



FREEMUSE AWARD WINNERS 2010:

MAHSA VAHDAT AND FERHAT TUNÇ

Iranian singer Mahsa Vahdat and Turkish-Kurdish singer and activist Ferhat Tunç are the 2010 Freemuse Award Winners. The artists will receive the award at a ceremony in London on Thursday 25 March.



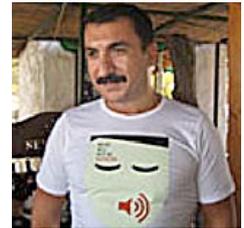
Mahsa Vahdat from Iran and Ferhat Tunç from Turkey are well-known to many Freemuse associates. They are strong defenders of freedom of musical expression and well-known to audiences in Europe, where their music - unlike in their home countries - can be performed without restrictions.

The Award Committee stated: “Mahsa Vahdat continues to resist all pressures that the conservative sectors of Iranian society put on woman musicians.

Despite such pressures Iran has a remarkably vibrant music scene that ridicules the clichés that are often written about the country, and Mahsa is a fabulous example of this. Last year, she recorded an album with Mighty Sam McClain, an artist from the ‘enemy nation’ - the US. Her courage and bold resistance in continuing to follow her artistic muse makes her an ideal laureate.”

“For almost three decades Ferhat Tunç has insisted on exercising his right to perform his music in spite of several court cases and other threats against him,” the Award Committee said in its nomination.

“He has continued to sing songs in the minority language Zaza (Dimli) and in Kurmanci (Kurdish) as well as in Turkish. He has refused in a firm way to succumb to all the intimidations, but without expressing any hatred against his perpetrators. Ferhat has actively propagated the strengthening of human rights and democracy in Turkey.”



Marie Korpe, Freemuse executive director, said: “At Freemuse we have collaborated with Mahsa Vahdat and Ferhat Tunç for several years. They have inspired many artists and human rights activists all over the world. We are particularly pleased that they are also both featured on the new Freemuse CD ‘Listen to the banned’.”

The Freemuse Award statuette is created by world-renowned Swedish glass designer Göran Wärff. Each winner receives 1,000 Euro. The Award is sponsored by the Björn Afzelius International Culture Foundation, BAIK, which was initiated in memory of Swedish rock singer Björn Afzelius who died 1999. Afzelius was a political activist and a strong spokesman for suppressed people.

Last year veteran activist and folk singer Pete Seeger received the Freemuse Award. The first artist to receive the award, in 2008, was exiled Ivorian reggae artist Tiken Jah Fakoly.

The award ceremony on 25 March 2010 will be part of the *Index on Censorship Awards Event* at Royal Institute of British Architects in London. Media interviews can be organised.

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Video interviews:

Mahsa Vahdat: www.freemuse.org/sw11921.asp

Ferhat Tunç: www.freemuse.org/sw34714.asp

FREEMUSE - THE WORLD FORUM ON MUSIC AND CENSORSHIP

The only international organisation advocating freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide
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