



Vojtěch Havlík

TIBURTINA ENSEMBLE

CELESTIAL HARMONY: MUSIC FOR THE HEAVENLY COURT BY HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Barbora Kabátková

SOPRANO Tereza Böhmová, Ivana Bilej Brouková, Barbora Kabátková

ALTO Anna Chadimová Havlíková, Daniela Čermáková

SOPRANO, MEDIEVAL HARP Hana Blažíková

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral
Thursday, April 23 @ 7 PM

There will be no intermission.

PROGRAM

Antiphona: *O rubor sanguinis*

SOLO Barbora Kabátková

"Mother of God"

Hymnus: *Ave generosa gloriosa et intacta*

Antiphona: *O tu illustrata*

SOLO Hana Blažíková

Conductus: *Marie qui gratiam* (Anonymous, 12th century)

"Heavenly marriage"

Antiphona: *De patria*

Antiphona: *Sed diabolus in invidua sua*

SOLO Daniela Čermáková

Conductus: *Mundus a munditia* (Anonymous, 12th century)

"Brightest light"

Sequence: *O Ecclesia*

Antiphona: *O spectabiles viri*

SOLO Barbora Kabátková

Responsorium: *Vos flores rosarum*

"Divine Rationality"

Antiphona: *O virtus sapientiae*

SOLO Tereza Böhmová, Anna Chadimová Havlíková

Responsorium: *O felix anima*

"The Flower of the Virgin Mary"

Antiphona: *Caritas abundat*/Instrumental

Conductus: *Deus misertus hominis* (Anonymous, 12th century)

Antiphona: *Hodie aperuit nobis clausa porta + Psalm 24*

Gregorian Chant (Hildegard of Bingen)

PROGRAM NOTES

By Barbora Kabátková

The twelfth century is one of motion. I dare claim that in many ways, it is the most distinctive period of the Middle Ages—full of upsets, changes and religious and institutional revolt. This revolt mainly consisted of an attempt to return to foundations, especially in monastic life, which had experienced an enormous boom, thanks to the founding of new, reformed orders such as Cistercians and Norbertines, as well as the reform efforts of the Benedictine Order itself, which had thrived on its monopoly of monastic life. Of course, this did not happen from one day to the next; the changes were preceded by important events, whether it was the political-ecclesiastical dispute over investiture, which divided the Western Christian world into two camps at the turn of the eleventh century, or the rise of interesting personalities in the late eleventh century. One such figure was Abbot William of the important South-German Benedictine monastery in Hirsau. He was one of the first people who, despite his Benedictine vows, stepped out of enclosure and preached. His spiritual and innovative approach included the effort to allow a new kind of piety for women. For surely, the religious talents of women enrich the church! This established the institution of double monasteries: a male community affiliated with a female one. This does not mean that nunneries did not exist as autonomous entities before, but their existence was certainly somewhat precarious.

In Rhineland, this monastic boom was very firmly impacted by Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), magistra of the monastery in Disibodenberg, later abbess of the Benedictine convent in Rupertsberg, and a mystic, composer, writer and perhaps even healer.

The story of her life is tied to many clichés and myths, which continue to be spread through various channels of communication until this day. But thanks to her *Vita*, which was partly written in Hildegard's lifetime, and her rich correspondence, which she maintained with many important characteristics of the period, we can avail ourselves of an extraordinary wealth of information regarding her person. As Barbara Beuys writes in her Hildegard biography, Hildegard can be venerated as a saint and a visionary, and her texts can be understood solely as a spiritual-religious message beyond time and space. It is quite another matter to approach her as a historical person, to cast light on the contexts, to separate the holy from the profane, to discover her characteristic traits and antagonisms. Only then do the person and the work gain comprehensibility and life.

We are therefore clearly confronted with a person, a "Renaissance woman" in today's terms, gifted with supernatural visions and divine revelations, while at the same time remaining thoroughly realistic and pragmatic, holding firm to her opinions on the world, the church and monastic life.

