



Prof. Avis Clendenen (St. Xavier University, Chicago) is considering the position of Vice-President that is being vacated by Michael Gardiner. Michael has done a great job and has now completed his doctoral thesis. We congratulate him for all his achievements and his considerable research concerning Hildegard's *Ordo virtutum*.

## KALAMAZOO CONGRESS

The next ISHBS Session at the 45th International Congress on Medieval Studies of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo will have five presenters and the Presider will again be Prof. K. Christian McGuire. The abstracts will be published in the Spring *Qualelibet*.

The presenters are as follows:

- Jennifer Bienert (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures)
- Francisco Buide del Real (Pontifical University of Salamanca, Spain, Dept. of Theological Studies)
- Michael Gardiner (New England Conservatory, Boston, Dept. of Theoretical Studies)
- Linn Maxwell Keller (Grand Rapids Opera, Michigan)
- K. Christian McGuire (Augsburg College and McNally Smith College, Minnesota)

There will also be an evening concert sponsored by ISHBS: "Hildegard von Bingen and the Living Light", written and performed by Linn Maxwell Keller and directed by Erv Raible. Ms Maxwell has sun in operas and concerts throughout the United States and abroad. Her many solo credits include San Francisco, The Netherlands, and Hungarian State opera houses, The symphony orchestras of Chicago, Toronto, and Mexico City, as the Grand Rapids Opera, with which she is associated. She recently performed her one-woman musical "Lili Marlene" at the Abingdon Theater in New York to

critical acclaim. Erv Raible is the Executive Artistic Director of the International Cabaret Conference at Yale University.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

We welcome paper presentation possibilities for the Hildegard Session at the 2011 Congress on Medieval Studies. Please send them to the Society's, President Pozzi, at 24 Avon Hill Cambridge, MA 02140 or by email to [Pozzi.escot@necmusic.edu](mailto:Pozzi.escot@necmusic.edu)

## MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

**Ellen Wiener** recently had some of her paintings exhibited at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, New York.

**Kathy Luethje** is the editor of a newly-published book (see New Publications) and is planning a conference on Hildegard in St. Petersburg, Florida in spring, 2011. For more information about the conference you may email her at [godsendink@gmail.com](mailto:godsendink@gmail.com).

**Pozzi Escot** will be including discussions of Hildegard in her lectures in the University Colloquium at the University of California at Berkeley, California. She also gave the keynote address at the University of Tallinn in Estonia this past spring.

**Karan Schneider** is the owner of Babs Bakery, which specializes in baked goods that use natural ingredients that would have been available during the time of Hildegard, many of which were recommended by her. She has a Web site for the bakery that discusses health issues and suggests help for common health problems.

Karan is also offering a couple of opportunities to our members: she is looking for someone to write for the page on her Web site titled "Hildegard and Her Works" and for a film-maker or producer to help her with another project.

You can contact her at [karan@breyerstate.com](mailto:karan@breyerstate.com) and see her Web site at [www.babsbakery.com](http://www.babsbakery.com).

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

**Kathy Luethje** is the editor of a recently published book of 40 essays by practitioners of the expressive arts titled “**Healing with Art and Soul: Engaging One’s Self Through Art Modalities**”

Ms Luethje tells us that some of the essays are based on Hildegard’s ideas and techniques for healing.

The book is available at Amazon.com or, at a discount, directly from Ms. Luethje at: 12501 Ulmerton Road, Number 176 Largo, FL 33774

**ISHBS President Pozzi Escot and her partner, Robert Cogan** have transcribed **Four Books of the Chants of Hildegard von Bingen**. These painstaking transcriptions by two of America’s most admired composers, are not changed to conform to certain modern ideas – they are simply Hildegard’s original works without alterations or additions.

They may be purchased from  
Cynthia Crawford, Manager  
Publication Contact International  
24 Avon Hill  
Cambridge, MA 02140

For more information, please send inquiries by email to: [demeslon@verison.net](mailto:demeslon@verison.net)

### **Note to Authors:**

If you would like to have your latest works listed in this column, please send information about them and where they may be obtained to [frances@trafford-flynn.com](mailto:frances@trafford-flynn.com).

## AN ESSAY

### ***Yaqub Al-Kindi and the Arab Golden Age and Hildegard von Bingen***

**Mohammed Fairouz**

The late professor Edward Said, in his last completed book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* contended that the “humanism, celebrated as originating in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy by authorities such as Jakob Burkhart, Paul Oskar Kristeller and nearly every academic historian after them, in fact began in the Muslim madaris, colleges, and universities of Sicily, Tunis, Baghdad, and Seville at least two hundred years earlier.” To support this, Said cites two important studies by George Makdisi and goes on to emphasize that “it is little short of scandalous, for instance, that nearly every medieval studies program in our universities routinely overlooks one of the high points of medieval culture, namely Muslim Andalusia before 1492.”

