



ERATO

Stockholm January, 2008



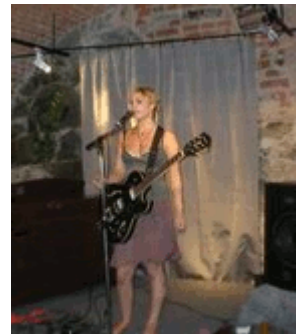
ILGCN (International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network) Information Secretariat

"Blue Baltic" Festival to Link Swedish Capital with Cities in Nordic/Baltic Neighbors

FOCUS on NORDIC/BALTIC TIES, AIDS in 2008

Stockholm -- Tupilak, the Nordic organization of LGBT cultural workers in the Nordic area, is launching this year with special emphasis on co-operation projects in Sweden and in our Nordic and Baltic neighbors -- promoting the use of rainbow culture as a powerful weapon against homophobia, provinciality and silence.

"We're adopting the excellent Polish idea of concrete East-West co-operation by launching the "Blue Baltic" happening " -- in Stockholm on July 19 at Södra Teatern (a week before EuroPride here) together with two cities in countries on the eastern shores of the Baltic -- pledging to increase mutual participation in each other's events. It had been hoped in vain that Europride organizers would adopt this concept to share the spotlight with Eastern European colleagues -- and maybe this may one day happen," says Tupilak chairman Bill Schiller, also general secretary of the ILGCN (International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network) Information Secretariat.
([continued on page 2](#))



Elise Ria Borderlin in Stockholm
(Photo: Guy Coste)

French news service report from the Turkish capital on Gay/Trans Drama:

Turkish Theater Blasts Discrimination, Invisibility

Ankara (AFP) — A unique play in an Ankara theatre has ended with a standing ovation as the little-known actors -- transsexuals and gays raising their voice against discrimination -- fought back their tears on stage. Their play, "Pink And Grey," put the spotlight on the plight of transsexuals in mainly Muslim Turkey, in the latest initiative of a fledgling but increasingly vocal movement for rights by a community long ostracized and often harassed.



Turkish actors in 'Pink & Grey'

Beaming with pride and excitement, the amateur stars, male-to-female transsexuals Derya Tunc and Sera Can, received congratulations in the boisterous backstage, taking a welcome respite from their actual jobs as sex workers. "Despite all the discrimination we face, I have no regrets for what I am," Can cheerfully told AFP. "My only regret is having ended up in prostitution." Almost all transsexuals and transvestites in Turkey make their living as prostitutes. They say ([continued on page 3](#))

Gay Rainbow Humanist Award to Nigerians (page 2) *

Stockholm -- The executive secretary of the Nigerian Humanist Movement, Leo Igwe and his Nigerian humanist colleagues have been awarded the 2007 Rainbow Humanist by the Nordic Rainbow Humanists for their outstanding and risk-filled public support ([continued on page 4](#))



ILGCN/Tupilak Travelling Art Exhibit on the road



Willi Reichhold
- Austria/Sweden



Isaias Fanlo - Spåin



Isaias Fanlo - Spåin



Andrius Privetas - Lithuania

FOCUS on NORDIC/BALTICITIES, AIDS - 2008....

(continued from page 1) Secretariat - Stockholm. "We have nothing against launching the idea on a smaller, less prestigious scale."

Tupilak, the ILGCN, the Nordic Rainbow Council and the Nordic Rainbow Humanists are also planning a special cultural festival in connection with this year's May 17 IDAHO (The International Day Against Homophobia) in Stockholm -- with seminars, drama, poetry, photography, music, song and dance. The aim is to help illustrate how HIV and AIDS have been reflected -- or ignored -- in cultural life of the Nordic and Baltic region, and how rainbow culture can be better used to promote safer sex and responsibility -- especially where HIV has reached epidemic proportions in some of Sweden's eastern neighbors across the Baltic Sea.

Tupilak is also planning to send delegates, the travelling Tupilak/ILGCN art exhibit and films to Prides and other events in the region -- especially in the East, as well as with other "partners" in Eastern Europe such as Romania, with a Nordic-Romanian rainbow festival in Stockholm and in Bucharest during the year. Other efforts include the special relationship with colleagues in Belarus -- the homophobic and last East European dictatorship.

"We are attending the Nordic-Baltic conference in Warsaw February 7-10 hoping to check out what progress has been made in the many recommendations made at the meeting in Gothenburg last September for increasing co-operation," Schiller adds. "We'll also try to attend the ILGCN world cultural conference stages in Helsinki on September 14 (part of the Tribade Days & Nights Festival) and Minneapolis/St. Paul between September 19-21.

ILGCN, Tupilak Award Presentations

Tupilak's November 9 "Kristal Nacht" event -- held in Stockholm earlier and in other Baltic cities -- focusing on Nazi and neo Nazi persecution of homosexuals is searching for a new host city, while Tupilak's annual Moonbow art exhibit and the winter solstice festival are again booked for the Swedish capital.

"Of course, we'll be handing out our annual Tupilak, ILGCN, and other awards during the year to honor outstanding achievements in the world of rainbow culture and international human rights," Schiller concludes. "We hope we also see a boost in new members among cultural workers and those who support rainbow culture -- since the 100 kronor membership fee and the moral support really helps a small organization like ours cross international and psychological barriers."

