

CALMUS

A perfect blend of sound, precision, lightness and wit. These are the hallmarks of Calmus, now one of the most successful vocal groups in Germany. The ensemble has forged a refined sound which few groups achieve. The wide range of sound colors, the joy in performing that musicians convey on the concert platform, and their varied and imaginative programs are praised by the press time and time again. These five Leipzig musicians have won a whole string of international prizes and competitions, including the ECHO Klassik and Supersonic Award, and the reach of their activities is constantly expanding, taking them throughout Europe as well as to North and South America. In 2010 the quintet made its debut at Carnegie Hall, New York.

The musicians are tireless in their quest to discover new repertoire. Shaped by the centuries-old tradition of great German boys' choirs, they are naturally at home in the vocal music of the Renaissance, the Baroque and the Romantic. The music of our own time is also a real passion. In all their ventures, there are frequently interesting partnerships with musicians such as the Lautten Compagnie Berlin, the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet, Hamburger Ratsmusik and the Frankfurt Radio Bigband. As this often means totally new repertoire in the area of contemporary music, over the years Calmus has commissioned numerous new works from composers including Bernd Franke, Steffen Schleiermacher, Wolfram Buchenberg, Mathew Rosenblum, Bill Dobbins, Michael Denhoff and Harald Banter, and the group has given many world premieres. It goes without saying that they revel in singing pop, folk and jazz, as well as chansons and golden oldies from the 1920s.

Part of their work is devoted to encouraging the up-and-coming generation, so teaching and workshops are part of their regular schedule, both at home in Leipzig and on their travels. It's no wonder that Calmus, with its unique line-up of soprano, countertenor, tenor, baritone and bass, is gaining more and more fans worldwide.

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES



Soprano **Anja Pöche** joined the *a capella* ensemble Calmus as soprano in 2001, marking the group's transition from an all-male to a mixed ensemble. Anja Pöche (née Lipfert) was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1980. As early as 1986 she started her musical career, including piano lessons starting in 1992, and she became a member of the MDR Kinderchor (children's choir of the local broadcaster) where she stayed until 1997.

In 2003 she was among the prize winners of the national competition "Jugend Musiziert" (youth makes music) in the section 'duet: voice and piano.' Also in 2003 Anja began studying vocal studies at the 'Hochschule für Musik und Theater Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy' in Leipzig as pupil of Adelheid Vogel. After successful completion of her studies she received her diploma in January 2010. Besides her involvement with Calmus, Anja regularly performs as a solo singer in oratorio and cantata concerts throughout Germany, Ireland, Great Britain and Switzerland. A particular emphasis of her repertoire is the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries.



Sebastian Krause was born in Halle/Saale. Since he was a child of two musicians, singing played an important part in his life from childhood. At the age of 9 he became a member of the *Thomanerchor* (St. Thomas Choir of Leipzig) where he sang until 1998. As prefect there, he also gained experience conducting. After A-levels and his leaving the choir, he became co-founder of the Calmus Ensemble in 1999. He previously had singing lessons with Jörn Sakuth, since 2004 his teacher is Dirk Schmidt. In 1999 he began studying musicology and computing science, but quit musicology in 2000. Aside from Calmus he was both a member of the “Sächsisches Vokalensemble” under Matthias Jung and responsible for the Georg Kreisler Internet Forum for a long time.

Sebastian is also an arranger for all kinds of vocal music both for Calmus and other vocal ensembles and choirs.



The tenor, **Tobias Pöche**, has been the tenor of the Calmus Ensemble since September 2006. Born in Annaberg-Buchholz in 1978, he had his first singing lessons at the age of 7. After having been a member of the Kreuzchor Dresden he studied singing with Kammersänger Rudolf Riemer at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater “Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy” Leipzig.

Tobias is a former member of the Kreuzchor Dresden, and also sang freelance for the MDR Radiochoir Leipzig, the NDR Radiochoir Hamburg, the RIAS-Chamberchoir Berlin, and was a member of the Dutch ensemble “Ensemble Lyrique” and the Händel Festival Choir Halle. In those various ensembles, he has worked with conductors including Michele Mariotti, Sir Simon Rattle, Martin Haselböck, Hans-Christoph Rademann, René Jacobs, Peter Dijkstra, Daniel Reuss, Lothar Zagrosek, Simone Young, Riccardo Chailly and Krzysztof Penderecki.

In addition he has worked as soloist in various opera- and operetta productions at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig, the Eduard-von-Winterstein Theatre Annaberg and the Anhaltische Theater Dessau. As a soloist and as an ensemble singer, his diverse field of activity has taken Tobias Pöche to all parts of Germany, throughout Europe, Asia and to North and South America.



Ludwig Böhme loves vocal music – as a singer, a conductor, a lecturer or an arranger, and he is a founding member of Calmus. Born in 1979, he was a member of the St Thomas' Boys Choir in Leipzig. He studied choral conducting with Georg Christoph Biller at the Academy for Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy", Leipzig. Until 2002 he worked as the assistant of the Director of Music of St Thomas'.

When he is not busy with Calmus, he works as the conductor of the Leipzig chamber choir "Josquin des Prés," which focuses primarily on the music of the Renaissance but whose repertoire does also include later periods. Though basically an *a cappella* ensemble, there is regular cooperation with baroque orchestras – in concerts, radio- and CD productions. In 2010 the chamber choir "Josquin des Prés" won the second prize of the German Choir Competition.

From 2004 Ludwig Böhme has been instigating, as its artistic director, the concert series "Josquin – the Project," the first complete performance of the latter's entire oeuvre in St Thomas Church, Leipzig.

Ludwig Böhme leads workshops for vocal ensembles and choirs and is Lecturer for Conducting at the Protestant Academy for Church Music in Halle/Saale. He has also achieved success as an arranger and a composer (Contemporary A cappella Recording Award 2004).



Born in 1988, **Manuel Helmeke** started his musical career as a young boy at the local children's choir of his congregation. In addition to this he took lessons at the local music school in piano, organ and singing.

In 2008 the young bassist was prize winner of the national music competition "Jugend Musiziert" for young adults. This success encouraged Manuel to start studying singing. He studied with Prof. Berthold Schmid and KS Prof. Roland Schubert at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in Leipzig and graduated in 2014 with a diploma both in singing as well as in music education.

Meanwhile he has had various engagements as a soloist, where he performed with famous ensembles such as the Thomanerchor Leipzig, MDR radio choir as well as Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. In addition to this he took part in CD productions with the Leipziger Gewandhaus as well as in radio broadcastings with Deutschlandradio Kultur and the MDR.

Manuel is also passionate about conducting his initiated choir projects. From 2012 - 2014 he discovered his preference for ensemble music as part of the award-winning Ensemble Thios Omilos. At the beginning of 2015 he joined Calmus as the bass singer.