If one man can be said to have embodied, during his lifetime from c. 801 to about 873 CE, the ideals of the golden age of Arab philosophy in the Middle Ages, it is Yaqub Ishaq al-Kindi and it will be noted that his influence on medieval European thought was established and acknowledged even by early European scholars. Most notable among these was the Italian Geralomo Cardano (1501-1575) who, according to George Satron in his *Introduction to the History of Science*, considered Al-Kindi one of the twelve great minds of the Middle Ages. His influence on the Islamic philosophers who would eventually overshadow him, namely Al Farabi and Avicenna, was indelible and the contemporary historian Ibn al-Nadim as the author of over two hundred and fifty books, covering issues of geometry, logic and physics. Of particular interest in his famed “Kitab al Musiqā”, which we can literally translate as “the Book of Music”, in which according to Dr. Rabah Saoud, Al-Kindi applied the term Musiqā to music having inherited the word from the Greeks.

Al-Kindi published fifteen treatises on music, of which five survive, in which he collected the

knowledge of the philosophers of the ancient world as well as proposed his own theories, among which were the addition of a fifth string to the lute. His work at Baghdad's House of Wisdom provides us with a glimpse into the earliest experiments with music therapy when Al-Kindi, according to Professor Saoud, attempted to heal a paraplegic boy through exposure to certain modes. This seems to preempt for me the socially integrated vision of music making that Hildegard was to explore in her own way as composer and writer of texts both musical and not.

Given the obvious contributions of Al-Kindi and the Arab golden age to musical discourse, the question remains as to why these achievements are commonly overlooked in the somewhat limited perspective of the humanities that seems to predominate the academy today. One of the reasons, it would seem, is a rather pressing issue: that while we assert the value of the classics, the value of a well-rounded education in the humanities, as well as the advancements of the arts, we tend to overlook (if not prove ourselves incompetent in comprehending) the way that these artistic and humanistic accomplishments are contextualized by the broader world around us.

To recall Professor Said's argument on the state of literary theory and criticism in his early book *The World, The Text and the Critic*, is to shed some light on the isolation of the academy from what Vico termed the world of nations and "what we might pragmatically call the world". We can further trace the trend of the isolation of the humanities in the Western world from the development of humanistic discourse in the non-European environment. In this sense, Al-Kindi and the Abbasid tradition that he emerged from are repressed through the collective manipulation of historical memory. It is this collective manipulation that allows for the current texts on the history of the humanities and music to proceed without regard for the non-European.

Musical discourse and the study of the history of music are particularly guilty of this exclusivist Eurocentric attitude. This is the case with the overwhelming majority of standard texts in the academy. Oliver Strunk's *Source Readings in*

*Music History*, even in the latest edition, begins with a book titled *Greek Views of Music* and moves directly from Sextus Empiricus to a book titled *The Early Christian Period and the Latin Middle Ages*. At no point, in the over 1500 pages of the *Source Readings*, is there any reading derived from a non-canonical or non-European source. Even if this was somehow satisfactory when Strunk first compiled these source readings in the early 1950s, at a time when the places of higher learning were predominantly geared toward a white male constituency of European descent, the question of how this text remains satisfactory in an increasingly heterogeneous and cosmopolitan academic environment remains.

In the chapter titled "American Ascendancy: The Public Space at War", from his 1993 book *Culture and Imperialism*, Professor Said sheds some light on the isolation of the Western tradition from the Abbasid cultural developments that produced such examples as Al-Kindi. At a time when political discourse was gearing towards Operation Desert Storm, he reminded us not to be forgetful of the role of Iraq in the flowering of Arab learning and scholarship:

"Yet even schoolchildren know that Iraq was the seat of Abbasid civilization, the highest flowering of Arab culture between the ninth and twelfth centuries, which produced works of literature still read today as Shakespeare, Dante, and Dickens are still read and that, as a capital city Baghdad is also one of the great monuments of Islamic art. In addition, it is where, along with Cairo and Damascus, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century revival of Arab art and literature took place. Baghdad produced at least five of the greatest twentieth-century Arab poets and without any question most of its leading artists, architects and sculptors. "

Al-Kindi, however, seems to have become particularly susceptible to being under-represented even by the standards of the representation of thinkers of the Arab golden age. Al-Farabi and Avicenna seem to enjoy a type of relative popularity when compared to Al-Kindi. This might be in part

due to the fact that Al-Kindi was overshadowed by many of the thinkers who followed him, but I am also prone to believe that there is some light to be found in the following words from Al-Daffa's text titled *The Muslim Contribution to Mathematics*:

“To his people he became known as . . . the philosopher of the Arabs, Al-Kindi ‘was the most learned of his age, unique among his contemporaries in the knowledge of the totality of ancient scientists, embracing logic philosophy, geometry, mathematics, music and astrology’.”