Turkish Theater Blasts Discrimination...

(continued from page 1) they have no other option in a society where homophobia is strong and often accompanied by violence. Three quarters of Turks say they are "disturbed" by homosexuals, a recent opinion survey showed, although many gays today are recognized as being among the country's most prominent singers and fashion designers. Notoriously harsh against transsexual prostitutes, police have been accused of arbitrary round-ups, mistreatment, torture and rough "clean-up" operations in several Istanbul neighbourhoods popular with transsexuals.

Activists say police abuse declined in recent years as the homosexual and transgender movement became organised and Turkey's bid to join the European Union made human rights a priority issue.

"Before, the police used violence -- now they only fine us," said Buse Kilickaya, the head of Pembe Hayat, or Pink Life, a newly-founded association that advocates transgender rights and sponsored "Pink and Grey." She pointed to the ongoing trial of four people over an assault on transvestite and transsexual prostitutes in Ankara's Eryaman suburb in 2006, which left several seriously injured.

The victims were attacked by young men wielding sticks and knives who were allegedly encouraged by local authorities and property developers; their flats were ransacked and they were eventually forced to flee the neighbourhood. Attorney Senem Doganoglu, a supporter of Pink Life, said transvestites and transsexuals continue to be arbitrarily detained and could end up in a police station simply for showing up in the street. "I had a case in which one was detained when she went out to buy bread," he said.

More 'Pink and Grey' Performances Planned

Prostitution is not a crime in Turkey, so the police use a law that provides for fines for disturbing public order to pursue transsexual sex workers, she explained. That the advocacy of conservative values by the governing Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) "is fostering the existing climate of intolerance," she said.

Islam's impact on sexual freedoms, however, has proven to be a tricky issue in secular Turkey, where same-sex relationships and sex change operations are allowed, unlike in many other Muslim countries, and homosexual traditions can be traced back to the palaces of Ottoman sultans.

One of Turkey's best-known gays, prominent fashion designer Cemil Ipekci, made the headlines this month as he praised the AKP, described himself as a "conservative homosexual" and said he would have worn the Islamic headscarf had he been a woman. And a transgender association in Ankara has called for a special mosque where its members can pray without disturbing the conventional Muslim flock.

"They cannot deny us the right to pray for salvation, can they?" asked group leader Oksan Oztok. Activists hope discrimination will decrease as they become better organised and more vocal. "We know things cannot change overnight. But there is progress already and we will continue to fight," Kilickaya said as she and her fellows excitedly discussed the date of the next "Pink and Grey" performance.

ILGCN Annual Awards:

(Proposals welcomed at all Secretariats)

Rainbow Iceberg (international work)

Orfeo Iris (research in Nazi 6 neo Nazi persecution of homosexuals)

Grizzly Bear (work in ferocious homophobic situations)

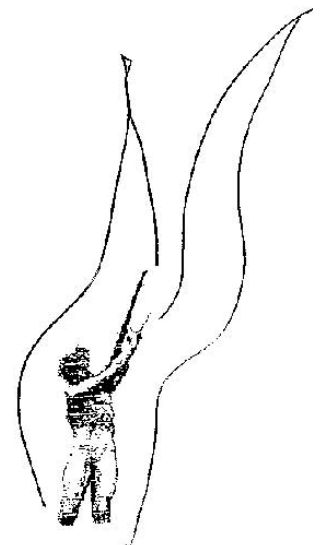
Orfeo Musica (international musical co-operation)

Sappho in Paradise (libraries, publishing)

Arco Nordica (Nordic co-operation)

Orfeo Imago (graphic art & photography)

Clio's Silver Cup (LGBT history)



Gay Rainbow Humanist Award to Nigerians....

(continued from page 1) of rainbow rights in that African nation. The award motivation reads: '...for their courageous defense of LGBT rights and dignity in the face of ferocious attacks from homophobic Nigerian politicians, parliamentarians and religious leaders calling for the imprisonment of those having homosexual relations and the jailing of those who dare to support such relations.

... and for reminding fellow countrymen and women in Nigeria of the need to safeguard the spirit of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the need for 'reason, common sense, thoughtfulness, knowledge, love, tolerance, solidarity and empathy -- instead of hate and homophobia.'

"We are very proud to salute African humanists for speaking out so clearly on behalf of rainbow rights -- and to add Africans to the list of internationally respected human rights activists strengthening the decades-long support of the humanist movement for LGBT people by the global International Humanist and Ethical Union," says Bill Schiller, international secretary of the Nordic Rainbow Humanists -- one of the main supporters of the ILGCN Information Secretariat.

The award was announced at a Tupilak (Nordic rainbow cultural workers) performance and prize awarding ceremony at Stockholm's LGBT cultural center and bookshop, Hallongrottan, by earlier Nordic Rainbow Humanist award winner, Carl Johan Kleberg, former head of the Swedish Humanists.

Earlier Rainbow Humanist awards have also gone to outstanding and pioneering activists in Britain, Norway and the Netherlands -- including George Broad head of London (founder of the international Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association, GALHA), Kim Friele of Oslo and Rob Tielman of Amsterdam.



ILGCN World Cultural Conferences

Toronto "Iranians in Exile," Canada – February 2008

Helsinki, Finland -- September 14, 2008

Minneapolis/St. Paul, USA – September 19-21, 2008

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