Hildegard's career was not set in stone, but as the daughter of a noble family she was predestined in a way. She was accepted to the Benedictine convent in Disibodenberg at a very young age. She grew up under the tuition of the strongly ascetic Jutta of Sponheim, the abbess of the female part of the monastery, whom she succeeded at the age of 38, to become the community's second magistra. The struggle for an independent female monastery culminated in 1158, when the convent founded by Hildegard on St. Rupert's Hill near the town of Bingen was exempted from the property of the male monastery of St. Disibod. It was not an easy path to take, especially for a woman. But she was aided by her visions. The voice of the so-called Living Light first addressed her in 1141, and as she wrote in the preface to her first visionary text, *Scivias (Scito vias Domini – Know the ways of the Lord)*, it was adamant and clear in its consequences: "Frail person, speak and write what you see and hear. Do not speak or write of it in a human manner, with an artifice stemming from human reason or with wayward human creativity, but instead in such a way as you see and hear it in heavenly reality in the miraculous acts of God... And suddenly I obtained insight into the interpretation of Scripture, the psalter, the Gospels and the other Catholic books of the Old and New Testament." Even as an abbess, she could hardly negate the words of Apostle Paul, that women should remain silent in public and that men were to have monopoly on the interpretation of Holy Scripture. So, it was her visions that freed her from this as no one could deny divine inspiration. From a modern perspective, she can hardly be faulted for using her mystical visions to realize her life's ambitions.

We know the names of very few twelfth-century composers and, in most cases, the name is the only information we have. Hildegard is a revelation from this perspective as well. Her works of sacred music, which consist of 77 pieces, and the liturgical drama *Ordo Virtutum* constitute a separate compositional approach inspired by the monophonic tradition of Gregorian chant, but which was like nothing else in its time, a distinctive approach that no one was able to continue. Although Hildegard denied having had any tuition in neumes and singing, it can be assumed that this was merely another gesture of a person who simply could not admit her own skill. But from her *Vita* we know that Mistress Jutta taught her to sing the psalms and led her to give praise on the ten-stringed psaltery. We also know that the nuns at Rupertsberg had mandatory singing lessons! It is not clear what such singing tuition consisted of in those days, but noting Hildegard's difficult melismatic, often virtuoso compositions requiring a vast vocal range, it can be presumed that the lessons must have fulfilled at least some of the requirements of our day and age.

Hildegard composed chants for both important and local feast days of the liturgical year. This work, called *Symphonia Harmoniae Caelestium Revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations), celebrates all the important celestial "personalities" of her time. We will perform these chants praising the Virgin Mary (the hymn *Ave generosa*, antiphon *O tu illustrata*, antiphon *Hodie aperuit nobis clausa porta*), St. Ursula (the antiphons *O rubor sanguinis*, *De patria*, *Sed diabolus* and the sequence *O ecclesia*), martyrs (the responsory *Vos flores rosarum*), the Prophets (the antiphon *O spectabiles viri*) and St. Disibod (the responsory *O felix anima*), as well as the votive antiphon for Divine Wisdom, *O virtus Sapientie*, and the antiphon for the Holy Spirit as Divine love, *Caritas abundat*. The lyrics of the chants are influenced by Hildegard's mystical visions, often quoting the Living Light that spoke to her in her visions.

Hildegard's music beckons to be experimented with. As something of a challenge, we chose an improvised accompaniment of the monophonic vocals on, let us say, an Old-Testament plucked string instrument: the harp. The polyphonic compositions, the conducti *Marie, qui gratiam*, *Mundus a munditia* and *Deus misertus hominis*, originate from approximately the same period as the monophonic chants of Hildegard of Bingen, but they are from anonymous composers of the so-called Notre Dame school, which sources show to have spanned from the late twelfth to early thirteenth century. The last-mentioned conductus is attributed to well-known Magister Perotinus.

Despite all her divine visions, Hildegard did not forget that she was human. She often asked herself, quoting Psalm 8: "What are humans that you are mindful of them?" At the age of 77, she turned to criticism of humankind in her correspondence: "People are uplifted to the stars by God through all his miracles, and yet they cannot stop sinning. I am a frail woman, but I am human. Many wise people were endowed with miracles, so that they proclaimed many mysteries. But for frivolous fame they ascribed these to themselves, and thus brought about their downfall." Hildegard died at the incredible age of 82. She left behind a striking legacy that has withstood the passage of time and lives on in us.

