

Leipzig, 10 May 2024

The next generation is alive and kicking!
The a cappella Showcase presents an impressively diverse array of talented young vocalists

Haus Leipzig was packed when **a cappella** hosted its Showcase early on Friday evening – a joint concert featuring all the young ensembles that had participated in this year's Leipzig International **a cappella** Contest and engaged in musical dialogue over the past three days. The field of participants had slightly dwindled towards the end due to illness, leaving just seven of the nine groups originally qualifying to perform at the **a cappella** Showcase. Even so, there was no shortage of talent!

Vox Mandala from Lübeck and their lively rendition of 'The Scotsman' were the perfect opener for the concert, the eight delightful ladies exuding plenty of infectious enthusiasm. Their inclusion of a piece of Bulgarian vocal music, performed with absolute authenticity, also worked in their favour. **calens vocalensemble stuttgart**, with its eight-voice panoramic sound, might have been better suited to a venue like the Mendelssohn Auditorium in the Gewandhaus, yet the high quality of their singing and their great versatility were still evident, despite the challenges of conveying modern compositions such as those by British composer Herbert Howells or their own arrangement of the American folk song 'Oh Shenandoah' in this setting.

soulparlez from Vienna presented three of their own songs: 'Branches and Trees', 'Tender Eyes' and 'Flowers'. Powerful solo voices, layered arrangements, physical presentations, and feminine messages go hand in hand with the four female singers, whose musical language is entirely unique. **Lylac** from Mainz also brought their own compositions and demonstrated with their sophisticated pieces 'Falling' and 'Das Raumschiff' rich with jazz nuances that they had significantly evolved in the year since they last took part in the competition.

The four ladies in **Vocalights** from Hamburg were accompanied by two men of water and sand: they sang

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Schumann's 'Der Wassermann' written for female choirs, as well as 'Mr Sandman' in three different tempos and styles.

Luminosa from Munich, on the other hand, performed 'Oh Sapientia' and 'I Never Saw a Moor' – modern, sophisticated pieces that the six women delivered superbly with all their dedication and skill. And last but not least, **Just Vox** from Brussels was another group with great voices and charisma, enhanced on this occasion by microphone power, particularly in terms of beatbox action. Their final song 'Jolie Coquine' was extremely danceable – and brought the Showcase of this year's participants and the concert to a perfect close.

"The new generation is alive!" remarked Daniel Knauff from the initiators amarcord about the 2024 competition. "It's more lively, creative and female than ever" – as was proven 100 per cent by this year's Showcase.

The crowning finale was – for the first time, but because it felt so logical, certainly not the last – the official announcement of the competition results. All the ensembles gathered on stage, Masterclass director Stephen Connolly (who once again hosted the event charmingly and with delightful culinary references to the ensembles' hometowns) was also present, as were the Contest jury, of course – and this year's winners were finally announced. And they were: calens vocalensemble – 1st Prize, Audience Award, and the Special Award from the SummerMusicAcademy at Hundisburg Palace; Lylac – 2nd Prize; and Luminosa – 3rd Prize and the amarcord Special Award for the best piece performed without amplification. This event was marked by plenty of (partly incredulous) joy, huge cheers from the audience, and also gratitude – and it was immediately followed by the final **a cappella** solo concert in 2024. What a day! What a celebration!

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Review



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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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