October 2011)

The singer Hortsang Lhalung Tso was detained by the Chinese authorities just before attending a Tibetan culture show with other popular Tibetans in Tsoe-town. Lhalung Tso was supposed to perform the Night Concert Opening Song – but could not perform her song, because she was detained before the show.

(Freemuse 11 October 2011)

Leonardo Lisandro Guarcax Gonzalez, promoter and defender of indigenous Maya culture in Solola, Guatemala, has been found dead with severe marks of torture. He has been affiliated to the Sotz'il Cultural Centre as an arts teacher and spiritual guide since 2001. This is the third murder to hit the Guarcax family in little more than a year.

(Freemuse 31 August 2010)

On September 12, 1973, Victor Jara was taken, along with thousands of others, as a prisoner to the Chile Stadium. Jara was repeatedly beaten and tortured; the bones in his hands were broken as were his ribs. Fellow political prisoners have testified that his captors mockingly suggested that he play guitar for them as he lay on the ground with broken hands. Defiantly, he sang part of "Venceremos" (We Will Win). He was machine-gunned on September 16, his body dumped on a road on the outskirts of Santiago and then taken to a city morgue where they found 44 bullet shots in his body.

(Wikipedia)

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19
(adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948)

Since the author Salman Rushdie introduced the idea of safe havens or cities of refuge for persecuted writers in the 1990s, this has become a worldwide scheme of 40 cities organized in the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN). Twenty-four of the ICORN member cities are Nordic. The ICORN Administration Centre in Stavanger, Norway, serves as the communication hub for the independently managed ICORN cities. There is to date no parallel scheme for safe *music* havens.

Freemuse, the World Forum on Music and Censorship (www.freemuse.org), an independent international organization which advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide, documented more than 100 violations of the freedom of expression in the field of music in 2011, worldwide. This includes 64 arrests and court cases, 32 cases of injury, torture and attacks, and 3 killed.

The case of Pussy Riot in Russia this year has drawn the world's attention to these issues, and has served as a wakeup call for the international music community. The case has shown that there is a need for increasing awareness of these issues, promoting initiatives that strengthen the freedom of artistic expression and democracy building, and organizing support for endangered musicians worldwide.

In 2011 the Norwegian Musicians' Union (MFO) took the first steps towards establishing a safe music haven scheme: *SafeMUSE, Safe Music Havens Initiative*.

What we want...

Currently there is no international safe music havens scheme in existence. But a number of colleagues around the world are being threatened, imprisoned or even killed as a result of their musical activities. This is not only due to lyrics with a political content, but also because musical expression, often related to specific traditions or ethnic groups, is regarded as an offence – or even as a terrorism-related activity. Specific musical genres, language used in lyrics, or female musical activity may also spark reactions by governments or others in power. There is, however, no principal difference between the need for protection of writers and professionals within the music area. Musicians, composers and tradition bearers also need to work in a safe environment with the freedom of expression ensured by the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The ambition of this project is to establish a scheme of safe music havens inspired by the ICORN cities of refuge for persecuted writers. This will be adapted to the music area, e.g. in relation to the network that will be used for the clearing of the applicants, and in relation to local and regional environments where the candidates will be hosted.

In a pilot phase (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013) SafeMUSE will aim at creating the first 4-5 safe music havens in the Nordic countries. This will help the project's initiators to gain experience and build networks for further development, with the goal of establishing an international scheme.

The first steps:

- **Administration and coordination:** The MFO's SafeMUSE project will be the network hub and coordinator with a function more or less similar to that of the Administration Centre of ICORN (www.icorn.org). Subsequently, after the pilot phase, SafeMUSE will be established as a standalone operation in close collaboration with the associated host cities.
- **Clearing of artists:** SafeMUSE has concluded an agreement with Freemuse for the clearing of artists for the scheme.
- **Hosting cities:** The project is planned on the model of the ICORN network, and the roles and responsibilities of the host cities will closely resemble those of the ICORN cities (see below).
- **Musical environment:** SafeMUSE, in cooperation with the host cities and the SafeMUSE partners, will ensure good relations with relevant local, regional and national music communities, and will establish favourable opportunities for cooperation and work for the hosted artist.

The development of a safe music havens scheme is taking place in dialogue with ICORN.

MFO's role ...

The Norwegian Musicians' Union (MFO) has taken on the role of mentor for the evaluation and the start-up of the project with support from the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO).

The MFO has appointed the following project board for the pilot period: Anders Hovind, Chairman (Vice President MFO), Geir Solum (MFO board member and musician in the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra) and Liv Runesdatter (MFO board member and freelance vocalist, composer and producer). The MFO has engaged Jan Lothe Eriksen as manager of the project.

Partners

In addition to the MFO and the LO, the following partners are currently collaborating on the project:

- Freemuse, the World Forum on Music and Censorship (www.freemuse.org), clearing house and professional liaison with the applicants for the scheme,
- NOPA, the Norwegian Society of Composers and Lyricists (www.nopa.no), which supports the project financially and will serve as a professional liaison with the Norwegian composers' community, as well as maintaining contact with Nordic and international composers' organizations along with SKAP (below),
- SKAP, the Swedish Society of Popular Music Composers (www.skap.se), which will serve primarily as a liaison with the professional communities in Sweden and the Swedish authorities, and along with NOPA also as a liaison with the Nordic and international composers' organizations,
- RFoD, the Swedish Folk Music and Dance Association (www.frod.se), professional liaison with the folk and world music community in Sweden, the other Nordic countries and continental Europe, and
- Soumen Muusikkojen Liitto, the Finnish Musicians' Union (<http://www.muusikkojenliitto.fi/english.html>) which will serve primarily as a liaison with the professional communities in Finland and with the Finnish authorities, and will together with the MFO also maintain contact with the Nordic and international musicians' unions.