PROGRAM TEXTS

Antiphona: O rubor sanguinis

O rubor sanguinis qui de excelso illo fluxisti
quod divinitas tetigit
tu flos es quem hiems de flatu serpentis numquam laesit.

O redness of blood, who have flowed down from that height
which divinity touched:
you are the flower that the winter of the serpent's breath never withered.

"Mother of God"

Hymnus: Ave generosa

1. Ave generosa gloriosa et intacta
puella, tu pupilla castitatis,
tu materia sanctitatis,
que Deo placuit.

2. Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit,
quod supernum Verbum in te carnem induit.

3. Tu candidum liliū quod Deus ante omnem creaturam
inspexit.

4. O pulcherrima et dulcissima,
quam valde Deus in te delectabatur,
cum amplexionem caloris sui in te posuit,
ita quod Filius eius de te lactatus est.

5. Venter enim tuus gaudium habuit
cum omnis celestis symphonia de te sonuit,
quia virgo Filium Dei portasti,
ubi castitas tua in Deo claruit.

6. Viscera tua gaudium habuerunt
sicut gramen super quod ros cadit
cum ei viriditatem infundit, ut et in te factum est,
O mater omnis gaudii.

7. Nunc omnis ecclesia in gaudio rutilat
ac in symphonia sonet
propter dulcissimam Virginem
et laudabilem Mariam,
Dei Genitricem. Amen.

1. Hail, nobly born, hail, honored and inviolate,
you Maiden are the piercing gaze of chastity,
you the material of holiness—
the one who pleased God.

2. For heaven's flood poured into you
as heaven's Word was clothed in flesh in you.

3. You are the lily, gleaming white, upon which God has fixed his
gaze before all else created.

4. O beautiful, O sweet!
How deep is that delight that God received in you,
when 'round you he enwrapped his warm embrace,
so that his Son was suckled at your breast.

5. Your womb rejoiced
as from you sounded forth the whole celestial symphony.
For as a virgin you have borne the Son of God—
in God your chastity shone bright.

6. Your flesh rejoiced
just as a blade of grass on which the dew has fall'n,
viridity within it to infuse—just so it happened unto you,
O mother of all joy!

7. So now in joy gleams all the Church like dawn,
resounds in symphony
because of you, the Virgin sweet
and worthy of all praise, Maria,
God's Mother. Amen.

Antiphona: O tu illustrata

O tu illustrata de divina claritate,
clara Virgo Maria,
Verbo dei infusa,
unde venter tuus floruit de introitu Spiritus Dei,
qui in te sufflavit, et in te,
te exsuxit, quod Eva abstulit
in abscisione puritatis per contractam contagionem
de suggestionem diaboli.
Tu mirabiliter abscondisti in te immaculatam carnem
per divinam rationem,
cum Filius dei in ventre tuo floruit,
sancta divinitate eum educente
contra carnis iura, quae construxit Eva,
integritati copulatum
in divinis visceribus.

O you, illuminated by divine brightness,
Bright Virgin Mary,
infused with the Word of God,
Whereby your womb blossomed at the entrance of the Spirit of God,
Who blew into you, and in you,
Sucked out from you what Eve took away,
In the cutting off of purity through the contagion contracted
From the devil's incitement.
You wonderfully hid in yourself the immaculate flesh
Through divine reason,
when the Son of God blossomed in your womb
holy divinity bringing him forth
Contrary to the laws of the flesh, which Eve constructed
he, joined to wholeness
In the innermost parts of the divine.

Conductus: Marie qui gratiam

1. Marie qui gratiam
Et gloriam
Tacere nequeo,
Nec habeo
Dicendi copiam
Iuxta materiam,

1. I who cannot be silent
About Mary's grace
And glory,
Have not
Great powers of speaking
Nor worldly goods,

Os meum aperiam,
Sit Dominus impletor.

2. Sed Dei iustitiam
Ennarare vetor,
Qui peccatis impetor,
Quid ergo torpeo?
Recurram ad Mariam,
Certus quia veniam
Inveniam,
Super quo valde letor.

