



Hildegard of Bingen

Fiona Maddocks

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Best known today as a fine composer, the twelfth-century German abbess Hildegard of Bingen was also a religious leader and visionary, a poet, naturalist and writer of medical treatises. Despite her cloistered life she had strong, often controversial views on sex, love and marriage too - a woman astonishing in her own age, whose book of apocalyptic visions, *Scivias*, would alone have been enough to ensure her lasting fame. In this classic and highly praised biography - first published by Headline in 2001 - distinguished writer and journalist, Fiona Maddocks, draws on Hildegard's prolific writings to paint a portrait of her extraordinary life against the turbulent medieval background of crusade and schism, scientific discovery and cultural revolution. The great intellectual gifts and forceful character that emerge make her as fascinating as any figure in the Middle Ages. More than 800 years after her death, Pope Benedict XVI has made Hildegard a Saint and a Doctor of the Church (one of only four women). Fiona Maddocks has provided a short new preface to cover these tributes to an extraordinary and exceptional woman.

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