



HILDEGARD OF BINGEN



Timeline							
1098	1113	1141	1150	1151-1158	1158-1163	1165	1179
Born in Bermershein (Germany)	Becomes a Benedictine nun	Hildegard claims to receive a call from god to record her visions	Completes her first composition Ordo virtutum and establishes her first monastery	Writes several books on medicine and natural sciences	Hildegard makes many teaching and missionary tours through the Rhineland and France	Preaches public sermons and founds a second monastery	Hildegard dies aged 81

Key Compositions

Ordo virtutum (The order of the virtues)
 This is a play set to music about good and evil. It tells the story of a human soul called Anima who has to choose between following the good Virtues or the bad Devil. In the play, we meet the Virtues who want to help Anima, and the Devil who tries to trick Anima into doing bad things. In the end, the Virtues and Anima defeat the Devil, and everyone celebrates together. The play has five parts, including a happy beginning, a sad middle, and a joyful ending with all the characters walking together.

- Other important compositions include:
- O ecclesia oculi tui (O church of your eyes)
 - Spiritus sanctus vivificans (The Holy Spirit gives life)
 - O Euchari in Leta Via (O Eucharis in the Leta Way)
 - Antiphon, O quam mirabilis est (Antiphon, O how wonderful he is)
 - O vis eternitatis (O force of eternity)
 - O Rubor Sanguinis: Antienne (O Red of Blood: Antienne)

The Importance of Hildegard

The Church
 Hildegard was given to the church at age 8 and was the tenth child of a German count who historians believe was a military man. Hildegard was sent to be instructed by Jutta, a nun who lived in an enclosed set of rooms, referred to as a vault, in a Benedictine monastery. Hildegard took vows to become a nun herself at age 15.

Visions from God
 Hildegard said she had visions of God her whole life. The first "shade of the living light" came at age 3 and the visitations never stopped. She described one as "Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast, not like a burning but like a warming flame." At age 43, she said God told her to "write down what you see and hear" and, for the first time, she revealed her visions to the world.

Key Events

Public Speaking
 The Pope authorised Hildegard to preach in public. It was extremely unusual for medieval nuns to leave their enclosed orders or to make public statements.

Her Music
 She wrote lyrical poetry which was not like the music of many other medieval composers at the time. It mostly contained small patterns of melody which are repeated many times in slightly different ways. Her music was also different because the chants she wrote were written for female voices, in a higher range than earlier chants. This made them easier for women's voices.

Her Legacy
 Seen as one of the first composers, Hildegard wrote nine books, seventy poems, seventy-two songs, and a play. Her books are in print and her music is widely performed today. However, her music was largely undiscovered until 1979.



DID YOU KNOW?



Sickly most of her life, she made it to age 81. As a child she was often too weak to walk and sometimes could not see. As an adult she could be in bed, paralyzed, for days. Historians now believe she suffered from severe migraines (headaches).