

FREEMUSE AWARD WINNER 2011:

RAMY ESSAM



Egyptian singer Ramy Essam, who provided the soundtrack for the Arab Spring at Tahrir Square, is the winner of the 2011 Freemuse Award. The artist will receive the award at a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden, on Monday 21 November 2011.



After eight years spent trying to break into the music business, it took less than two weeks for Ramy Essam to turn from a struggling artist into a celebrated “Singer of the Revolution”. His song ‘Irhal’ (‘Leave’) became an anthem of the protesters at Tahrir Square and he is now working on an album of songs inspired by the events at the beginning of the year.

The Freemuse Award Committee stated: “Ramy Essam played an important role during the Egyptian revolution and suffered severe beatings and torture as a consequence. He personifies the powerful role that music played in the Arab Spring.”

Receiving the news in Cairo, Ramy said: “I was extremely happy when I got the news. I really respect this prize because it calls for freedom of expression in music, protecting musicians and advocating free art that is not subjected to any restrictions. At the same time I was proud because I would be able to achieve something for Egypt.”

Marie Korpe, Freemuse Executive Director, said: “Ramy Essam continues a long tradition of protest singers who have become symbols of civil rights movements and through their music express frustrations and hope in song rather than speech. In 2009 Pete Seeger received the Freemuse Award. Like Seeger, Ramy has shown that one musician with a single instrument can make a difference.”

Ramy will receive the Freemuse Award in Stockholm on 21 November 2011 as part of the international conference and concert *‘Right! Freedom of Music & Speech’* organised by the Swedish Society of Popular Music Composers (SKAP) at Södra Teatern. Read more on right11.se

Freemuse Award

The Freemuse Award is sponsored by the Björn Afzelius International Culture Foundation (BAIK). Björn Afzelius, who died in 1999, was a Swedish rock singer who became a passionate spokesman for suppressed people around the world combining his musical career with political activism.

Media contacts

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