

**Award Ceremony German Female Founder's Prize 2018**  
Wednesday, 16 May 2018 in Nuremberg (Germany)



**Laudation for Ise Bosch**

**Laudatory speaker: Gudrun Landgrebe**

13.800 characters, approximately 14 minutes

Dear Ise Bosch, dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an actress, the nature of my profession means that I usually speak *for* other women – for those whose roles I perform.

Today – and this is an honour for me – I stand before you as a laudatory speaker, speaking, not *for*, but *about*, a woman.

About a remarkable woman.

About a woman who says:

*“I don't like the term ‘patron’. I prefer to call myself a ‘donation activist’.”*

About a woman who, in her commitments, does not decide or talk for and about others, but with them; who lets the people who are part of the issue at hand have their say.

I now have the honour to pay tribute to this extraordinary woman – not only to her, but with her.

I will try to let you, dear Ise Bosch, have your say in this laudation, through quotes like this:

*“If things go quite well, philanthropy not only brings social change; it also allows us to grow personally. Then philanthropy is transformative in every way.”*

Now, dear Ise Bosch, you are not somebody who operates in the shadows. You have deliberately chosen to speak in public.

About your relationship to wealth:

*“Other things are more important to me than money.”*

About your inheritance:

*“I didn't earn that money; there's no justification for it. Inheritance is not fair.”*

About what you use the inherited wealth for:

*“I consider diversity to be extremely important; it is an enrichment to democracy and to the mainstream.”*

However, I would like to start with something completely different – with these words from you:

*“I have a vocation in music that gives me an incredible balance in what is from my point of view*

*actually a crazy world of money.“*

Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, has a list of double bass players. Quite a long list.

There is no list of female double bass players on Wikipedia.

The list of double bassists consists of 488 musicians. This includes a total of 20 women.

Playing the double bass seems to be a male domain.

Donating [seems to be a male domain] too.

Until a few decades ago, female founders were the exception in the world of foundations. It wasn't until the 1990s that donating involved more female participation. 22,274 foundations with legal capacity exist in Germany today, and a quarter of them were set up by women.

Today, the German Founder's Prize will be awarded for the 21st time. So far, however, only three women have received the award for their exemplary foundation work. Two others have been honoured together with a man.

I am pleased that this year, for the first time, the Federal Association of German Foundations is talking about the German *Female* Founder's Prize. With the selection of a female award winner, gender equality and the engagement of women and on behalf of women is taking centre stage.

Foundations are like playing the double bass: the significant women do exist.

Today, I can pay tribute to one of them.

A woman who initiates great things – literally and figuratively.

Dear Ise Bosch, you have been playing the double bass for more than 20 years. You make strings vibrate. These, in turn, set the air inside the instrument in motion – no large movements; just a small vibration. And that's how this wonderful, deep sound finally comes into being. A sound that changes the mood in the room.

Dear Ise Bosch, you have been a donation activist for more than 20 years. You have initiated a lot for women and girls, for sexual minorities, for tolerance and diversity. You enable movements – often also the small ones – always with the aim of achieving deep changes.

In his piece “The Double Bass”, Patrick Süsskind lets the musician say:

*“Ask an orchestra musician when he starts to flounder. Ask him! If he can't hear the double bass. A fiasco. This is even clearer in a jazz band. A jazz band is exploding apart – figuratively now – when the bass stops. At a single blow, everything seems meaningless to the other musicians.”*

Foundations also have very different functions in our society. Often, they go unnoticed – but they are by no means unimportant. Without Germany's 22,274 foundations, many things in our society would, figuratively speaking, also fly apart.

If foundations are the double basses in the orchestra of society, you, dear Ise Bosch, are the **female** double bass player among them. You are a special feature, and this is true in many respects.

Firstly, you are remarkable in your commitment to women, and to sexual and gender minorities – an area that has received little attention in the engagement landscape so far.

In 2001, you and eight other women founded filia.die frauenstiftung, which today has 70 female founders. This foundation is even more extraordinary in the world of foundations than a female double bass player on Wikipedia.

This is how you describe your work:

*“We invest in women who fight for better living conditions for themselves and for others, and we work for the equitable distribution of resources, equal participation in society, and respect for the human rights of women.”*

Thus, filia supports women who take to the streets in Serbia against sexism and racism; lesbians in Namibia, who bring sexual diversity to their communities; organisations in Georgia working against domestic violence; and women's foundations in Latin America, which jointly raise funds for activities against climate change.

Not only the choice of instrument, but also the way it is played, makes you a philanthropic virtuoso.

You do not leave the complex issue of investment to others. For you, investment is not about the highest return, but about how assets can be invested to change society.

You are interested in philanthropy at eye level, where the people you support are not alms recipients but female designers of social change.

Change, not charity: not only do the target groups of your projects experience change and change their environment; the donors change also. The aim is:

*“With transformative philanthropy we try to break up the conventional power structures of giving.”*

If modern jazz is part of Ise Bosch's musical repertoire on the double bass, she is also a pioneer in modern philanthropy.

If you want to tell the story of Ise Bosch from the beginning, both musically and as a founder, you have to start before the double bass.

With a violin.

Violin was the instrument Ise Bosch learned to play at an early age in her educated middle-class Swabian parental home.

Her parents not only laid her musical foundations: they also shaped Ise's down-to-earth distanced relationship to money.

