

NAXOS

Hildegard von BINGEN

Celestial
Harmonies
Responsories
and Antiphons

Oxford
Camerata
Jeremy
Summerly



Abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179): Celestial Harmonies:

Responsories and Antiphons from *Symphoniae armonie celestium revelationum*

Hildegard of Bingen was a remarkable being. In a postmodern Europe that still has to remind itself that women can write inspired music, Hildegard's compositional beacon shines from a distance of eight and a half centuries. In today's Europe, science, religion, and diplomacy make strange bedfellows, yet Hildegard appears not only to have reconciled all three, but actively to have investigated their common roots. Given the unusual combination of Hildegard's accomplishments, perhaps the most comforting aspect of this saintly figure's uniqueness is that she was not only a woman, but a peculiarly feminine one.

Born into the Rhenish aristocracy in 1098, Hildegard entered a convent eight years later because she was her parents' tenth child; she spent the remainder of her eighty years as a nun, the latter half as abbess of her own convent. Hildegard was not universally popular during her lifetime: the establishment of her own convent at Rupertsberg near Bingen (into which she attracted twenty nuns of noble birth) was elitist. Added to which, Hildegard's community worshipped in fine jewellery and ostentatious headgear. Our stereotypical image of the frugal medieval abbess in enclosed orders may therefore be wide of the mark. It seems rather that the sensuality of Hildegard's music and poetry sprung from an individualistic view of high Benedictinism.

Hildegard's great musico-poetic collection was completed around the year 1150. *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* ('Symphony of the harmony of heavenly revelations') is a collection of 77 songs and one music drama. The subjects of these songs are an idiosyncratic collection of individuals and groups—the pieces included on this recording are variously addressed to the Creator, the Redeemer, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St John the Evangelist, Apostles, Confessors, and Martyrs. The five antiphons each frame a segment of psalm verses (taken from Psalms 22, 78, 23, 61, and 113 respectively) and the responsories make use of a refrain—two items in *abcb* form (*O vos imitatores* and *O dulcis electe*) and one (*O vis aeternitatis*) in *abcbdb*.

Critics remain divided as to the assessment of Hildegard's competence as a poetess and musician. Her colourful imagery and capricious melodies can appear inspired or unpolished according to your point of view. To some, these songs appear repetitive and formulaic; to others they are coherent works of genius. And while Hildegard's lack of formal training in Latin results in inconsistencies and poor construction, the absence of grammatical convention enables a torrent of original imagery to bypass traditional poetic shackles.

Jeremy Summerly

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Oxford Camerata



Oxford Camerata gave its first concert at the Maison Française in Oxford on 22 May 1984. The core group comprises twelve singers with or without keyboard accompaniment, but for certain projects the choir has been made up of as few as four singers and as many as forty. After a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in the Snape Maltings on Good Friday 1986, Sir Peter Pears, who was at the performance, agreed to become the Oxford Camerata's first patron. While Oxford Camerata was initially recognised as a specifically early music group, since the early 1990s the choir has expanded its repertoire to include music from Gregorian chant to the present day. The Oxford Camerata Instrumental Ensemble (using modern instruments) was formed in 1992 and the Oxford Camerata Baroque Orchestra in 2007.

Abigail Boreham (AB)
Eloise Irving (EI)

David Brown (DB)
David Knight (DK)

Clare Dawson (CD)
Carys-Anne Lane (CL)

Peter Davoren (PD)
Paul Thompson (PT)

Track analysis (**Bold** denotes solo voices in order of appearance)

1	CD	EI	AB	CD
2	DB	PT	PD	DK
3	AB	CD	EI	CL
4	DB	PD	DK	PT

5	CD	AB	EI	CL
6	DK	PD	DB	PT
7	CL	AB	CD	EI
8	PT	DK	DB	PD

Jeremy Summerly



Jeremy Summerly has given concert tours throughout Europe and the United States as well as in Israel, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa, and Botswana. He has conducted at the BBC Proms, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Palestine Mozart Festival, and has performed Ligeti for Ligeti, Pärt for Pärt, and Kagel for Kagel. In 1995 he was a recipient of a European Cultural Prize from the European Association for the Encouragement of the Arts (Basel, Switzerland) and in 2007 he was made an honorary associate of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Die Äbtissin Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179): Himmlische Harmonien: Responsorien und Antiphonen von *Symphoniae armonie celestium revelationum*

