

Calmus Ensemble

“Nothing short of remarkable...they, quite simply, bring whatever they sing to glorious life.” That is how the *Deseret Morning News* described a concert by Calmus, the First Prize Winner of the 2009 Concert Artists Guild International Competition. Founded in 1999 in Germany, the *a cappella* quintet embodies the rich choral tradition of its hometown of Leipzig, the city so closely associated with Bach and Mendelssohn. Whether singing music by those German masters or another work in its diverse repertoire, Calmus captivates both audiences and critics with its charming stage presence, flawless technique and entertaining presentation.

Calmus offers the unique combination of a pure soprano voice with four male voices ranging from bass to countertenor. The seamless blend of these five voices lends itself to the almost limitless range of music the ensemble offers, from renaissance and baroque masters through great German romantic works, all the way to contemporary choral repertoire and popular songs. Calmus conveys everything it performs with great respect and also with a sense of joy in singing that is obvious to the listener: **“...the singers bring tremendous character and musical depth to their interpretations... that transcends the language of the lyrics.”** (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*)

Featured 2015 performances for Calmus include return engagements for the Bach Society of Houston and in Chicago for the Jewel Box Series of Northeastern Illinois University, plus debut concerts for the Auditorium Chamber Music Series (ID) and The Cloisters in New York City. This follows the quintet’s recent NYC engagements including Lincoln Center Great Performers, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Met Museum Presents, Schneider Concerts at the New School, and a special sacred program in fall 2012 at Manhattan’s Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the St. Thomas Choir School of Leipzig.

Other recent North American highlights include Calmus’ New York debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall on the CAG *Winners Series*, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Purdue University Convocations, Ravinia’s Rising Stars series, Washington Performing Arts Society, University of Iowa’s Hancher Auditorium, Dallas Chamber Music Society, Clemson University’s Brooks Center for the Performing Arts, Lancaster (CA) Performing Arts Center and Northeastern Illinois University’s Jewel Box series in Chicago. US Festival appearances include: the Virginia Arts Festival; Rockport Chamber Music Festival (twice); Chautauqua Institution; Madison Early Music Festival and the Green Lake Festival, both in Wisconsin.

With fifteen recordings to its credit, Calmus latest CD, *Madrigals of Madness* (featuring Renaissance and Baroque songs of heartbreak, despair and war), was selected by the *New York Times* Classical critics among the best CD’s of 2014, and the group also received the 2009 Echo Klassik Award for *Lied:gut!*, a disc of treasured German folksongs. Calmus’ prior release was *Touched*, featuring a unique intermingling of classical and popular songs ranging from Purcell and Monteverdi to Elton John and Sting. Other recent releases include: *Mythos 116*, highlighting six different settings of Psalm 116 (including three written in 1616 and two newly commissioned works by Calmus); and *Christmas Carols*, Calmus’ first CD of music for the holidays which was received enthusiastically:

"...perfectly balanced ensemble singing, every note, every chord given exacting importance, delivered in the most vocally attractive, musically expressive style (*Classics Today*).

An active concert schedule worldwide has taken Calmus all across Germany, Europe and North and South America. In addition to garnering First Prize and numerous performance prizes at the CAG Competiton, other prestigious awards bestowed upon the ensemble include First Prizes at the fourth annual Robert Schumann Choral Competition, the International Competition for Vocal Ensembles in Finland and the 37th Tolosa Choral Contest in Spain.