

On June 25th, 2018 **UPF-Upper Austria** invited to a **literature concert** into the **Upper Austrian Culture Quarter in Linz**.

The literature concert on the subject of
“Europe – Identity and Future”
was characterized by the **World Refugee Day**
celebrated annually on June 20th since 2001.



The texts were chosen and read by the famous **actress** and former **Member of the European Parliament**
Raina Mercedes Echerer.



The program was brilliantly synchronized with the young **Baroque Ensemble Adornamento**.



Maria Pammer shortly introduced UPF and spoke about the latest facts concerning the World Refugee Day published by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. In the past year worldwide about 68,5 million people were fleeing from conflict, pursuit and human rights violations, which is more than the population of France or Great Britain.

Mercedes Echerer did not want to give a speech on this subject, but let culture speak for itself. At the beginning she asked the question: What is Europe's identity and which future can we extrapolate out of this? Europe represents among other things democracy, freedom, equality, human rights and freedom of speech. Our grandparents mounted the barricades and partly lost their lives so that we can vote in freedom, which is not self-evident. Another feature of Europe is the diversity of society and cultures and this shall remain also in the future.



After her introduction Mercedes Echerer read the tale “Love” by the Hungarian writer **Déry Tibor** (1894-1977). Together with several other liberal intellectuals Déry is regarded to be one of the intellectual pioneers of the Hungarian uprising in 1956.

A Sonata Seconda by Johann Rosenmüller 17th century ensued.

Next Mercedes read „Poems to My Wife From Prison“ by the Turkish poet **Nazim Hikmet** who spent more years in prison and exile than he had been out of prison, followed by a Sonata by Domenico Scarlatti.

After an excerpt from the tale „Deer, My Mother and Germany“ of the live Turkish journalist and author **Nursel Duruel** many times awarded for her tales, followed a Folia by Andrea Falconieri performed by the Ensemble Adornamento.



A listener said that the whole room vibrated through the energy of her readings, so completely Mercedes Echerer identified herself with the texts. Mercedes herself and many a listener had to wipe away tears from their faces.

Especially intensive was then an excerpt from the book by **Ernö Lazarovits** “My Way through Hell”, a Hungarian Jew who survived the death march from Hungary to Mauthausen in the last days and weeks of the Second World War.

After a further piece of music by Andrea Falconiere (1585-1656) **Mercedes Echerer** read extracts from the audiobook „**Romanian Roulette**“ published by herself a year ago. It is a fictional story, but based on facts of her life. Her mother came from Transylvania 1950 to Austria. The story deals with homeland, identity, family and is a fascinating journey into the past, presence and future of a Europe, where history and stories interweave.

Further pieces of music by Antonia Caldara (1670-1736) and Andrea Falconieri followed.

Mercedes Echerer concluded by reading poems of the writer and journalist **Ali Al Hasan** who fled 2015 from Syria – poetry from Syria and writings, he wrote already in German. After a piece of music by Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) the poet Ali Al Hasan handed roses over to Mercedes Echerer and cordially thanked for the opportunity that some of his writings were read within the program of this literature concert on the occasion of the World Refugee Day and that he could also participate personally.



Our heartfelt thanks to **Mercedes Echerer** for the touching texts and to the young **Baroque Ensemble Adornamento** for the great sound quality of their pieces of music presented and the sensitive harmonization with the texts!

It was for all of us not only a cultural experience, but an impulse to reflect on identity, homeland, family and the future of Europe.

Maria Pammer/UPF-Upper Austria