Hildegard von Bingen war eine bemerkenswerte Gestalt. Über achteinhalb Jahrhunderte hinweg strahlt ihr Licht als Komponistin in unser postmodernes Europa, das sich immer wieder der Tatsache erinnern muss, dass auch Frauen zu inspirierter Musik in der Lage sind. Ähnlich sieht die Sache aus, wenn man das Verhältnis zu Wissenschaft, Religion und Diplomatie betrachtet: Was in der europäischen Gegenwart recht seltsame Bettgenossen sind, vermochte sie nicht nur zu verzöhnen, sondern auch aktiv auf gemeinsame Wurzeln hin zu untersuchen. Angesichts der Leistungen, die in der Person der Hildegard auf ungewöhnliche Weise zusammentrafen, ist der tröstlichste Aspekt dieser heiligmäßigen Persönlichkeit, dass sie trotz aller Einzigartigkeit nicht nur eine Frau, sondern obendrein auch noch eine besonders weibliche war.

Hildegard wurde 1098 als Tochter rheinischer Aristokraten geboren und kam, weil sie das zehnte Kind ihrer Eltern war, bereits als Achtjährige in ein Kloster. Den Rest ihrer achtzig Lebensjahre verbrachte sie als Nonne und die zweite Hälfte dieser Zeit als Äbtissin eines eigenen Konvents. Hildegard war nicht allenthalben beliebt: Die Gründung ihres Klosters auf dem Rupertsberg bei Bingen, wohin sie zwanzig Nonnen edler Herkunft zog, hatte etwas Elitäres. Dazu kam, dass Hildegards Gemeinschaft dem HErrn mit feinen Juwelen und prächtigem Kopfputz diene. Unsere stereotype Vorstellung von der bescheidenen mittelalterlichen Äbtissin in ihrem abgeschlossenen Orden dürfte an der Realität wohl gehörig vorbeigehen. Vielmehr scheint die Sinnlichkeit, der man in Hildegards Musik und Dichtung begegnet, einem individuellen Verständnis der Benediktinerregel entsprungen zu sein.

Ihre große musikalische und dichterische Kollektion hat Hildegard um 1150 abgeschlossen. Die *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* („Harmonischer Zusammenklang himmlischer Offenbarungen“) besteht aus 77 Liedern und einem musikalischen Schauspiel. Die Themen dieser Lieder bilden eine eigenartige Sammlung von Individuen und Gruppen: Die auf dieser CD enthaltenen Stücke wenden sich an den Schöpfer, den Erlöser, die Heilige Jungfrau Maria, den Evangelisten Johannes, die Apostel, Bekenner und Märtyrer. Die sechs Antiphonen fassen jeweils einen Psalmausschnitt ein (aus den Psalmen 22, 78, 23, 61, und 113), und in den Responsorien gibt es Refrains, wobei zwei Stücke nach dem Schema ABCB (*O vos imitatores* und *O dulcis electe*) und das *O vis aeternitatis* als ABCBDB angelegt sind.

Die Kritik ist sich bis heute darüber uneins, wie man Hildegards Befähigung zur Dichterin und Musikerin zu bewerten habe. Ihre farbige Bilderwelt und ihre kapriziösen Melodien können inspiriert oder auch ungeschliffen wirken, je nachdem, welchen Gesichtspunkt wir annehmen. Manch einer hört in den Liedern Wiederholungen und Formelwerk, andern hingegen sind sie schlüssige Werke eines Genies. Während nun Hildegards Mangel an förmlichem Lateinunterricht zu Stilbrüchen und schlechten Konstruktionen führte, entsteht aber gerade durch eben dieses Fehlen grammatikalischer Konventionen eine Fülle origineller Bilder, die die traditionellen poetischen Regelwerke umgehen.

