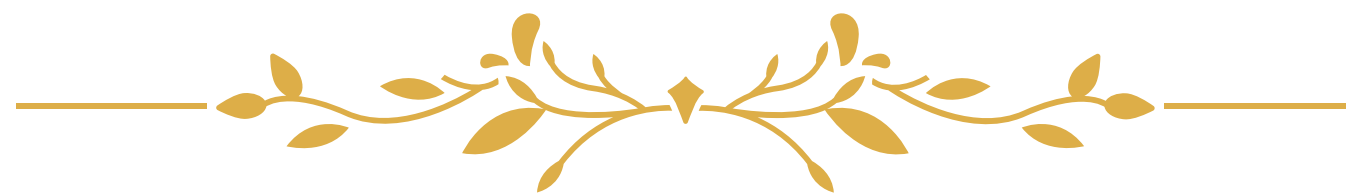




Hildegard Reanimated: Vision in Vision



The Pandora Consort

***Kendra Comstock, Angie Tyler, Gina Marie Falk, sopranos
Cate Duckwall, Visual Artist***



THE
**PANDORA
CONSORT**



The Pandora Consort is newly formed early music ensemble, founded in 2021 by Kendra Comstock and Angie Tyler. Both graduates of the Historical Performance Masters program at the Longy School of Music, Angie and Kendra met and bonded over their love of singing early music and creating unique performances. This group was formed with the mission of creating accessible, modern performances of early music by supporting young artists of every medium to create relevant, innovative performances that can attract a wider audience. The Pandora Consort aims to reimagine classical music performance with multimedia, interactive performance, and exploring historically under-represented music. The Pandora Consort is particularly interested in performing rare works by female early music composers.

In the Summer of 2022, the Pandora Consort premiered their program *Vox Feminae* with SoHIP Boston, which included works by Barbara Strozzi, Isabella Leonarda, Antonia Bembo, and Elisabeth Jacquet De la Guerre. Striving to bring new and old music together, Pandora maintains a partnership with the Tutti Music Collective and hosts an annual event known as the Worlds Collide Showcase, bringing together Boston-based emerging musicians across all genres to create original genre-bending compositions and fundraise for Massachusetts charities of their choice.

In 2023 the ensemble received a grant from the Anna Sosenko Assist Trust to perform *Vox Feminae* during the Boston Early Music Festival Fringe Series, and an Encouragement Award from the Mixtape Recital Series to support the development of a new program: *The Witching Hour*. In February 2024, the Pandora Consort performed this program through New York as part of the Pegasus Rising Concert Series with Pegasus Early Music and NYS Baroque. In Summer 2024, the Pandora Consort will perform as Resident Guest Artists at the Sable Project in Vermont, and will perform their new program, *Hildegard Reanimated*, in Boston and Vermont.

The name comes from the myth of Pandora's box, and the human need to seek the unknown and echoes the mission of the ensemble to push the boundaries of what a classical concert is.

For this performance, the Pandora Consort is joined by frequent collaborator and vocalist, Gina Marie Falk, and visual artist, Cate Duckwall.

A "soaring soprano soloist" (Boston Classical Review), **Gina Marie Falk** is a Boston-based singer specializing in the performance of early and contemporary chamber music. Some of Gina Marie's most recent engagements include touring with the Pandora Consort as a Pegasus Rising Artist, singing with Emmanuel Music as part of their Cantata Series, and collaborating with pianist Clémentine Dubost to bring exciting, varied recitals to the Middlebury College School of French. Gina Marie's love of new music is at the forefront of her budding career. She continues her collaboration with emerging composers, premiering their works in both chamber and solo settings; most recently with Emmanuel Music, Nightingale Vocal Ensemble, and collaborator John Secunde. Gina Marie and John's project, Saint Boniface, explores the boundaries between classical and popular genres in intimate venues. Forever a limit-pusher, Gina Marie seeks to make classical music accessible to and enjoyable for all listeners.

Cate Duckwall is an interdisciplinary artist currently based in Berlin, Germany. A storyteller at heart, she brings narratives to life through the use of animation, filmmaking, and visual art. Born in Virginia in the USA, she has been empowering narratives through the moving image sector ever since she was a child. Her art has evolved into an instrument to memorialize that magic. She received her B.F.A. in Kinetic Imaging at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts in May of 2022. Here's what Cate had to say about her artistic process, "I view my process as a feedback loop, an effort to bring stories and images to life thinking in the context of "anima." Even something as delicate as a 2 second motion study is an effort for myself to gain an understanding of one's identity and the world at large. Through my process, I am constantly analyzing how these ideas close the boundaries between time and how they may translate as input for future operations."

