

## DAS LEBEN, DAS DU NICHT VERSTEHST...

*Das Leben, das du nicht verstehst,  
es ist Bewegung, un darin ist es Glück.*

### **Jonny spielt auf, 1926. Ernst Krenek**

To write is really to make difficult and sometimes absurd choices. Why struggle with ideas when one can go for a walk along the Danube riverside or make a wonderful trip on a ferry? Why work when one can take a bus and go to Dürnstein or to Melk Abbey? Why sit for hours bound to a desk when one can absorb the vast and restorative silence of the vineyards? In fact, why exercise one's mind at all, when one can take a train and be in Vienna in just an hour, eating a delicious Wiener Schnitzel or admiring "The Kiss" from Gustav Klimt? At the LiteraturHaus apartment, the creative energies were such that, in a day -when the shopping and the visiting, and the wondering about was done- there was still plenty of time to write, without distraction.

In my case, the journey to Krems and my residency was partly one of desperation. To leave all that kept me from writing and arrive at a space that only demanded creativity of me. To centre myself and heal from the daily occupations (children, readings, classes, obligations) by writing, *just writing*, again. The **gift of time and freedom** spent at LiteraturHaus was really the first advantage. There's also another advantage: this time is not only to write but also to **find and talk to your inner self, to discover if you still like and are friends of yourself**. Disadvantages of the programme? None. I guess one always thinks more work can be done, but that has nothing to do with the residency itself.

It actually has more to do with this part of writing which you don't understand and don't control. During my stay, I worked in a novel ("The nostalgia of the amphibious woman") which I had been writing, intermittently, for two years. But even it was quite advanced, new characters arose and others changed their mind about what they wanted to do in "their" little life, so I also had to struggle with that. Never mind! As the Austrian composer, Ernst Krenek (whose museum in Krems we visited) wrote in one of his operas

“the life that you don’t understand is movement, and there’s happiness inside”.  
Mysterious sentence!

What did I miss at the residency? Maybe a small “obligation” to meet and socialize with the other residents (in arranged dinners, for example, which could be done in the big room) or by day excursions to the countryside.

I had a wonderful reading in Spanish and German of my book “Die Wintermädchen” at the **Instituto Cervantes in Vienna**. I was surprised to find so many people attending it (you never know how many you’re going to find in these events!)

That night I slept in Vienna and the next day, I took a train and went to **Frankfurt Buchmesse**. These three nights away were good for a change, although I must confess that I was really missing my peace and was looking forward to coming back to my little apartment in Krems. I also visited Vienna a couple of days more (I had the experience of a “Heuriger” in Nussberg), Melk Abbey, Dürnstein and other little villages around.

Organized by AIR we visited the interesting **Ernst Krenek Forum**, an Austrian composer; attended an event called “**Kunst, Kaffee & Kipferld**”, in which we learnt about the art of a former AIR Pélague Gbaguidi” and the Exhibition “**Ticket to the Moon**”.

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