Jeremy Summerly

Deutsche Fassung: Cris Posslac

1 **O cohors militiae** floris
virgae non spinatae
tu sonus orbis terrae
circuiens regiones insanorum sensuum
epulantium cum porcis quas expugnasti
per infusum adiutorem
ponens radices in tabernacula
pleni operas verbi patris.
Tu etiam nobilis es gens salvatoris
intrans viam regenerationis aquae
per agnum qui te misit in gladio
inter saevissimos canes
qui suam gloriam destruxerunt
in operibus digitorum suorum
statuentes non manufactum
in subiectionem manuum suarum
in qua non invenerunt eum.
Quoniam circumdederunt me canes multi:
concilium malignantium obsedit me.
Foderunt manus meos et pedes meos:
dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.
Ipsi vero consideraverunt et inspexerunt me:
diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea,
et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.
Tu autem Domine, ne elongaveris auxilium tuum a me:
ad defensionem meam conspice.
Erue a framea Deus, animam meam:
et de manu canis unicum meam.
Salve me ex ore leonis:
et a cornibus unicornium humilitatem meam.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
O cohors &c.

2 **O successores** fortissimi leonis,
inter templum et altare
dominantes in ministracione eius,
sicut angeli sonant in laudibus
et sicut assunt populis in adiutorio,
vos estis inter illos qui haec faciunt,
semper curam habentes in officio agni.
Et excitatus est tamquam dormiens Dominus:
tamquam potens crapulatus a vino.

O fighters of the flower
from the thornless branch,
you are the voice of the orb'd world,
encircling places of unbalanced senses,
communing with pigs which you captured
by injected aid,
erecting foundations in the dwellings
of the full works of the word of the father.
You also are the renowned race of the saviour,
initiating the method of rebirth by the water
through the lamb, who sent you armed,
among the fiercest dogs
who destroyed their honour
through the actions of their own fingers,
placing that which was not manufactured
under the authority of their own hands
in which they yet did not discover him.
For many dogs surrounded me:
a band of wicked people beset me.
They pierce my hands and my feet:
I can count every one of my bones.
These people stare and gloat on me:
they share out my clothes among them,
and they cast lots for my robe.
But you, O Lord, do not withdraw your help from me:
hasten to my defence.
Rescue my soul from the sword, O God:
and from the grip of dogs, my life.
Save me from the mouth of the lion:
and from the horns of the unicorn, my humility.
Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, and now and for ever,
and for all ages. Amen.
O fighters...

O followers of the bravest of lions,
between shrine and high altar
governing through his ministry,
as the angels sing praises
and as they give aid to the people,
you are one of those who do such things,
always having care in the service of the lamb.
And the Lord awoke as if from sleep:
like a warrior overcome with wine.

Et percussit inimicos suos in posteriora:
opprobrium sempiternum dedit illis.
Et repulit tabernaculum Ioseph:
et tribum Ephraim non elegit.
Sed elegit tribum Iuda:
montem Sion quem dilexit.
Et aedificavit sicut unicornium
sanctificium suum in terra: quam fundavit in saecula.
Et elegit David servum suum,
et sustulit eum de gregibus ovium:
de post foetantes accepit eum.
Pascere Iacob servum suum: et Israel hereditatem suam.
Et pavit eos in innocentia cordis sui:
et in intellectibus manuum suarum deduxit eos.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
O successores &c.

3 **O vos imitatores** excelsae personae,
in preciosissima et gloriosissima significatione.
O quam magnus est vester ornatus,
ubi homo procedit,
solvens et stringens in Deo
pigros et peregrinos.
Etiam ornans candidos et nigros
et magna onera remittens.
Nam et angelici ordinis official habetis,
et fortissimo fundamenta prescitis,
ubicumque constituenda sunt,
unde magnus est vester honor.
Etiam ornans candidos et nigros
et magna onera remittens.

4 **O dulcis electe,**
qui in ardore ardentis effulsisti, radix,
et qui in splendour patris elucidasti mystica,
et qui intrasti cubiculum castitatis
in aurea civitate quam construxit rex,
cum accepit sceptrum regionum.
Praebe adiutorium peregrines.
Tu enim auxisti pluviam cum praecessoribus tuis,
qui miserunt illam in viriditate pigmentariorum.
Praebe adiutorium peregrines.

