

## Written interview with Lea Suter

«Peace is a permanent mission». (DeepL Translation from German)

Silvia Vogel Wiederkehr: Dear Lea. You are an important ambassador of our project «TimeDate - music for peace in the world» and you will participate in the concert «The Peacemakers» in Lucerne. Consistently you report about peacemaking and call for breaking out of the spiral of violence in warlike conflicts and seeking cooperation. How can bridges be built where the obstacles seem almost insuperable?

*Lea Suter: First of all, you have to believe that they are superable, otherwise they will certainly remain insuperable. I think we are a little too used to believing that something must first become real before we believe in it. It could also be the other way around, that we must first believe in something for it to become real/realistic. I would even argue that the belief that something is insuperable is the biggest obstacle of all... Of course, this inner attitude alone is not enough. It also takes a lot of courage, perseverance, creativity and a great feeling for people.*

SV: At the concert in Lucerne you will present Peacemakers from war zones. Courageous people who, despite nasty circumstances, unflinchingly carry out cultural peace work and take on dangerous efforts in order to move the hostile parties one step closer to peace. Are there commonalities that characterise these personalities?

*Lea Suter: They are very different personalities whom I encounter in a wide variety of contexts. Some of them have to deal with terrorism, others with tribal conflicts, and for others the war was fought a quarter of a century ago. What really unites them all is that they are very courageous, that they have - from wherever that comes - an inner certainty that overcoming war is possible and they have an enormous will for peace, perseverance and resilience to cope with countless resistances, setbacks and threats to their own lives.*

SV: At Easter, Pope Francis called peace a «gift» - you speak of peace as a «permanent mission». To whom do you address this commitment?

*Lea Suter: I don't see any contradiction in that. Peace is definitely one of the greatest gifts we enjoy here in Switzerland. But peace is much more. It must be permanently shaped, nurtured and adapted to circumstances. The concept of collective permanent mission also refers to the UN Security Council's definition of «sustaining peace». This emphasizes that peace work must be understood and promoted not only after conflicts - as it was understood in the past - but also preventively. This understanding is especially important for us here in Switzerland. Otherwise we think, «We already have peace, we don't have to worry about it anymore». That is a very fallacious assumption. That's why I'm concerned that we understand peace as a collective mission, which therefore involves all areas of life, from politics, to media, to business, to culture, to school, to private life.*

SV: Where do you see the importance of music - and thus also of the concerts that will be heard around the globe on this World Day of Peace 2023 - in promoting peace?

*Lea Suter: My approach is that everyone can contribute to peace, some do it through music, others through politics, climate activism, at school or in the family. It is important that we give peace a voice that permeates our everyday lives. Only in this way a true, active culture of peace can emerge. Peace is not a theoretical concept or something we can expect from others. Peace comes about when we take action ourselves. I do not believe that music is fundamentally conducive to peace. It can just as well promote hatred and violence; there are many examples of this historically. For me, it always depends on the attitude with which we do something. That's why I like to talk about «peace attitude».*

SV: Thank you for this interview.