*"I was raised as a normal Swabian. There is, by all means, a stingy component to this. It's just a culture where you now and again buy yesterday's rolls."*

Despite its financial possibilities, her family lived very modestly. Ise wore the clothes of her bigger siblings, inherited their used bicycle with great pride, and shared a room with them. To save the ten Pfennig of a phone call, one preferred to visit in person. And Nutella was only eaten on Sundays – and then also spread very thin.

I am certainly not wrong when I say that the Swabian education characterises you, dear Ise Bosch – even if you have now stopped buying the rolls from the previous day after your female friends have laughed at you again and again.

*"If you splurge, what will it look like?"*

You were once asked this in an interview. Your answer:

*"There will be a lot of asparagus – over a pound a person."*

Like modesty, Ise Bosch's violin was also intended to accompany her into adulthood.

By the way, the word "violin" comes from the Germanic. It comes from "geigan", which means "moving backward and forward."

Just as important as music was moving in the philanthropic sense – donating and creating – in the Bosch family.

The Robert Bosch Foundation was born in the same year as Ise Bosch, the legacy of her famous grandfather and company founder; it is still one of the largest foundations in Germany.

Ise Bosch's grandfather, Robert Bosch Sr., founded the company that today stands for many types of electrical appliances worldwide. He was himself a founder and philanthropist. He wanted to improve the living conditions of his time, to help shape society – and to encourage others to act. He had a lot in common with the granddaughter he never knew – even though they focused on different things.

And so the history of Ise Bosch has to begin even earlier, with her grandfather – the foundation history, certainly, but perhaps also the musical history.

After all, music also has a long tradition at Bosch. When people laughed and sang in his workshop, Robert Bosch was satisfied. This was said about the working atmosphere in the workshops founded in 1886, which wrote economic history as the "Bosch spirit".

In Ise Bosch's youth, her musical heritage was much more important than her financial or philanthropic heritage.

But at some point, dear Ise Bosch, the Swabian orchestra pits became too narrow for you. You went to Oregon and studied women's history and feminist theory. You made friends far from privileged circles, worked at a local radio station, hitchhiked around the country, started playing the electric bass, fell in love with a woman. When measures preventing discrimination against homosexuals were banned in Oregon, you went from house to house with flyers.

You came to West Berlin in the summer of 1989. You studied music and found a home in the women's music and lesbian scene. With your female bands, you performed at female student parties, at the Berlin Women's Music Centre Lärm + Lust, at the Munich Tollwut Festival and at the Milan Jazz Festival, and in trendy pubs.

The musical spectrum was wide – jazz, world music, Latin, Salsa, and not to forget the women's big band, the United Women's Orchestra.

*“Big money was rare in my daily life,”* you say in your recently finished book on transformative philanthropy.

And yet: on your travels through Eastern Europe, you saw again and again how homosexuals had to hide, how they fought for their rights and a free, tolerant society. You supported these people; you sent them money for meetings, campaigns, room rentals, a new computer.

You found the topic of your life and heart, and you say today:

*“I consider myself fortunate that, through my own life story, I have found a clear area in which I have become a specialist – the human rights of women and girls, but also of sexual and gender minorities, that is lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans humans, interhumans.”*

In the meantime, the range of your commitment is as broad as your musical repertoire.

In 1996, you donated the International Fund for Sexual Minorities to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation in New York.

The establishment of filia followed.

Together with other heiresses, you founded the heiress network Pecunia.

In 2005, you sold your shares in the family business to fund your dream: your own, independent philanthropic institution.

You founded the Dreilinden Gesellschaft für gemeinnütziges Privatkapital, and became the sole shareholder and managing director of the gGmbH.

Dreilinden promotes gender diversity and human rights internationally, supports local groups in the global South and East, promotes gender-sensitive investment, and promotes research in this area.

Your aims are:

*“Firstly, I would like the persecution of people for sexual reasons to stop – the murders, the suicides in distress, the torture, the forced marriages, the psychological terror. And secondly, I am interested in the knowledge gained. I collect answers to the question: What is sex anyhow?”*

As a founder, shareholder, board member, and donation activist, dear Ise Bosch, you rarely have time for your double bass today. If you do, then you play classical music – in the orchestra with your husband, whom you met, if I am not mistaken, in the church choir.

One last parallel could be drawn here. Whether big band, women's quartet, orchestra, or choir – you know the importance of interaction. Not only in music, whether free jazz or classical, but also in philanthropy.

With your engagement, Ise Bosch, you want to change not only society, but philanthropy itself.

*“People get their neck hair blown off just hearing the word philanthropy. That's rich people. It's where they decide about us. That is how philanthropy is generally perceived. I think we have to do something about that – and we have to do it with clear signals.”*

I think today we are sending out such a signal by awarding you the Female Founder's Prize. It is going to a female philanthropist in the truest sense of the word: a female philanthropist who is concerned with change for people – who is concerned, not *about* them, but *with* them.

And so my laudatory speech should not end with words about you, dear Ise Bosch, but with words from you:

*“The philanthropic capital we have in the world is extremely valuable. What we do with it is important. The time is past when we could afford to regard philanthropy as a matter of luxury.”*

Dear Ise Bosch, I would like to congratulate you warmly on the German Female Founder's Prize 2018.