

German nun called Hildegard over 850 years ago. And was it good? Ooh yes.

Hildegard was an abbess, mystic, writer and scientist – a kind of 11th century Carol Vorderman but without the silly frocks. I first heard about her on Woman's Hour a few years ago and heartily recommend her work to anyone who is keen on Benedictine chants or church music in general. Words like polyphonic, mystical and heavenly come to mind.



Mediva are a small combo based in Stroud Green. All young (well younger than I) mid-twenties, and they play instruments as well as sing divinely. The programme is like nothing I have heard before. Interspersed with readings from Patience Tomlinson, we are treated to some of the most beautiful, wondrous music ever written. There is something different about hearing music that was listened to by people who were alive within 100 years of the Battle of Hastings. Other art – literature and sculpture and painting – are, of course, evocative of the time they were created. But the physicality of hearing these sounds is a little spooky.

The only downside to the first part of the concert was the setting. The Purcell Room was designed to be neutral. Hildegard's music was written for a church setting. Mediva must put her art back where it was intended to be performed and mine the rich vein of resonance that old ecclesiastical buildings offer. The second part of the show was much livelier – an

offering of texts and music by 12th and 13th century women troubadours. Beautiful and often very funny, even bawdy, the pieces are of courtly love and deal with matters that are not unfamiliar to modern teenagers – love, treachery, self-doubt.

Again, I questioned the venue. This music was the popular music of its day and, hitching up their skirts, Mediva should seek a wider audience – The Great Northern on a Thursday night?

Watch out for the name – they promise a lot and can deliver.

BOOK REVIEW

GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE
The World's Secret Services Today

Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch

Just when we thought that the Cold War was over, along comes another! Phillipa Morrell has been looking at a new book that looks at the workings of the 'defence community'.

In an effort to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-understand guide to the world's intelligence services, local author Jonathon Bloch (Muswell Hill resident and Haringey Councillor) with co-writer Paul Todd have produced *Global Intelligence*.

The book is timely: all news reports seem dominated by the workings of the UK Intelligence and Security Committee and all manner of intelligence gathering networks.

The CIA, the KGB, Mossad, Boss, Savak, Dina – the names read like a rollcall of the seamier side of history in the years following the Second World War. Today the Cold War is dead but the catastrophe of 9/11 has led to the 'war on terrorism' providing new roles for the secret services, making them even less accountable and a threat to free and democratic societies.

The book describes how ultra-modern technologies have greatly increased the power and reach of these agencies to spy and eavesdrop in a sinisterly 'big brother' way. It reveals how their priorities and working methods have changed world-wide and how the US surprisingly failed to predict the Soviet Union's collapse; how this brought about the equally surprising dissolution of Russia's KGB, to be replaced by the FSB; how Israel spends more GNP per head on intelligence – especially Mossad – than any other country and describes its sanctioned intelligence practice of targeted killings; and how the transition to (albeit flawed) democracy in South Africa, while ridding the country of

KEEP US INFORMED
OF YOUR
**ARTS, MUSIC AND
ENTERTAINMENT
EVENTS**

Email the details to
info@n8mag.com

the dreaded power of BOSS, has not diminished the importance placed on intelligence by the ANC government.

All in all, the book provides a valuable insight into what the secret services are doing these days and contains important material for courses in international relations, human rights, political science and democracy.

The paperback price is £9.99,
hardback £32.95. ISBN 1 84277
113 2, published by Zed Books.

Fiction Vegetarian Restaurant

'Vegetarian cooking with pizzazz'

Fully Licensed
Organic Wines
Garden Tables

Open Wed - Sun from 6 PM
60 Crouch End Hill N8 8AG

Tel 8340 3403

www.fiction-restaurant.co.uk

