

78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | DECEMBER 15, 2019



FROM A WALL STENCIL
GRAY MAINE 1800

PROGRAM



Calmus Vocal Ensemble, photo by Marco Borggreve

Calmus Vocal Ensemble

Anja Pöche, soprano

Sebastian Krause, countertenor

Tobias Pöche, tenor

Ludwig Böhme, baritone

Manuel Helmeke, bass

December 15, 2019 | 3:30 p.m.

West Building, West Garden Court

Ancient and Contemporary Motets and Songs

Traditional, 11th century

Arr. Günther Raphael (1903–1960)

“Sis willekommen, Herre Kerst”

John Tavener (1944–2013)

“A Cradle Song”

“Today the Virgin”

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

(1525–1594)

“Gloria” from *Missa O Admirabile*

Commercium

Hugo Distler (1908–1942)

Singet frisch und wohlgemut,

op. 12, no. 4

Traditional, 19th century

Arr. Ludwig Böhme (b. 1979)

“Maria durch ein Dornwald ging”

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

“Nova! Nova!”

Intermission

Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839–1901)

Benedicta es tu from *Motet*, op. 163, no. 5

Traditional, 17th century

Arr. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

“O Jesulein zart”

Traditional

Arr. Gunnar Eriksson (b. 1936)

“Kristallen den fina”

Christmas Carols from around the World

Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649)

Arr. Calmus

“Huron Carol” (Canada)

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Lyrics, a poem by Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

“In the Bleak Midwinter” (Great Britain)

Gustaf Nordqvist (1886–1949)

Lyrics by Edvard Evers (1853–1919)

“Jul, jul, strålande jul” (Sweden)

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)

Arr. Sebastian Krause (b. 1979)

“White Christmas” (United States)

Mykola Leontowytsh (1877–1921)

Arr. Fredo Jung (b. 1949)

“Shchedryk” (Ukraine)

Traditional

Arr. Juan Garcia (b. 1976)

“De tierra lejana venimos” (Puerto Rico)

Ariel Ramirez (1921–2010)

Arr. Gr. Meyer (b. 1979)

“La Peregrinacion” (Argentina)

James L. Pierpont (1822–1893)

Arr. Ludwig Böhme

“Jingle Bells” (United States)

THE MUSICIANS

“Nothing short of remarkable...they, quite simply, bring whatever they sing to glorious life.” That is how the *Deseret News* described a concert by Calmus Vocal Ensemble, the first-prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild 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 other works in its diverse repertoire, Calmus captivates both audiences and critics with its charming stage presence, flawless technique, and entertaining presentation.

Calmus’s members are graduates of Leipzig’s renowned St. Thomas Church Choir School, and together they offer a 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, as well as pop songs and jazz. Calmus has nearly twenty recordings to its credit, with its latest release, *Folk Songs*, featuring twenty-one works from around the world.

The group has performed at major venues in North America, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Ravinia Festival, and Washington Performing Arts, and its world-wide touring has included Europe and Central and South America. Festival appearances include the International A Cappella Week Hannover and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival.

PROGRAM NOTES

The festival of Christmas is celebrated throughout the world, and naturally many traditions have developed in different cultures. During this festive season, there is generally more singing than at any other time of the year, along with a huge number of wonderful Christmas carols that come from all over the globe. Some pieces have their origin in the liturgical rites, beginning with the Catholic Church and the “Gloria” as a part of the mass, and have been followed by musical contributions from other Christian faiths. Some carols have developed into annual folk traditions by the people of a particular region (“Shchedryk”), which have then spread to become famous elsewhere. Some carols praise the baby Jesus (“Today the Virgin”); others simply sing about the winter (“In the Bleak Midwinter” and “White Christmas”); some are centuries old (“Sis willekommen, Herre Kerst”); and others fairly new (“La Peregrinacion”). Some carols are virtuous and powerful, while others are calm and peaceful; some are geared to adults and others to children (including the children inside of all of us!). Often the sound of a particular language helps to create the atmosphere of a song, as in “Huron Carol,” Canada’s oldest carol, where we sing two verses in the native language of the Huron/Wendat people.

The variety of Christmas music is indeed vast, and it’s not only the melodies themselves that are so different, but also the form in which they are (or can be) sung: there are unison Gregorian melodies, classic four-part choral settings or polyphonic motets, and complex jazzy or even trendy (or sometimes a bit kitschy) arrangements. And, isn’t it marvelous to take a familiar melody out of its old setting and give it a new one? Christmas carols are so versatile—there are hardly any that can’t be set in several different styles.

Over the years that Calmus has been singing, its musicians have developed a huge repertoire of worldwide Christmas music. This program contains some of our favorite songs that give an idea of the range of music that is sung all over the world. We have designed the program with ancient and contemporary motets and songs in the first part, with arrangements and a little Christmas twinkling eye in the second part.

We hope that our program of Christmas music from around the world will help bring the holiday spirit into your hearts, and perhaps bring you a bit of calm and inner peace during these often hectic December days.

Program note by Calmus

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

East of the River

Solstice: Darkness Is Your Candle

Music of the Mediterranean, Balkans, Armenia, and the Middle East.

December 21, 3:30 p.m.

Inscape Chamber Orchestra

DC Youth Orchestra

Music by Beethoven, Respighi, and Stravinsky.

December 22, 3:30 p.m.

Eunice Kim, violin

Xavier Foley, bass

Program includes baroque, Irish, Latin, and contemporary music.

This concert is part of a series of performances by female violinists, showcasing the brilliance and stylistic versatility of the instrument.

January 5, 3:30 p.m.

Imani Winds

Catalyst Quartet

(im)migration

Featuring a new work by Jessie Montgomery inspired by the Great Migration of African Americans.

January 12, 3:30 p.m.

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

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cover Mildred E. Bent, *Design from Gray, Maine 1800 (no. 1): From Proposed Portfolio “Maine Wall Stencils,” 1935/1942*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Index of American Design, 1943.8.18116

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