

Bach Aria Soloists Presents
Biographies of Six Women Composers Featured
"In Her Own Words"

Hildegard Von Bingen (1098-1179) was a German composer, Benedictine abbess, visionary, healer, and theologian whose work continues to inspire musicians and scholars. She composed more than 70 liturgical songs, noted for their wide melodic range and mystical character, as well as *Ordo Virtutum*, the earliest known morality play and one of the earliest surviving musical dramas. In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI canonized her and named her a Doctor of the Universal Church.

Francesca Caccini (1587-1640) was an Italian composer, singer, lutenist, poet, and music teacher of the early Baroque era. She was known as the first woman to compose an opera and was also a court composer, a virtuoso singer, and a commanding female voice in a male-dominated world. Interestingly, her education did not stop at music. She also studied Latin, geometry, and philosophy, and she would later gain fame not just for her music, but for her poetry, too.

Élisabeth Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729) was a French musician, harpsichordist, organist, and composer. Jacquet de La Guerre was a significant figure in French Baroque music, particularly in the development of cantata and keyboard traditions. She was the first woman to compose an opera in France.

Clara Josephine Schumann (1819-1896) was a German virtuoso pianist, composer, and teacher, regarded as one of the most distinguished pianists of the Romantic era. A celebrated child prodigy, she became an in-demand soloist across Europe and sustained an influential performing career for six decades. Though she composed less after marrying Robert Schumann, she remained a vital musical voice and championed his works in concert.

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) was a French composer associated with Symbolist and Impressionist influences. A prodigious musician from childhood, she became the first woman to win the Prix de Rome for her cantata *Faust et Hélène*. Despite chronic illness, she created powerful works for choir, voice, piano, chamber ensemble, and orchestra before her death at age 24.

Reena Esmail (born 1983) is an Indian American composer of Indian and Western classical music. She strives to create equitable musical spaces by bridging the gap between the two classical music traditions. Esmail divides her attention evenly between orchestral, chamber, and choral work. She has written commissions for ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Kronos Quartet, and her music has been featured on multiple Grammy-nominated albums. Many of her choral works are published by Oxford University Press.