

# RAMY ESSAM

*Voice Of A New Generation*

**“MUSIC IS THE  
STRONGEST  
PEACEFUL  
WEAPON IN  
THE WORLD”**

**- RAMY ESSAM**

**Fuuse**  
voices



# RAMY ESSAM

In 2011 Ramy Essam exploded into international fame as the real voice of the Egyptian revolution. His songs spread like wildfire among the demonstrators, and during the height of the uprising Ramy performed in front of millions of people in the Tahrir Square. The songs became the soundtrack of a whole generation of young Egyptians' struggle for a better future. His song *Irhal*, in which he's demanding the resignation of Mubarak, is referred to as the anthem of the revolution. *Time Out Magazine* later selected *Irhal* as the third most worldchanging song of all time (with John Lennon's *Imagine* #5 on the list).

But fame came at a heavy price with torture, arrests and censorship to silence Ramy. His songs were banned and he was unable to perform public shows. Still, he came out even stronger and more determined to speak out against the oppression. "In the revolution I was born again. The struggle became the purpose of my life." In 2014 he was offered a safe haven residency in Malmö, Sweden.

Once again having the chance to create and perform freely, he decided to use the opportunity to spread his message around the world. Today Ramy spends his time between Finland and Sweden.



In 2016 Ramy returned to the international scene big time, with a string of single releases that gained a lot of new audiences and attention. The single *Segn Bel Alwan* (featuring Lebanese rapper Malikah), highlighting women's situation and the issue of gender equality in his home country, became a big hit and one of the most streamed videos in Egypt in the weeks after its release. He has toured extensively internationally.

During 2016 and 2017 Ramy toured throughout Finland with the theatre

monologue *Ramy – In the Frontline*, which also gathered 5 stars reviews at the Fringe Festival Edinburgh.

Ramy remains to be one of the loudest voices for the young generation in Egypt and its struggle for a progressive and modern society, but has also become an international symbol of social activism and a beacon of uncommon bravery in the Middle East and the rest of the world.



