

About music

I have been playing music for as long as I can remember. I have played in a lot of bands, performed and toured around the world. I was actively involved in putting up shows for other bands and songwriters, and I organized a few festivals along the way. The punk and hardcore scene I was closely involved in, and what struck me was the activism, the political involvement, the discussions, the DIY mentality and a general sense of togetherness. These were mostly highly intelligent human beings that actively chose a path and used music as an expression, creating a scene out of their music. Something you want to belong to, and get. That scene is still strong today, thankfully.

There is the entire indie world as well, which kind of evolved from that punk and hardcore scene. And basically anyone you meet on your way who is doing the thing they love most, creating and performing music, you share a deep connection with. No explanation needed.

How it started

In 2005 I graduated with my Masters, and I decided that my graduation project should become a music community for others to share and download music. The whole Napster/Metallica ordeal was quite a thing back then, and in response to that I wanted to show that sharing music, not keeping it to yourself, is the better option. Socially and commercially. No matter how big you are as a band. I got actively involved as a programmer with the Open Content movement, and found out about Creative Commons. I decided that these licences would be the drive behind the legal sharing and remixing of music. If you do not know Creative Commons, it is time you find out at creativecommons.org.

Together with a good friend we founded the Open Media Foundation, started the Simuze project, and got support from several instances, including data and hosting. We ran in the Netherlands for five years, organized a lot of shows from the bands on Simuze, and had around 100,000 visitors each month. Not bad for a startup.

Only, we were not making money. Neither were the artists. After five years the hosting support stopped, and it was too costly for us to keep it up and running ourselves. We had to let Simuze go and let it rest for a while. It rested, but it did not disappear.

Why now

Fast forward to 2025. The world is burning. Large corporations are leading the way and taking over control of lives and countries, politics and wars. Kids are addicted to social media, and whatever great thing we thought we had in the 90s has now turned into a political manipulation tool on a scale we have never seen before.

Kids growing up now do not know any better than that AI exists and is there to help them. It is not. At least what you think it is, it is not. If a product is free to use, then you yourself are the product. Remember that.

When I heard that Spotify, the largest of the music providers, is investing in AI weapon technology, I decided that it is time for action, not words.

What Simuze is now

I started to develop Simuze again, with a simple goal: to provide an alternative tool for the entire music industry. I want to create a network, locally and globally, of everyone that is involved in the music industry. To bring together fans and artists, bookers, venues, record stores, promoters, screenprinters, labels, and everyone else. To provide a place where they can talk about music, book or get booked, buy and sell music, merch and more, and to be able to make a living out of the thing they love to do the most.

Simuze must become a tool and a place, a network and an app, affordable and fair.

This time, we own everything. The servers, the code, the infrastructure. No sponsor to pull the plug. No platform dependency. Every piece of it runs on systems we control, and that is not going to change.

Will it work?

Whether I will achieve this we will see. But I am certainly going to try. I will not be alone, and we will slowly and steadily build on Simuze. With the same DIY mentality that got me here in the first place.

This is not about fighting the world. It is about building something better next to it.

Love,
Marten