3. Nam de peccato meo
Seu langueo,
Seu summus super eo,
Me vocat in ius precor,
In sinu virgineo
Ihesum reperiam,
Qui medicus et thethor.

"Heavenly marriage"

Antiphona: De patria

De patria etiam earum
et de aliis regionibus
viri religiosi
et sapientes ipsis adiuncti sunt,
qui eas in virginea custodia servabant
et qui eis in omnibus ministrabant.

Antiphona: Sed diabolus in invidia sua

Sed diabolus in invidia sua istud irrisit,
qua nullum opus Dei intactum dimisit.

Conductus: Mundus a munditia

Mundus a munditia
dictus per contraria
sordet inmunditia
Criminum crescit in malitia
culpa nescit terminum.

Omnis inmunditie
clerus fons est hodie
capita malitie presules
nec tot pestit varie
monstra vidit Hercules.
Ubi nunc iustitia?
Ubi sanctimonia?
Perit in astutia veritas
Duplex est malitia
simulata equitas.

"Brightest light"

Sequentia: O Ecclesia

O Ecclesia,
oculi tui similes saphiro sunt et aures tue monti Bethel,
et nasus tuus est
sicut mons mirre et thuris, et os tuum quasi sonus aquarum
multarum.
In visione vere fidei
Ursula Filium Dei amavit,
et virum cum hoc seculo reliquit, et in solem aspexit,
atque pulcherrimum iuvenem vocavit, dicens:
In multo desiderio
desideravi ad te venire

But I will open my mouth
And may God be my inspiration.

2. But I am prevented from recounting
The justice of God,
Because I am assailed by sins,
But why should I therefore languish?
I shall run to Mary,
Certain that I shall find
Pardon,
And I shall greatly rejoice.

3. For whether I languish
Because of my sin,
Or whether I overcome it,
I pray that she will call me to righteousness,
And that in the virgin bosom
I shall find Jesus,
Who is both healer and orator.

And from their country,
and from other places, too,
men wise
and of religion joined up with them,
to keep them safe with virgin guard
and serve them in all things.

But the Devil in his envy mocked it,
since he has never left any work of God untouched.

World and purity,
alas, what a contradiction!
For the world is sinful and foul,
malice produces evil deeds
and wrongdoing has no end.

The clergy is nowadays
the source of all impurity
the bishops being the heads of all evil.
Hercules himself had never seen
so much plague among monsters.
Where is the justice now?
Where has the holy virtue disappeared?
In slyness the truth perishes,
and malice is even doubled
when it is disguised for righteousness.

O Church,
your eyes are like sapphire, and your ears are like the mountain
of Bethel, and your nose
is like a mountain of myrrh and incense, and your mouth is like
the sound of many waters.
In her vision of true faith
Ursula loved the Son of God,
and forsook husband and this world, and gazed into the sun,
and called out to the most beautiful young man, saying:
"With great desire
have I desired to come to you,

et in celestibus
nuptiis tecum sedere,
per alienam viam ad te currens velut nubes que in purissimo
aere currit similis saphiro.
Et postquam Ursula
sic dixerat,
rumor iste
per omnes populos exiit. Et dixerunt:
Innocentia puellaris ignorantie nescit quid dicit.
Et ceperunt ludere cum illa in magna symphonia, usque dum
igne sarcina super eam cecidit.
Unde omnes cognoscebant, quia contemptus mundi est
sicut mons Bethel.
Et cognoverunt etiam suavissimum odorem
mirre et thuris,
quoniam contemptus mundi super omnia ascendit.
Tunc diabolus
membra sua invasit, que nobilissimos mores in corporibus
istis occiderunt.
Et hoc in alta voce omnia elementa audierunt
et ante thronum Dei dixerunt:
Wach! rubicundus sanguis innocentis agni
in desponsatione sua effusus est.
Hoc audiant omnes celi
et in summa symphonia laudent Agnum Dei,
quia guttur serpentis antiqui in istis margaritis
materie verbi Dei suffocatum est.