**RAMY STANDS FOR**

**GENDER EQUALITY**

**FREEDOM**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

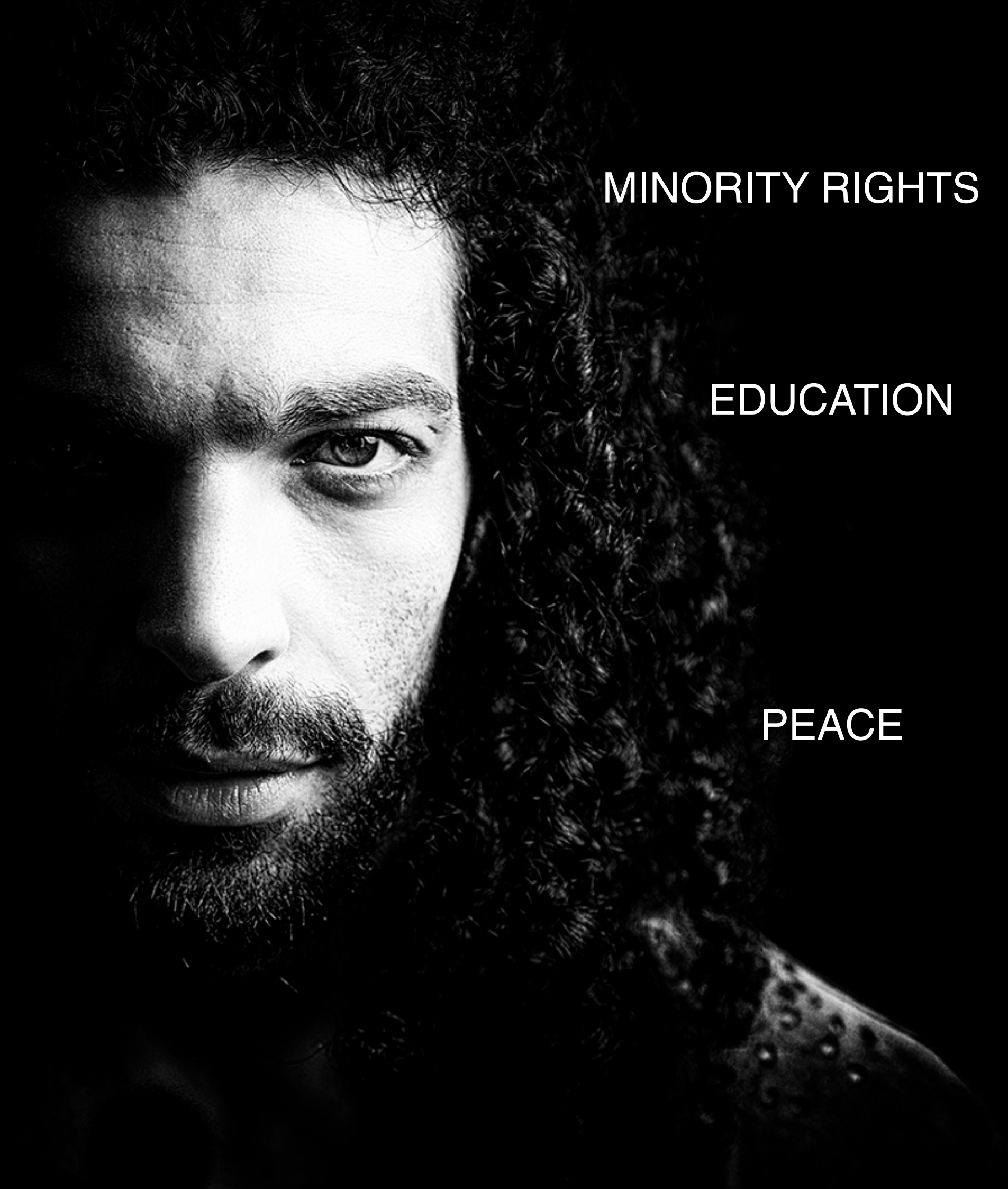
**EQUITY**

**HEALTH CARE**

**MINORITY RIGHTS**

**EDUCATION**

**PEACE**



# RELEASES

## THE CAMP with PJ HARVEY

In 2017, Ramy released a song called The Camp together with English singer-songwriter **PJ Harvey**.

PJ Harvey and Ramy Essam have come together to write and record 'The Camp' – a track which they hope will raise awareness and much needed support towards the health and educational well-being of displaced children in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon.

"I believe that people, no matter who they are and where they come from, can have their freedom and live together in peace." - Ramy Essam

- Music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhttLXBkJvE>
- Read more: The Guardian, 2017  
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/jun/07/exclusive-watch-pj-harvey-video-the-camp>



## SEGN BEL ALWAN – THE GIRLS IN PRISON feat. MALIKAH

Ramy's track *Segn Bel Alwan* (released in 2016) is concentrating on women's rights, raising awareness of the imprisoned women after the Egyptian revolution. Lebanese female rapper **Malikah**, known for her actions on empowering women and fighting against stereotypes, is featuring on the track. The music video for Segn Bel Alwan has over 4 000 000 views on YouTube.



*You cannot jail a rose,  
oh government of blind men  
Oh my occupied nation,  
oh people in slumber  
The night has fallen upon  
you, and now the owls rule  
All men have saluted,  
and Sanaa alone rises  
To uncover  
your misleading lies  
and stand up to the Pharaoh*

- Music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOo8BiSLVSE>
- Live at BBC Edinburgh's Festival Theatre Studio: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05c5chs>

## RESALA ELA MAGLES EL AMN – A LETTER TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Universal Music MENA, 2017

In 2017, Ramy released his album *Resala Ela Magles El Amn* on Universal Music MENA.

The album consists of re-recorded older tracks and new compositions. And Essam remains as political as ever. The lyrical topics range from depictions of daily hardships of normal people, the struggle for social justice and women's rights, environmental issues and, of course, a big dose of criticism of the regime.

"Some of the songs were written while I was still in Egypt. But I feel very much that with what's happening around the world today, the messages in the songs can be applied to many places in world. When talking about these issues with people from around the world, we can really connect in more or less similar experiences or situations." - Ramy Essam

- Link to the album: <https://umusicmena.lnk.to/ResalaElaMaglesElAmn>



## YA ASKARY – HEY, SOLDIER

Ramy's track *Ya Askary* is a message for the army soldiers to drop their weapons, disobey the orders and to join people's side.