In this sense, since Al-Kindi was one of the first self-proclaimed polymaths, there seems to be evidence of early discontent with the lack of an invitation in his work for the positivistic definition as “philosophical” or “technical” and so on. This may also serve to elucidate why Al-Kindi was somewhat looked over in his own lifetime in favor of such thinkers as the Banu Musa brothers or Al Khawarizmi, all of whom have come to be clearly thought of as mathematicians and are renowned for the composition of technical texts.

It is perhaps partially due to the fact that Al-Kindi confronts the studies that have come to be associated with the humanities that he has come to be extraordinarily neglected. It might be because of, and not simply despite, his composition of fifteen texts on music, and countless others on metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and even philological discourse on the reading of texts, that Al-Kindi has suffered such tremendous neglect. In fact, his contributions to philosophical discourse is such that Professor Adamson, in his essay on Al-Kindi collected in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, contends that if it had not been for Al-Kindi's work, which he carried out under the patronage of the Abbasid caliphs at the House of Wisdom, Al-Farabi, Avicenna and Al Ghazali would not have been possible. It also bears mentioning, since it might be of special interest regarding Al-Kindi's relationship to, and impact on, European thought of the Middle Ages, that his reassessment, in epistemological terms, of the work of Aristotle as well as his fulfillment of translating numerous classical texts, meant that, while Al-Kindi

held Aristotelian thought in highest regard, he was able to reinvigorate it by questioning the bulk of Aristotle's assessments of the natural world and holding them against empirical evidence.

Our canon of musical and broader intellectual thought from Hildegard to the present, or the canon represented by Strunk in his source readings of classical and medieval through modern European musical thought is rich but can hardly be satisfactory unless it undergoes, at our hands and minds, a rigorous reassessment and expansion. And as the world is constantly erupting anew, it would seem that our appropriate response should be a constant reimagining and broadening of our humanistic canon to make it more inclusive, varied, relevant, and interesting. We may take Raphael's example when he included, in his predominantly white, male School of Athens, together with Epicurus and Zeno of Elea, portraits of Ibn Rushh, or Averroes and Hypatia of Alexandria.

It seems that the misrepresentation of the other is essential, however, to the attempted dehumanization of those who we would deem to be our enemies. If we, however, disregard such distinctions in the interest of a greater good, we might have some effect in allaying, or at least, belying the seemingly incumbent dark ages where the creative discourse and flow of knowledge that usually characterize a renaissance is given up in favor of the construction of walls and the prolongation and propagation of conflict. It might be best to allow Al-Kindi himself to offer some valedictory remarks that we might well take under advisement. Al-Kindi is here quoted in Ibn abi Usiba's “*Tabaqat al Itbia*”:

We ought not to be embarrassed of appreciating the truth and of obtaining it wherever it comes from, even if it comes from races distant and nations different from us. Nothing should be dearer to the seeker of truth than the truth itself, and there is no deterioration of the truth, nor belittling either of one who speaks it or conveys it.

(This essay was delivered by Mohammed Fairouz at Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, June 1, 2008 for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Society.)

# REMINDERS

## DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The next edition of *Qualelibet* will be published in March, 2010. We encourage and appreciate the contributions of our members. The deadline for submitting your articles, letters, or items for our Calendar of Events is

**MARCH 15, 2010.**

Please mail or email news items, calendar entries, or letters to the editor to:

**Qualelibet  
Frances Flynn, Editor  
255 Brookwood Drive  
Tryon, NC 28782, USA**

**Email:  
frances@trafford-flynn.com**

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Dues for ISHBS membership are \$10 (\$5 for students) in U.S. funds. They are tax-deductible and are due by

**MAY 1, 2010.**

Checks should be made out to

**International Society of  
Hildegard von Bingen Studies**

and mailed to our treasurer,

**K. Christian McGuire  
787 Iowa Avenue West  
Saint Paul, MN 55117**