Further development of the professional network in the Nordic countries is a priority.

SafeMUSE has established good relations with the Swedish Arts Council. We also consider our ongoing dialogue with ICORN as an important means of arriving at a useful and rational organizational framework in the implementation of the project and a safe music havens initiative.

The International Federation of Musicians (FIM), representing 62 musicians' unions from all over the world, unanimously adopted at its 20th Congress in October 2012 a motion supporting the MFO's safe music havens initiative. The motion also recognizes the work of Freemuse, and encourages the FIM and the member unions to build an international network in the professional field of music to strengthen freedom of expression for musicians and music creators.

The role of the safe havens...

The project is planned on the model of the ICORN network, and the role and responsibilities of a Safe music haven host city will closely resemble those of an "ICORN City of Refuge for Persecuted Writers".

During the pilot period the SafeMUSE secretariat, together with the pilot host cities, will become familiar with and gain experience in the operation of safe music havens. In signing the Host City Agreement with SafeMUSE, the city agrees to:

- Arrange for the relocation and reception of the guest artist to the city (visa, residence permit etc.).
- Provide the artist and his/her family with appropriate housing, and commit to hosting them for a standard period of two years.
- Provide the artist with an appropriate scholarship/grant/financial support for living expenses for his/her period of stay.
- Help the artist to integrate with the local community, both socially and artistically.
- Appoint a Music Haven coordinator to support the artist in legal and practical matters.

(C.f. the attached Safe Muse City Agreement)

The selection of safe music haven artists will take place in close consultation between the relevant city and the SafeMUSE secretariat based on a list collated by Freemuse. This will ensure that the city and the professional music community find the selection of artist appropriate, and that the host period will be as fruitful as possible for all parties.

The idea of Safe Music Havens has not yet been widely launched, but SafeMUSE has approached some cities and communities in the Nordic region about participating in the pilot phase of the project. Currently the idea is under discussion with the Department of Culture of Troms County Council, the Culture and Leisure Administration of the City of Copenhagen, the Culture and Real Estate Division of the City of Stockholm and the Finnish Music Council (umbrella organization for music organizations in Finland). However, further research and development work is necessary in each of these cities before any of them can be established as a Safe Music Haven pilot city.

Freemuse has started the clearing process and has been charged with identifying and assessing the suitability of the first Safe Music Haven candidates.

Budget ...

Network Secretariat

The budget of the network secretariat of SafeMUSE for the preparation/start up phase and the pilot phase is NOK 3 032 000 (EUR 440 000):

- Preparation phase (ca 12 months, starting 28 June 2011): Budget NOK 410 000
- Pilot phase (ca 12 months, starting 15 June 2012): Budget NOK 2 622 000

Subsequently the scheme will be established as a standalone operation.

The budget for administration in the pilot phase covers the running of a network secretariat and the Freemuse preparation costs. The direct costs for each host city and the operation of the safe music havens are not included in this budget. The funding for these expenses must be procured by each host city from national, regional and/or local sources (as in the ICORN scheme).

Based on the experiences of the ICORN network, there will also be a need for an Emergency Fund that can meet unforeseen expenses arising in connection with this type of activity. SafeMUSE is currently working on finding resources for the establishment of such a fund. This is not yet in place.

Until now SafeMUSE has obtained support/commitments amounting to NOK 1.3 million (EUR 177 000) from the LO, the MFO, NOPA, the Norwegian Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs and Nordic Culture Point (Nordic Council of Ministers), but currently lacks at least the equivalent amount. SafeMUSE is continuously working to acquire additional funds as well as stable supplemental funding for the continuation of the project.

Host cities' costs

During the pilot period we will try out and gain experience from the operation of Safe Music Havens. The host cities' periods of responsibility and financial obligations will be the same as for the host cities in the ICORN network, mainly:

- Hosting the artist for a standard period of two years. This includes the provision of furnished housing for the artist (and family, if applicable) and appropriate financial support for living expenses.
- Providing an invitation, visa/residence permit and travel expenses.
- Appointing a Music Haven coordinator to support the artist throughout the hosting period.

Progress ...

The progress of the SafeMUSE scheme is divided into three phases:

- Preparation Phase, 7 January 2011 – 30 June 2012, establishing the groundwork for SafeMUSE.
- Pilot Phase (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013) during which a number of safe music havens will be established in the Nordic countries through close cooperation with Freemuse, several Nordic partners and relevant cities/municipalities, and the founding and running of a standalone organization will be investigated in consultation with the hosting cities, partners and ICORN.
- Independent organization (from 1 July 2013), when the project will be established as an independent organization, gradually expanding to create the international scheme of Safe Music Havens.

The Preparation and Pilot Phases are to be carried out under the auspices of the Norwegian Musicians' Union (MFO) in close cooperation with Freemuse and in dialogue with ICORN and Nordic partners.

SafeMUSE, Safe Music Havens Initiative

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