*Hey, soldier, if you join my ranks, the  
poor will get justice.*

*The matter is beyond your imagination,  
but dont forget, all blood is the same  
color.*



- Music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXuv5UjGo5E>

**YOUTUBE CHANNEL** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0Em0xHgUlh4rgyLU8R73Mg>  
**SPOTIFY** <https://open.spotify.com/artist/7axpCYU6YisPgZQXYzNzis>  
**SOUNDCLOUD** <https://soundcloud.com/ramy-essam>



# IN MEDIA

## BERKLEE CAFE939 2017

### RAMY ESSAM: MUSIC AS THE MOST PEACEFUL WEAPON IN THE WORLD

Interviewed by **Ralph Jaccodine**, professor at Music Business department, Berklee College of Music.

"I know that I can help with my guitar."

- Ramy Essam



- Watch: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/109668994>

## RAMY ESSAM AT 60 MINUTES CBS News 2011

*Egyptians return to Tahrir Square. **Bob Simon** reports from Egypt, where he meets the troubadour of the revolution, Ramy Essam, a musician who continues to sing protest songs, despite the brutal torture he has endured.*

"I just want Egypt to be better. I just want to take my freedom." - Ramy Essam

- Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYZUz\\_wux-s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYZUz_wux-s)

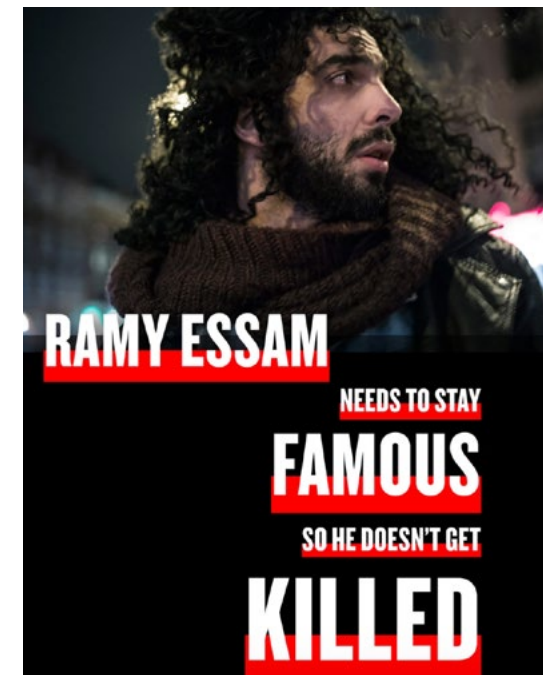
## MUSIC FREEDOM DAY Interview at Radio Helsinki 2017

"We have a very stupid male culture and we don't have any kind of equality. So the revolution was a very important chance for the girls and women in Egypt to prove that we are the same and everyone can do anything." - Ramy Essam

"Equality is extremely important, because we need to have balance in the society to go forward." - Ramy Essam

- Listen: <http://www.radiohelsinki.fi/2017/03/03/podcast-haastattelussa-safe-haven-turvaesi-denssissa-oleva-muusikko-ramy-essam/>

## RAMY ESSAM NEEDS TO STAY FAMOUS SO HE DOESN'T GET KILLED BuzzFeed 2015



"I'm not fighting for fight. I'm fighting for peace. And that's something totally different. I want to reach something good."

- Ramy Essam

- Read: [https://www.buzzfeed.com/djpeisner/ramy-essam-needs-to-stay-famous-so-he-doesnt-get-killed?utm\\_term=.wfqd-wYLaq#.xoPAGeZkg](https://www.buzzfeed.com/djpeisner/ramy-essam-needs-to-stay-famous-so-he-doesnt-get-killed?utm_term=.wfqd-wYLaq#.xoPAGeZkg)

## DYING FOR A SONG BBC radio documentary 2017

*Rex Bloomstein meets musicians from around the world who are being persecuted for raising their voices against political, cultural or religious repression. He talks to artists whose songs have led to their imprisonment, torture and to the continuing threat of violence; artists who have been driven from their homelands, artists who, literally, risk dying for a song.*

”Music is the strongest peaceful weapon in the world.”