Antiphona: O spectabiles viri

O spectabiles viri,
qui pertransistis occulta,
aspicientes per oculos spiritus
et annuntiantes in lucida umbra acutam
et viventem lucem in virga germinantem,
quae sola floruit de introitu radicans luminis.

Vos antiqui sancti,
praedixistis salvationem exulum animarum,
quae immersae fuerant morti,
qui circuistis ut rotae,
mirabiliter loquentes mystica montis,
qui caelum tangit,
pertransiens unguendo multas aquas,
cum etiam inter vos surrexit lucida lucerna,
quae ipsum montem praecurrens ostendit.

Responsorium: Vos flores rosarum

Vos flores rosarum,
qui in effusione sanguinis vestri
beati estis
in maximis gaudiis redolentibus
et sudantibus in emptione
que fluxit
de interiori mente
consilii manentis ante evum
in illo,
in quo non erat constitutio
a capite.
Sit honor in consortio vestro,
qui estis instrumentum ecclesie
et qui in vulneribus vestri
sanguinis undatis:

and to sit with you
in heavenly marriage,
hurrying to you by a strange path,
the way a cloud hurries along in the purest air, like a sapphire."
And after Ursula
had spoken in this way,
a certain saying
went out among all peoples, and they said:
"The innocence of her girlish ignorance does not know what it is saying."
And they began to mock her all together
until a burden of fire fell upon her.
From which they all began to learn that true disdain for the world
is like the Mountain of Bethel.
And they understood then the sweetest scents
of myrrh and incense,
for disdain for the world had risen above all things.
Then the devil
rushed into his minions, and they destroyed
those bodies in all their womanly grace.
And all the elements heard it in a loud voice,
and spoke before God's throne:
"O woe, that the bright red blood of the innocent lamb is shed
at its betrothal.
Let all the heavens hear this,
and in full harmony let them praise the Lamb of God,
because the throat of the old serpent is choked by these pearls
made of the matter of the word of God."

O remarkable men,
who passed through hidden things,
looking through the eyes of the spirit
and proclaiming in the shining shadow the intense
and living light germinating on the rod,
which alone flowered at the entrance of the light which caused it
to take root.
You ancient saints,
you foretold the salvation of exile souls,
which had been sunk in death,
you who turned like wheels,
wondrously speaking the mysteries of the mountain,
which touches heaven,
by anointing passing through many waters,
when among you there arose a shining lantern,
which, running ahead, showed the mountain itself.

You buds of roses,
within your blood outpoured
you're blessed
in joys supreme and fragrant,
distilled of that redemption
that flowed
from th' inmost heart
of counsel kept before all time
in him
who was unfounded
at the source.
An honor in your fellowship!
The Church's instrument you are
as in your wounds, your waves
of blood, you surge:

"Divine Rationality"

Antiphona: O virtus sapientie

O virtus Sapientie,
que circuiens circuiisti,
comprehendendo omnia
in una via que habet vitam,
tres alas habens,
quarum una in altum volat
et altera de terra sudat
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet, O Sapientia.

Responsorium: O felix anima

O felix anima
cuius corpus de terra ortum est,
quod tu cum peregrinatione huius mundi conculcasti:
Unde de divina racionalitate, que te speculum suum fecit,
coronata es.
Spiritus Sanctus etiam te ut habitaculum suum intuebatur.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

"The Flower of the Virgin Mary"

Antiphona: Caritas abundat

Caritas abundat in omnia,
de imis excellentissima
super sidera
atque amantissima
in omnia,
quia summo regi osculum pacis
dedit.

Conductus: Deus misertus hominis

Deus misertus hominis,
lavit reatum criminis Eve
per partum virginis;
O quam dulce remedium,
ut vitium purgetur per contrarium;
fit electis compendium,
ne tedium fit currenti per studium,
si differatur bravium.

Antiphona: Hodie aperuit nobis clausa porta + Psalm 24

Hodie aperuit nobis clausa porta
quod serpens in muliere suffocavit,
unde lucet in aurora
flos de Virgine Maria.

Ad te levavi animam meam, Deus meus in te confido,
non erubescam: neque irrideant me inimici mei:
et enim universi qui te exspectant, non confundentur.