Hildegard Reanimated: Vision in Vision

The Woman in Sapphire Blue

O virtus sapientie

The Personification of God's Power

O ignee spiritus

The Egg of the Universe

Quia ergo femina

Ave Generosa

O virgo ecclesia

Nunc gaudeant

The Cosmic Tree

O frondens virga

O pulcre facies

O nobilissima viriditas

O viridissima virga

The Choirs of Angels

O quam mirabilis est

O gloriosissimi lux vivens angeli

Translations

The Woman in Sapphire Blue

O virtus Sapientie

O energy of Wisdom! you circled, circling, encompassing all things in one path possessed of life.
Three wings you have: one of them soars on high, the second exudes from the earth, and the third flutters everywhere.
Praise to you, as befits you, O Wisdom!

The Personification of God's Power

O ignee Spiritus

Praise to you, spirit of fire! to you who sound the timbrel and the lyre.
Your music sets our minds ablaze! The strength of our souls awaits your coming in the tent of meeting.
There the mounting will gives the soul its savor and desire is its lantern.
Insight invokes you in a cry full of sweetness, while reason builds you temples as she labors at her golden crafts.
But sword in hand you stand poised to prune shoots of the poisoned apple -scions of the darkest murder- when mist overshadows the will.
Adrift in desires the soul is spinning everywhere. But the mind is a bond to bind will and desire.
When the heart yearns to look the Evil One in the eye, to stare down the jaws of iniquity, swiftly you burn it in consuming fire.
Such is your wish.
And when reason doing ill falls from her place, you restrain and constrain her as you will in the flow of experience until she obeys you.
And when the Evil One brandishes his sword against you, you break it in his own heart. For so you did to the first lost angel,
tumbling the tower of his arrogance to hell. And there you built a second tower - traitors and sinners its stones.
In repentance they confessed all their crafts.
So all beings that live by you praise your outpouring like a priceless salve upon festering sores, upon fractured limbs.
You convert them into priceless gems! Now gather us all to yourself and in your mercy guide us into the paths of justice.

The Egg of the Universe

Quia ergo femina

For since a woman drew up death, a virgin gleaming dashed it down,
and therefore is the highest blessing found in woman's form before all other creatures.
For God was made a human in the blessed Virgin sweet. +

Ave Generosa

In the pupil of chastity's eye I beheld you untouched. Generous maid! Know that it's God who broods over you.
For heaven flooded you like unbodied speech and you gave it a tongue. Glistening lily: before all worlds you lured the supernal one.
How he reveled in your charms! how your beauty warmed to his caresses till you gave your breast to his child.
And your womb held joy like the grass when the dew falls, when heaven freshens its green: O mother of gladness, verdure of spring.
Ecclesia, flush with rapture! Sing for Mary's sake, sing for the maiden, sing for God's mother. Sing!

O virgo Ecclesia

O virgin Church, we must grieve because a most savage wolf has snatched your children from your side.
O woe to the cunning serpent! But O how precious is the blood of the Savior, who betrothed the Church to himself with the King's standard.
Therefore he is seeking her children.

Nunc gaudeant

Now let the motherly heart of the Church rejoice, for in supernal symphony her children are gathered into her bosom.
So you, shameful serpent, are confounded, for those your jealousy held in its maw now gleam in the blood of God's Son.
Praise then be yours, O King Most High! Alleluia.

The Cosmic Tree

O frondens virga

O leafy branch, standing in your nobility as the dawn breaks:
Now rejoice and be glad, and deign to set us frail ones free from our bad habits,
and stretch forth your hand to raise us up.

O pulcre facies

O beautiful faces, beholding God and building in the dawn!
O blessed virgins, how noble are you, in whom the King contemplated himself when he sealed in you beforehand all the beauties of heaven.
So you are the sweetest garden, fragrant with all beauties.

O nobilissima viriditas

O most noble greenness, you are rooted in the sun, and you shine in bright serenity in a sphere no earthly eminence attains.
You are enfolded in the embraces of divine ministries. You blush like the dawn and burn like a flame of the sun.

O viridissima virga

Hail, O greenest branch! You came forth in the windy blast of the questioning of saints.
When the time came for you to blossom in your branches, "hail" was the word to you,
for the heart of the sun distilled in you a fragrance to all the spices that had grown dry. And they all appeared in full verdure.
So the skies rained dew on the grass and the whole earth exulted, for her womb brought forth wheat,
and the birds of heaven made their nests in it. Then food was prepared for humans and great joy for the banqueters.
So in you, sweet Virgin, no joy ever fails. Eve despised all these things! But now, praise be to the Most High.

