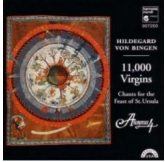


Hildegard von Bingen - 11,000 Virgins (1997)

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VIGIL 1. *Antiphon: Auctori vite psalmis Invitatory: Venite exsultemus domino* 8:51
2. *Symphonia virginum: O dulcissime amator (Hildegard of Bingen)* 9:23 3. *Hymn: Jesu corona virginum Ahrweil Antiphoner (13th c.)* 248 4. *Responsory: Spiritui sancto (Hildegard of Bingen)* 6:51 5. *Versicle: Specie tua (Karlsruhe LX)* 0:25 6. *Responsory: Favus distillans (Hildegard of Bingen)* 6:51 7. *Benedicamus domino (Engelberg 314 (14th c.))* 0:54 LAUDS
8. *Antiphon: Studium divinitatis (Hildegard of Bingen)* 1:12 9. *Psalm 92: Dominus regnavit / Studium divinitatis Ahrweil Antiphoner* 3:27 10. *Sequence: O Ecclesia (Hildegard of Bingen)* 10:09 11. *Benedicamus domino (Engelberg 314)* 0:53
VESPERS
12. *Chapter: Domine deus meus (Berlin 40046 (13th c.))* 0:51 13. *Brief Responsory: Mirabilis deus (Karlsruhe LX)* 1:10 14. *Hymn: Cum vox sanguinis (Hildegard of Bingen)* 8:09
15. *Antiphon: O rubor sanguinis (Hildegard of Bingen)* 1:38 16. *Canticle: Magnificat anima mea / O rubor sanguinis (Ahrweil Antiphoner)* 5:01 17. *Hymn: Te lucis ante terminum (Ahrweil Antiphoner)* 2:03 18. *Benedicamus domino (Worcester F. 160 (13th c.))* 0:47

From my early childhood, before my bones, nerves, and veins were fully strengthened, I have always seen this vision in my soul, even to the present time, when I am more than seventy years old. ...The light that I see thus is not spatial, but it is far, far brighter than a cloud that carries the sun. . . . and I call it "the reflection of the living Light". . . and I see, hear, and know all at once, and as if in an instant I learn what I know. But what I do not see, I do not know, for I am not educated, but I have simply been taught how to read. And what I write is what I see and hear in the vision. . . . And the words in this vision are not like words uttered by the mouth of man, but like a shimmering flame, or a cloud floating in a clear sky." —Hildegard of Bingen, letter to Guibert of Gembloux (1175)

Of the innumerable composers of sacred music before the fourteenth century, only a handful of names have come down to us. It is no small irony, then, that one of the most important is a “poor little woman” (as she called herself), untutored in music, and for whom musical composition was only one small part of a life of mystical experience and miraculous creativity.

From her memoirs and voluminous correspondence, we know a good deal about Hildegard’s life. She was born to noble parents in 1098 in Bermersheim, near Mainz, Germany. She was their tenth child and was dedicated to the church as a tithe—a decision influenced, perhaps, by her poor health and strange visions. At the age of eight she entered a small convent associated with the monastery of St. Disibod near Bingen on the Rhine; and there, under the tutelage of the anchoress Jutta of Spanheim, in her mid-teens, she took her vows. The little convent grew and flourished under Benedictine rule, and when Jutta died in 1136, Hildegard succeeded her as magistra, or leader. It was five years later, at the age of forty-three, that Hildegard saw a vision of tongues of flame, signifying to her that she should write down and share her spiritual experiences, thus beginning her career as mystic, writer, and poet-composer. In 1147, her first writings, describing her visions, came to the attention of the Benedictine reformer and preacher Bernard of Clairvaux and his friend, Pope Eugenius III, both of whom affirmed her gift as prophetess and mystic. Her fame increased, and with it the number of postulants at the convent of St. Disibod. Hildegard proposed to found a new convent at Rupertsberg, a little distance away. The monks of St. Disibod were reluctant to lose the famous Hildegard and her sisters, and Hildegard struggled through numerous difficulties—including a paralyzing illness—before the issue was resolved and the new convent completed in 1150. By 1165, the Rupertsberg convent had so prospered that Hildegard founded a daughter house at Eibingen, just across the Rhine.

In the meantime, with the help of her teacher and confidant, the monk Volmar, Hildegard finished her first visionary work, *Scivias*, in 1151, and began her scientific encyclopedia in two parts: a book of herbal medicine, called *Physica*, and a book of compound medicine, *Causae et curae*. Hildegard was well-known in her day as an herbalist and healer, and her knowledge and veneration of the natural world are evident in her poetry, with its frequent symbolic use of plants, animals, and gems. Between 1150 and 1160, Hildegard also composed and edited her collection of poetical-musical works, the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (*Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*). Two more books eventually followed in this trilogy of visions, as well as hundreds of letters, exegetical works, homilies, saints’ lives, and a glossary of a secret language (her *Lingua ignota*). Amid all this she found the time and strength, after the age of sixty, to travel and preach throughout Germany. Her long life was filled with controversy and struggle, ending only with her death at Rupertsberg on 17 September 1179 at the age of eighty-one. Although attempts to have her canonized in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were unsuccessful, she is nevertheless honored as a saint in the Roman martyrology. The *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* consists of seventy-seven poems

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with monophonic music, making up a liturgical cycle for specific feasts or feast classes. There are thirty-four antiphons, fourteen responsories, and three hymns for use in the daily round of psalm and prayer called the Divine Office. There are also five sequences, a Kyrie and an Alleluia verse for the Mass, and several other devotional works. The Symphonia was no doubt intended for the nuns of her convent, though some of its works were commissioned by or sent to monastic men as well. Hildegard claimed to have received these pieces directly in her visions, declaring herself to be a mere vessel or mouthpiece for the divine word. But no matter how they were generated, the absolutely integral relationship of text and music in all these works, their daring use of imagery, and the artful freedom of melodic formula and gesture are truly inspired and are a testament to her genius. Hildegard was not “learned” in the manner of her scholarly brethren, bred on logic and patristic writings. Her intellect fed on the Bible—especially the Psalms and the Song of Songs—and on liturgical language; from these she drew her boldly juxtaposed images and rhapsodic style. In an age of regularly scanned and rhymed religious verse, Hildegard’s poetry is unfettered and unpredictable with melodies characterized by wide, unprepared leaps, ornate melismas, and modal irregularities. Certain typical melodic formulas recur again and again, but the strong bond between text and music—as well as ingenious (or inspired) variation and recombination—transforms these formulas into a hypnotic web of sound. Although scholars have found some similarities to the works of earlier poet-musicians, Hildegard’s style is truly individual and had no direct ancestors or descendants. —Susan Hellauer , anonymous4.com

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