And attacked his enemies from behind:
and put them to everlasting shame.
And rejected the tent of Joseph:
and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.
But he chose the tribe of Judah:
Mount Zion which he loves.
And built his shrine like the heavens
and the earth: which he made firm for ever.
And he chose David his servant,
and took him away from the sheepfolds:
from the care of the ewes he called him.
To shepherd his people Jacob: and Israel, his inheritance.
And tended them with a blameless heart:
and with discerning mind he led them.
Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, and now and for ever,
and for all ages. Amen.
O followers...

O you disciples of the most excellent being,
in the most valued and most renowned symbol.
O how splendid is your attire,
when man proceeds,
releasing and therefore binding through God
the strugglers and the stragglers.
Also adorning white and black
and unburdening heavy burdens.
For, of the angelic order, you have responsibility,
and foretell the strongest foundations,
wheresoever they are to be placed,
therefore great is your honour.
Also adorning white and black
and unburdening heavy burdens.

O sweet, elected one
who burnt in the glow of the fiery one, a root,
and who in the father's splendour elucidated mysteries,
and who entered the chaste chamber
in the golden city which the king constructed
when he accepted governance of the regions.
Grant aid to the wanderers.
For you augmented the rain when your superiors
unleashed it on the viridity of the spice-sellers.
Grant aid to the wanderers.

5 O victoriosissimi triumphatores,
qui in effusione sanguinis vestri
salutantes aedificationem ecclesiae,
intrastis sanguinem agni, epulantes cum vitulo occiso.
O quam magnam mercedem habetis,
quia corpora vestra viventes despexistis,
imitantes agnum Dei, ornantes poemam eius,
in qua vos introduxit
in restaurationem haereditatis.
Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit:
in loco pascuae ibi me collocavit.
Super aquam refectionis educavit me:
animam meam convertit.
Deduxit me super semitas iustitiae:
propter nomen suum.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
O victoriosissimi triumphatores &c.

6 O cruor sanguinis qui in alto sonuisti,
cum omnia elementa se implicuerunt
in lamentabilem vocem cum tremore,
quia sanguinis creatoris sui illa tetigit,
ungue nos de languoribus nostris.
Exaudi Deus deprecationem meam:
intende oratione meae.
A finibus terrae ad te clamavi:
dum anxietur cor meum, in petra exaltasti me.
Deduxisti me, quia factus es spes mea:
turre fortitudinis a facie inimici.
Inhabitabo in tabernacula tuo in saecula:
protegar in velamento alarum tuarum.
Quoniam tu Deus meus exaudisti orationem meam:
dedisti haereditatem timentibus nomen tuum.
Dies super dies regis adjicies:
annos eius usque in diem generationis et generationis.
Permanet in aeternum in conspectu Dei:
misericordiam et veritatem eius quis requiret.
Sic psalmum dicam nomini tuo in saeculum saeculi:
ut reddam vota mea de die in diem.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
O cruor sanguinis &c.

O most victorious vanquishers,
who, hailing the foundation
through your bloodshed, of the church,
embraced the blood of the lamb, eating of the fatted calf.
O how great a recompense you have
for you despaired of your living bodies,
imitating the lamb of God, enlarging his pain
through which he brought you
to the renewal of your inheritance.
The Lord is my shepherd, and there is nothing I shall want:
he makes me lie down in green pastures.
Near restful waters he leads me:
he revives my soul.
He guides me along the right path:
because he is true to his name.
Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, and now and for ever,
and for all ages. Amen.
O most victorious vanquishers...

O stream of blood that sounded above,
when all the elements entwined
in a lamentable voice with dread
because the blood of their creator touched them,
cleanse us from our afflictions.
O God, hear my cry:
listen to my prayer.
From the ends of the earth I call to you:
when my heart is faint, set me upon the rock.
Lead me, for you are my hope:
a strong tower against the enemy
I will dwell in your tent for ever:
and hide in the shelter of your wings.
For you, my God, have heard my prayer:
grant me the heritage of those who fear you.
May you prolong the life of the king:
may his years span many generations.
May he ever sit enthroned before God:
bid love and truth to be his protection.
So I will sing psalms to your name for ever and ever:
and fulfil my vows from day to day.
Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, and now and for ever,
and for all ages. Amen.
O stream of blood...