The Choirs of Angels

O quam mirabilis

O how marvelous is the foreknowledge of the heart of God, that foreknew all creation.
For when God looked on the face of the man he had formed, he saw all his works whole in the form of that man.
O how marvelous is the breath of the Spirit that roused man to life!

O gloriosissimi lux vivens angeli

O most glorious angels, living light:
beneath the Divinity you gaze on the eyes of God within the mystical darkness of all creation in ardent desires, so you can never be satiated.
O how glorious are those joys that belong to your form, which in you is untouched by all the wicked work that first arose in your companion,
the lost angel, who wished to fly above the pinnacle hidden in the depths of God.
So he crookedly plunged into ruin- but by his counsel, he supplied the means of his fall to the handiwork of God's finger.



All translations by Barbara Newman, unless notated with + Translation by Nathaniel Campbell.

For this program we used facsimilies from the *Riseinkodex* and *Dendermonde*
and modern editions from Beverly Lomer and Eya Medieval Music

Program Notes

Since we began singing early music we have held a fascination with the music and works of Hildegard von Bingen. While Hildegard's unique musical notation seems to always imply movement in service of the text and modal writing, her visions too capture a moment in time ripe with symbolism and beauty. When we began delving into her musical and visual works over the past few years, the connection between her music and illuminations became even more apparent.

We selected five of her most famous visions for this performance. The first, *The Woman in Sapphire Blue*, which Hildegard described as, "a most quiet light and in it burning with flashing fire in the form of a [wo]man in sapphire blue". The central figure embodies peace and power in the foreground of the mandala, a common symbol for the Holy Trinity, which she often describes as a wheel that cannot be understood but embraces all.

The second vision, *The Personification of God's Power*, is meant to symbolize the image of Divine Love. According to Hildegard, "And thus Divine Love reveals humankind. For when the Son of God put on flesh, he redeemed the fallen humankind through the service of Love".

The third vision, *The Egg of the Universe*, depicts Hildegard's concept of the universe through a divine feminine lens. Sometimes referred to as the "cosmic egg" Hildegard's theology often states the interconnectedness between God, the cosmos, and man as one entity, represented here by the symbolism of unity in the egg. We have paired music that explores the feminine divine and its interconnectedness to the universe with this vision.

In the fourth vision, *The Cosmic Tree*, we can see the continual progress of humans cultivating the earth in the foreground of the macrocosm of the universe. This vision is ripe with symbolism for the continual regenerative process of life, the visible sparks of God's creation; which reaffirms according to Hildegard that God is life itself.

The finale vision, *the Choirs of Angels*, depicts nine choirs of angels in a joyous mandala as a symphony of life and creation. Each ring of the mandala symbolizes the nine choirs of angels: angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principalities, dominations, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim.

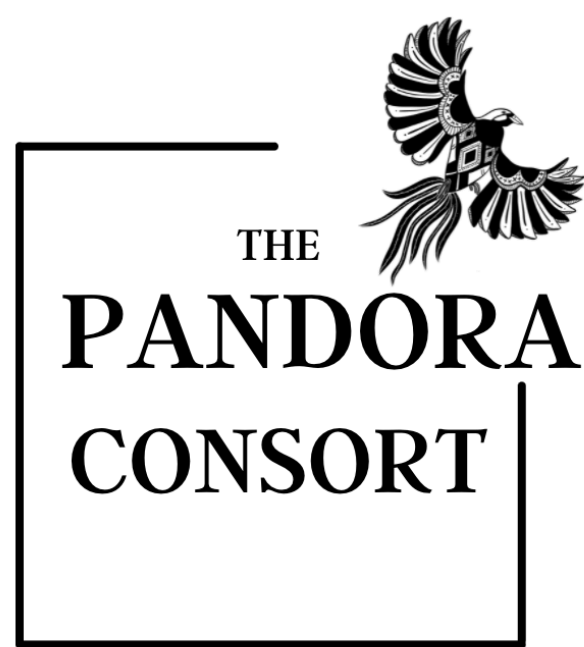


Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) was a German abbess, writer, philosopher, composer, mystic, and medical practitioner and scholar during the High Middle Ages. She was by far the most prolific composer of plainchant and more works can be attributed to Hildegard than any other composer of the Middle Ages. Hildegard experienced mystical visions from a very young age and outside the context and safety of the church she perhaps would have been labeled in a very different vein. Hildegard fought against patriarchal power structures in protection of her nuns but was able to do so in a way that avoided her total condemnation by the church leaders at the time.

Hildegard was a powerful woman in many regards and utilized her skills with tact and wisdom. Hildegard's writings, visions, and music are inextricably linked in her life and philosophy. For Hildegard the act of making music is an act of sacrament, channeling a glimpse of the divine into her compositions through her florid melodic writing and her mastery of rhetoric.



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