

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN

Power Woman of Medieval Times – Her Life, Work and Music

During 2020, we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to our Constitution which guaranties women the right to vote. In celebration of this anniversary, the German American Heritage Center in Davenport, IA, features a special exhibit on German and German-American women who left their mark on the world. Among the stories of these amazing women is that of the original “Power Woman”, Hildegard von Bingen, confidante of popes and emperors as well as other prominent contemporary thinkers of the 12th Century, more than 900 years ago.

Hildegard von Bingen, also known as **Saint Hildegard** and the **Sibyl (Oracle) of the Rhine**, was a German Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, philosopher, Christian mystic, visionary, and polymath. She is one of the best-known composers of medieval sacred music and is one of the most-recorded song writers in modern history. She is considered by many to be the founder of scientific natural history in Germany; her guidelines for monastic medicine remain prominent today. Hildegard was the first woman empowered by papal decree to write on theological treaties and preach; she traveled throughout western Europe, teaching, preaching and providing counsel to four popes, two emperors and countless bishops, abbots, abbesses and the nobility. Her work includes six books, more than 400 letters and 80 musical compositions. She built two convents at a time when funds for monasteries and abbeys were donated by wealthy nobles.

This presentation will summarize the life of St. Hildegard, review her major works and their impact on medieval life as well as today, and provide eight short samples of Hildegard’s music, some performed as originally written for voice, others interpreted for medieval and baroque instruments, as well as arrangements by modern contemporary artists.

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Wolf Koch and his wife **Linnea** travel extensively; their interest in history has taken them to many historical sites in European countries and to the Heartland of the US. During the last three decades, they have visited Rudesheim in Germany’s Rheingau and St. Hildegard’s Abbey in near-by Eibingen multiple times. **Wolf** grew up in the Rhine Valley in a small town dating back to 886, located halfway between Cologne and Koblenz. He returned to Germany as an officer in the US Air Force and was stationed for four years in Bitburg, close to the Luxembourg border. He has previously prepared presentations commemorating several German historic events, and covered various local and national historic as well as photography topics. Dr. Koch, a Sterling resident, is a consultant to the oil and petrochemical industry and has been a professor of chemical engineering. **Linnea** is a graphic designer and photographer, known for her photos of local landmarks and documenting the Whiteside County Barn Tours since their beginning. She has given many talks on local landmarks, shade gardening and some of the wonderful gardens here and in Europe, featuring her photography.



Wikipedia

St. Hildegard Abbey, Eibingen



A. Birkle, Mädchengymnasium, Ulm

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Wolf & Linnea Koch