

Leipzig, 10 May 2024

The next generation of a cappella singers is broad-based – just like Contest winners calens vocalensemble stuttgart

Powerful voices, styles and female ensembles epitomized the next generation of European vocal music at the 14th a cappella Contest in Leipzig

The 2024 Leipzig **a cappella** Award has gone to Stuttgart. The eight-member **calens vocalensemble stuttgart**, which showcased an extraordinary sound and high standards in primarily sacred vocal music from various eras, secured the top spot today at the 14th Leipzig International **a cappella** Contest. In addition to first prize, the octet also received the Audience Award. The vocal jazz quintet **Lylac** from Mainz, which finished third in last year's competition, claimed second place this year, while the multinational women's ensemble **Luminosa** from Munich took third prize.

A total of nine ensembles had qualified to compete over the past two days, but unfortunately, the only all-male group, **Mehr als 4** from Halle, had to withdraw at short notice due to illness. In addition to the prizewinners, ensembles such as **Just Vox** from Brussels, **soulparlez** from Vienna, **notable** from Weimar, **Vox Mandala** from Lübeck, and **Vocalights** from Hamburg aimed to impress the audience and vied for the approval of the five-member jury, headed by King's Singers co-founder Simon Carrington.

The organizers and initiators of the competition and the **a cappella** Festival (into which the Contest has always been integrated), the Leipzig vocal ensemble amarcord, had increased the prize money for the 14th edition of the competition, allowing the winners to look forward to prize money of €3,000. The second prize was endowed with €2,000, the third prize with €1,000, and the Audience Award with €500. As in previous years, amarcord also presented a Special Award (also worth €500) for the best piece performed without amplification. This went to **Luminosa** for their performance of 'Jubilate Deo' by Thomas Hanelt. The SummerMusicAcademy at Hundisburg Palace awarded another special prize for

Artistic directors

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unamplified singing, inviting the winners – **calens vocalensemble stuttgart** – to perform there in 2025. As the winners of the **a cappella** Contest, the ensemble will also perform at the final concert of this year's **a cappella** Festival tomorrow (Saturday) in the Grand Auditorium of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, along with runners-up **Lylac**, as the decision was extremely close. At the 2025 **a cappella** Festival, there will be a full-length winners' concert featuring the **calens vocalensemble**.

In addition to a wide variety of styles and a passion for a cappella singing, the field of participants in the 2024 Contest was outstanding for the strong presence of female voices. Four of the eight participating groups were all-female ensembles, blazing the trail for female a cappella music and groups. Moreover, almost all the ensembles had only been formed within the last four years – a testament to the emerging talent in young vocal music – and they all sang a high number of original compositions or arrangements by the ensembles themselves.

Following the Contest, the young groups attended a masterclass with former King's Singers bass Stephen Connolly. They also presented themselves once more to the audience with short performances in a joint concert, the **a cappella** Showcase, at the end of which the winners were announced live. The Showcase was also streamed live and can still be viewed on the **a cappella** Festival's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZmUdn2waJ4.

The Leipzig International **a cappella** Contest, which assesses all ensembles in a single category and is an integral part of the renowned **a cappella** Festival, strives to offer enduring support to emerging vocal music talents as well as a platform for interaction with professionals and peers. Past winners of the Leipzig **a cappella** Award include German ensembles such as Delta Q, Sjaella, German Gents and JuiceBox, alongside Ommm from France, Latvian Voices from Latvia, and Jazzation from Hungary.

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24th Leipzig International Festival of Vocal Music **a cappella:**
3–11 May 2024

14th Leipzig International **a cappella** Contest:
8–11 May 2024

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