- Ramy Essam

- Listen: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04kxdj3>

## EGYPT’S ROCK REBEL RAMY ESSAM: ‘MY CAUSE IS HUMANITY AND FREEDOM’ Middle East eye 2017

”I’m not asking for much. I just want homes for everyone, safety, education, healthcare - the normal basic human rights.” - Ramy Essam

- Read: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/ramy-essam-egypts-rock-star-revolutionary-plays-417489479>

## ROCK DUDES #60 - RAMY ESSAM INTERVIEW

MTG radio, Sweden 2017

- Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...>



# ARTIST RESIDENCIES

## SAFE HAVEN MALMÖ 2014–2016

The International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), Malmö municipality, Freemuse, SafeMUSE

**The International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN)** is an independent organisation of cities and regions offering shelter to writers and artists at risk, advancing freedom of expression, defending democratic values and promoting international solidarity.

**Freemuse** is an independent international membership organisation advocating for and defending artistic freedom of expression.

**SafeMUSE - Safe Music Havens Initiative** is an independent non-partisan and non-profit membership association with the main purpose of offering persecuted artists and artists at risk a safe place to stay and work with freedom of artistic expression.

- Read more: <https://icorn.org/writer/ramy-essam>

## SAFE HAVEN HELSINKI 2016

Perpetuum Mobile ry / Artists At Risk, Helsinki International Artist Programme (HIAP), Finnish Musicians' Union, Finnish Music Council (FMC)

**Perpetuum Mobile** is a curatorial vehicle which brings together art, practice and enquiry.

**Artists At Risk (AR)** is an institution at the intersection of human rights and the arts.

**Helsinki International Artist Programme (HIAP)**'s residency programmes provide opportunities for international arts professionals to undertake creative work, conduct research, build networks and engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue with the HIAP community.

**The Finnish Musicians' Union** is a trade organization for professional musicians.

**Finnish Music Council (FMC)** is an umbrella organisation in the Finnish music sector. It contributes to the internal co-operation and participates in the development of the music field, and promotes the realization of music rights at national and international level.

- Read more: <http://www.hiap.fi/artist/ramy-essam>



# FILM & THEATRE

## RAMY – IN THE FRONTLINE

Viirus Teater, Finland 2016–17

During 2016 and 2017 Ramy toured throughout Finland with the theatre monologue *Ramy – In the Frontline* (Viirus teater, Finland), which also gathered 5 stars reviews at the Fringe Festival Edinburgh.



"It is a rare experience that leaves you feeling changed." – Edfringe review

"They (Ramy's songs) are stunning, and his voice incredible; even in Arabic, the performances were incredibly moving." – Theatre Bubble

"We planted a seed in the next generation: They are different than us. They are not chained in their minds, they are not brainwashed, they don't believe in the state media, they are free. I'm sure that the new generation will make the change

together with us."

- Ramy Essam; *Ramy – In the Frontline*

"The only thing dictators can't stop is art. They can't kill my music."

- Ramy Essam; *Ramy – In the Frontline*

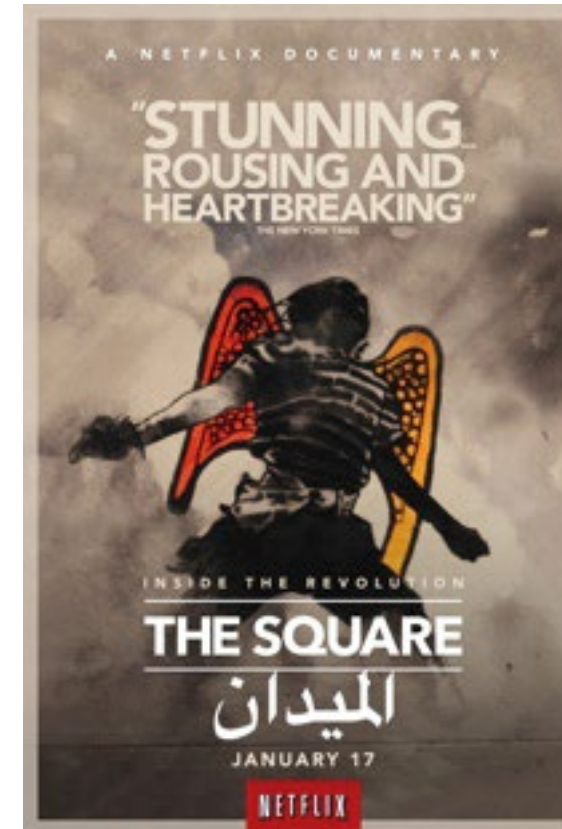
- Read more: <http://www.viirus.fi/ramy-in-the-frontline/?lang=en>