O Wisdom's energy!
Whirling, you encircle
and everything embrace
in the single way of life.
Three wings you have:
one soars above into the heights,
one from the earth exudes,
and all about now flies the third.
Praise be to you, as is your due, O Wisdom.

You blissful soul,
whose body, born of earth,
you trod down in the pilgrimage of this world –
thus by divine rationality, which made you its own mirror,
you have been crowned.
The Holy Spirit, moreover, was wont to gaze upon you as its
own dwelling-place.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Love abounds in all,
from the depths exalted and excelling
over every star,
and most beloved
of all,
for to the highest King the kiss of peace
she gave.

God, taking pity on man,
Washed away the guilt of Eve's sin,
Through the Virgin's birth.
O how sweet the remedy,
That the fault might be purged by its opposite;
A shortcut is created for the elect,
Lest weariness should strike the runner on the track,
If the prize is deferred.

Today a door long shut has opened, to show us that thing
which the serpent choked in the woman;
and so there shines brightly in the dawn
the flower of the Virgin Mary.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul, O my God, in you I trust,
let me not be put to shame, let not my enemies exult over me:
indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Established in 2008 in Prague, the **Tiburtina Ensemble** of female voices specializes in the interpretation of Gregorian chant, medieval polyphony and contemporary music. The group ranks among the best in Europe's leading early music ensembles, thanks to its unmistakable vocal timbre and its ardent expression, both highly praised by audiences.

The ensemble's concert programs focus not only on vocal and instrumental compositions from the Middle Ages, but also on non-traditional projects that blend Medieval music with other musical genres. The Tiburtina Ensemble regularly performs at major venues in the Czech Republic and across Europe.

In 2011, the ensemble released its debut album, *Flos inter spinas*, which translates to "Blossoms among the Thorns" (Supraphon label), followed by *Apokalypsis* (Animal Music label) in 2013. The Ricercar label released two of the group's recordings: *Ego sum homo* featuring music of Hildegard of Bingen (2016) and *Cor Europae*, a collection of Nativity chants from medieval Prague (2019). In 2018, Tiburtina collaborated with Capella de la Torre on *Vidi Speciosam* (Sony/Deutsche Harmonia Mundi), performing music by T.L. de Victoria. The ensemble released *Paradisi porte*, inspired by a painting by Hans Memling, on the Accent label in 2021 in collaboration with Oltremontano Antwerpen. That same year, the group also released *Jistebnický kancionál* (Supraphon), dedicated to music from the Hussite era. Its most recent album, *Trobairitz* (Animal Music, 2024), features a new composition by Michal Nejtěk inspired by the songs of female troubadours—a rare and powerful voice of medieval Occitania.

The ensemble took its name from a figure in Medieval history: Tiburtina, or the Tiburtine Sibyl, who was a prophetess who became the best-known sibyl of the Middle Ages. Her oracles were closely tied to Christianity. The parallels between the pagan sibyl and the Christian prophetess are striking: noble origins, preaching expeditions, inquiries from persons in positions of power and the ability to foresee the end of the world—something said to be denied to even the most learned men.
tiburtina-ensemble.com

Barbora Kabátková (Artistic Director)

A singer and musicologist, Kabátková has been involved with music since childhood, studying piano and voice. In 1995, she joined the Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir. She later studied choir conducting at Prague's Charles University in the faculty of education and musicology at the university's Faculty of Arts, where she is currently pursuing a Ph.D. specializing in Gregorian chant.

Kabátková is deeply engaged in the performance of early solo vocal music and plays medieval harps and the psaltery. She regularly collaborates with leading early music ensembles, including Collegium Vocale Gent, Collegium 1704, Il Gardellino, Ricercar Consort, Collegium Marianum, Concerto Palatino, Musica Florea, Cappella Mariana, Tasto Solo, Concerto Melante and Accentus Austria. Since 2025, she has been working as a guest conductor with Collegium Vocale Gent.

As a performer of contemporary music, she recently worked with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Berg Orchestra and Ostravská Banda. She has appeared at major festivals and concert halls throughout the Czech Republic and Europe, as well as in Canada and the United States.