7 O vis aeternitatis

quae omnia ordinasti in corde tuo,
per verbum tuum omnia creata sunt sicut voluisti,
et ipsum verbum tuum induit carnem in formatione illa
quae educta est de Adam.

Et sic indumenta ipsius a maximo dolore abstera sunt.

O quam magna est benignitas salvatoris
qui omnia liberavit per incarnationem suam
quam divinitas exspiravit sine vinculo peccati.

Et sic indumenta ipsius &c.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

Et sic indumenta ipsius &c.

O force of immortality

which regulated everything in your heart,
by your word all things were made just as you desired,
and your word itself took on flesh in a form
that led directly from Adam.

And so his clothes from the most acute pain were cleansed.

O how great is the benevolence of the saviour
who liberated all things by his incarnation
which breathed holiness without a single link of sin.

And so his clothes...

Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

And so his clothes...

8 O splendidissima gemma

et serenum decus solis qui tibi infusus est,
fons saliens de corde patris,
quod est unicum verbum suum, per quod creavit mundi
primam materiam, quam Eva turbavit.

Hoc verbum effabricavit tibi pater hominem,
et ob hoc es tu illa lucida materia
per quam hoc ipsum verbum exspiravit omnes virtutes,
ut eduxit in prima materia
omnes creaturas.

Laudate pueri Dominum: laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum:
ex hoc nunc, et usque in saeculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum:
laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus:
et super coelos gloria eius.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat:
et humilia respicit in coelo et in terra?

Suscitans a terra inopem:

et de stercore erigens pauperem.

Ut colloquet eum cum principibus:
cum principibus populi sui.

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo:
matrem filiorum laetantem.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

O splendidissima gemma &c.

O most splendid gem

and serene elegance of the sun which into you was poured,
a font springing from the heart of the father,
which is his unique word, from which he made
the world's primal matrix which Eve threw into disorder.

For you the father effected this word as man,
and so you are that luminous substance
through which this word breathed all virtue,
just as within the primal matrix he led forth
all forms of life.

Praise, O servants of the Lord: praise the name of the Lord.
May the name of the Lord be blessed:
both now and for evermore.

From the rising of the sun to its setting:
praised be the name of the Lord.

High above all nations is the Lord:
and above the heavens is his glory.

Who is like the Lord our God, who has risen on high to live:
and looks far down on heaven and earth?

Lifting the needy from the dust:

and from the mire he raises the poor.

To set him in the company of princes:
with the princes of his people.

Who gives a home to the childless woman:
and blesses the mother with children.

Glory be to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, and now and for ever,
and for all ages. Amen.

O most splendid gem...

Translations of responsories and antiphons by Jeremy Summery



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Now enjoying cult status since her 're-discovery' 25 years ago, Hildegard von Bingen, the tenth child of an aristocratic family, entered a convent at the age of eight and spent the remainder of her eighty years as a nun as well as a mystic, the latter half as abbess of her own convent. Hildegard's great musico-poetic collection was completed around the year 1150. *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of Heavenly Revelations) is a collection of 77 songs and one music drama. The subjects of these songs are an idiosyncratic collection of individuals and groups – the pieces included on this recording are variously addressed to the Creator, the Redeemer, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St John the Evangelist, Apostles, Confessors, and Martyrs.

Abdess Hildegard von

BINGEN

(1098-1179)

Celestial Harmonies

Responsories and Antiphons *from*
Symphoniae armonie celestium revelationum

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| 1 O cohors militiae | 15:42 | 5 O victoriosissimi triumphatores | 9:37 |
| 2 O successores* | 8:21 | 6 O cruor sanguinis* | 6:05 |
| 3 O vos imitatores | 6:34 | 7 O vis aeternitatis | 8:58 |
| 4 O dulcis electe* | 6:19 | 8 O splendidissima gemma* | 12:43 |



Oxford Camerata
Jeremy Summerly,
Director



Includes Free Downloadable Bonus Track (Leonin: Sacred Music from Notre Dame: *Viderunt omnes*) available at www.classicsonline.com. Please see inside booklet for full details.

Sung texts and translations are included, and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/557983.htm

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