## THE SQUARE

Noujaim Films, 2013

Ramy was starring in the Oscar-nominated documentary film *The Square*, that tells the story of Egyptian revolution.



The Egyptian Revolution has been an ongoing rollercoaster over the past two and a half years. Through the news, we only get a glimpse of the bloodiest battle, an election, or a million man march. At the beginning of July 2013, we witnessed the second president deposed within the space of three years.

*The Square* is an immersive experience, transporting the viewer deeply into the intense emotional drama and personal stories behind the news. It is the inspirational story of young people claiming their rights, struggling through multiple forces, in the fight to create a society of conscience.

"This is why *The Square* is so important - not because it tells us what happened and what didn't happen, or who is and isn't right, but because it listens to people. It opens a discussion, and it challenges us to consider what does and doesn't work, wherever we are."

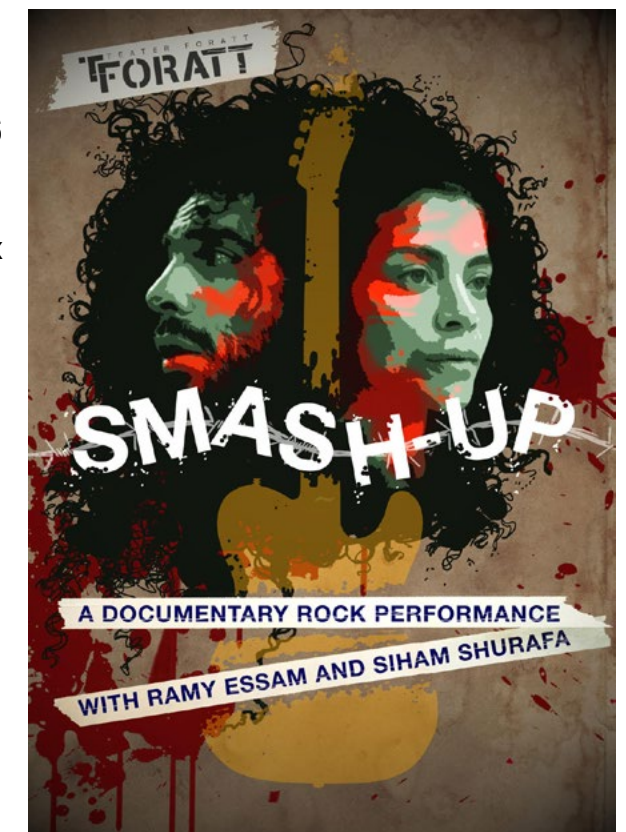
- Stephan Said, *Huffington Post* 2014

- Read more: <http://thesquarefilm.com/>

## SMASH-UP – A DOCUMENTARY ROCK PERFORMANCE WITH RAMY ESSAM AND SIHAM SHURAFI Teater Foratt, Sweden 2016

An explosive encounter, a musical portrait of a complex person and a raging brave individual. He that uses art to strike back at the Egyptian regime and her having a constant battle trying to fit in, but never really seems to manage, either in Egypt or Sweden.

- Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JaVnzDTLlw>





# AWARDS, NOMINATIONS, HONORS

## SPIRIT OF FOLK AWARD 2017

Folk Alliance Festival, US

*These awards are presented to honor and celebrate people and organizations actively involved in the promotion and preservation of folk music through their creative work, their community building, and their demonstrated leadership.*

- Read more: <http://www.folk.org/?page=SpiritofFolk>



## MUSIC RIGHTS CHAMPION 2016

International Music Council

*The Five Music Rights represent the core values of the International Music Council. They have been guiding, since their proclamation in 2001, the work of the IMC and of its network comprising some 1000 music organisations in 150 countries of the world.*

*In 2016, 15 years after the proclamation of these rights, the IMC wishes to give new impetus to their promotion by appointing IMC Five Music Rights Champions, with the purpose of increasing the visibility of these core values and putting them 'on the radar' of musicians and music-lovers around the world as an expression of concerns they share with the IMC.*

- Read more: <http://www.imc-cim.org/news-imc/imc-news/3708-dame-evelyn-glennie-ramy-essam-and-tabu-osusa-nominated-imc-five-music-rights-champions.html>

## 5 Music Rights

- |                                       |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
|                                       | 1 | To express themselves musically in all freedom  |
| THE RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS | 2 | To learn musical languages and skills   |
|                                       | 3 | To have access to musical involvement through participation, listening, creation, and information     |
| THE RIGHT FOR ALL MUSICAL ARTISTS     | 4 | To develop their artistry and communicate through all media, with proper facilities at their disposal |
|                                       | 5 | To obtain just recognition and fair remuneration for their work                                       |

## #3 ON THE LIST "100 SONGS THAT CHANGED HISTORY"

Timeout Magazine

*"Irhal" is one of the most influential songs on the modern age."*

- Read more: <https://www.timeout.com/london/music/100-songs-that-changed-history-20>

## FREEMUSE AWARD WINNER 2011

FreeMuse

*"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."* - Marie Korpe, Freemuse Executive Director

Freemuse is an independent international membership organisation advocating for and defending artistic freedom of expression.

- Read more: <https://freemuse.org/freemuse-award/freemuse-award-2011/>

## FREEDOM TO CREATE PRIZE WINNER 2011

*"The slogans, series of songs, explore the notions of dignity, freedom, democracy, abuse of power, equal rights, subjugation and police oppression. Ramy wants to continue using his creativity to become the voice for all of those who cannot speak for themselves."*



- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71IsrQyAsDY>



# TOUR

## 2018

### CANADA

- Calgary Folk Festival
- Harbourfront Centre Toronto
- Hillside Festival Guelph, ONT.

### UNITED STATES

- Philadelphia Folk Festival
- Clearwater Folk Festival NY
- Crystal Bridges Performance Bentonville, AR.
- Faulkner Performance Center
- The Drom, NYC NY
- Sheen Center of Culture and Thought NYC, NY
- Human Rights Watch concert date TBA NYC, NY
- CHIRP concert Series Ridgefield, CT
- Woody Guthrie Archives Festival Tulsa, OK

### EUROPE

- Rudolstadt Festival Germany

## 2017

### CANADA

- Stan Rogers Folk Festival
- Vancouver Folk Festival
- Mundial Montreal Festival

### UNITED STATES

- Univ. of Texas School of Journalism, Lecture and concert Austin, TX
- St Edwards Lecture and Concert Austin, TX
- Berklee College of Music, Lecture and concerts Boston, MA
- Rockwood Music Hall, NYC
- Rocky Folk Festival Lyons, CO

### AUSTRALIA

- Woodford Folk Festival

### EUROPE

- Non-Violence Run, Stockholm
- Fringe Festival, Edinburgh
- Järfällafestivalen, Stockholm

# SAID ABOUT RAMY

“He was in the Oscar-nominated movie *The Square*, but he was one of the leaders of the Egyptian revolution. He was tortured and exiled for his role in that. He’s kind of the poet laureate-slash-hard-rock Bob Dylan of the Middle East. [laughs].”

- Tom Morello, Guitarist, Rage Against The Machine

- Read more: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/tom-morello-unleashes-rebel-music-label-firebrand-records-first-song-20150604>



“Ramy’s participation at the Song School and Folks Festival was a vivid reminder of how music really can change our world. His music speaks truth to power and needs to be heard.”

- Steve Szymanski

“I saw Ramy Essam and he was breathtaking. I learned his backstory and it brought me to tears. Then I saw him live and was blown away by his power and passion and complete soul-driven delivery. Love, loved him! He’s a force of nature.”

- Lisa Schwartz, Festival Director, Philadelphia Folk Festival





Huda.Ye7ia photoGraphy