

The Poulenc Trio
Aleh Remezau, Oboe Bryan Young, Bassoon Irina Kaplan Lande, Piano

Program

George Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) 7:00

Trio Sonata in F major

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) 12:30

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Lento - Presto

Andante con moto

Rondo. Très vif

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) (arr. C. Triébert & E. Jancourt)

Fantaisie Concertante sur des thèmes de "l'Italiana in Algeri"

Intermission

Jakov Jakoulov (b. 1958)

Yiddish Lexicon (2010)

Duke Ellington (1899-1974) arr. Jonathan Jensen

In a Sentimental Mood

Black & Tan Fantasy

I'm Beginning to See the Light

André Previn (1929-2019)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano (1994)

Jaunty

The Poulenc Trio appears by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists, www.chambermuse.com

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

The Poulenc Trio is the most active touring piano-wind chamber music ensemble in the world. Having recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, the trio has performed in 46 U.S. states and at music festivals around the world, including the Ravello Festival in Italy, the San Miguel de Allende Festival in Mexico, and the Newport Music Festival.

The New York Times praised the trio for its “elegant rendition” of Piazzolla’s Tangos. The Washington Post said the trio “does its namesake proud” in “an intriguing and beautifully played program” with “convincing elegance, near effortless lightness and grace.” A recent performance in Florida—for which the Palm Beach Post praised the group’s “polished loveliness” and the Palm Beach Daily News said the “potent combination” of oboe, bassoon and piano had “captured the magic of chamber music”—was rebroadcast on American Public Media’s nationally syndicated radio program, Performance Today. The trio has garnered positive attention in full-length profiles in Chamber Music magazine and the Double Reed Journal. The group has been called “virtuosos of classical and contemporary chamber music” in one profile for Russian television.

The Poulenc Trio has a strong commitment to commissioning, performing and recording new works from living composers. Since its founding, the trio has greatly expanded the repertoire available for the oboe, bassoon and piano, with no fewer than 22 new works written for and premiered by the group, including three triple concertos for the trio and full orchestra. They premiered two works with the renowned violinist Hilary Hahn.

The Poulenc Trio launched a pioneering concert series called Music at the Museum, in which musical performances are paired with museum exhibitions, with special appearances from guest artists and curators. As part of the series, the trio has collaborated with the National Gallery in Washington DC, the Walters Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Hermitage State Museum in Russia.

The trio is deeply engaged in musical and educational outreach programs, including "Pizza and Poulenc," an informal performance and residency series for younger audiences. The trio regularly conducts masterclasses, including at the University of Ohio, San Francisco State University, Florida State University and the University of Colima in Mexico.

PROGRAM NOTES:

HANDEL - Trio Sonata in F-major

George Frideric Handel was a German-born Baroque composer who spent most of his adult life in England, becoming a subject of the British crown in 1727. His most famous works are the *Messiah*, an oratorio set to texts from the King James Bible, *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. Strongly influenced by great composers of the Italian Baroque as well as the English composer Henry Purcell, his music was known to many significant composers who came after him, including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

The trio sonata is a musical form which was particularly popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. A trio sonata is written for two solo melodic instruments and basso continuo (often a keyboard instrument).

POULENC - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano:

"Above all, a composer should not aim to be fashionable. If you are not fashionable today, you may not be unfashionable tomorrow." —Francis Poulenc

Poulenc was born in Paris on January 7, 1899 and attained both a distinct musical voice and success at an early age. During the 1920's, he was one of the leading spirits of the group of young French composers known as "Les Six." Their music was often light, witty, satirical and urbane. They were in sympathy with and influenced by Stravinsky and "Neo-Classicism," and in opposition to the cerebral music of Schoenberg and of what they considered to be the religio-musical excesses of their countryman Olivier Messiaen. Poulenc, in particular, often juxtaposes passages of wit and irony with lush, sentimental outpourings.

Poulenc composed orchestral, chamber music, ballets, concertos, film scores, and opera, as well as powerful choral and sacred music. In the field of French art songs he is an acknowledged master, with over 130 songs to his credit. Indeed, melody was the most important element to him. Norbert DuFourcq writes: ". . . he found his way to a vast treasury of undiscovered tunes within an area that had, according to the most up-to-date musical maps, been surveyed, worked and exhausted." Of his own work, he wrote, "I know perfectly well that I'm not one of those composers who have made harmonic innovations like Igor (Stravinsky), Ravel, or Debussy, but I think there's room for 'New' music which doesn't mind using other people's chords. Wasn't that the case with Mozart-Schubert?"

The Trio is one of Poulenc's most popular chamber works. It is in the spirit of an eighteenth century divertissement, light and witty, yet spiced with dissonances. Though the combination of instruments is unusual, it is eminently logical, combining and contrasting the two members of the double reed family with the percussive quality of the piano. While composing the Trio in Cannes in 1926, Poulenc took the advice of Ravel (with whom he had been studying) and based the opening Presto on a Haydn Allegro, and the closing Rondo's refrain begins as a near perfect quote of a well-known Beethoven melody until it makes a surprising turn into the fresh vocabulary of Poulenc's own distinctive language. Poulenc hinted that he patterned this movement after a piano concerto by Saint-Saëns. The Andante is gracefully Mozartean, though any suggestion of parody is dispelled by alluring shifts of tonality and chromaticism. The work is dedicated to Manuel de Falla, whom Poulenc had met at the house of his teacher Ricardo Viñes in 1918. David Ewen writes, "Pictorially one is sometimes reminded of a chase, sometimes a dialogue. Normally, however, the main musical discourse is entrusted to the piano, while the bassoon is relegated to the role of a discreet commentator and the oboe is allowed to intensify the more lyrical flights. The very heart of Poulenc is in this adroit little work."

ROSSINI:

This "Concert-Fantasy," composed in 1856, is from a collection of delightful opera-inspired arrangements dating from 19th century Paris and the salon music of that time. It contains works by the opera composers Rossini and Donizetti, who were the delight of the Parisian audiences, in potpourri arrangements by the oboe and bassoon virtuosos (and Conservatoire professors) of the day Charles Triébert, Henri Brod and Eugène Jancourt. These works were not only "tuneful" but enabled the performers to show off their ample virtuosity very well. The rousing *Fantaisie Concertante*, based on tunes from Rossini's "An Italian Girl in Algiers," is one such work.

JAKOULOV:

<https://jjakoulov.wixsite.com/jakov-jakoulov>

The composer writes:

"This piece is structured in the same way as a lexicon would be designed. It is a collection of short movements, the musical equivalent of dictionary entries which give brief definitions of a specific words or expressions. To the religious Jewish mind, ordinary life is a logical and organic continuation of biblical history. Metaphysics blends with physicality, the divine with earthly routine, the fairy-tale with the day-to-day. That's why "Job's lament" peacefully shares the pages of this score with that of the scapegoat, and Jacob observes the angels with the same adoration as a yeshiva boy a blond girl. I tried to bring to this piece a dose of good humor and I hope that despite the rather sophisticated music language, the images are eloquent enough. A short list of definitions will help to understand and enjoy my work."

ELLINGTON:

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was an American composer, pianist, and big-band leader. A major figure in the history of jazz, Ellington's music stretched into various other genres, including blues, gospel, film scores, popular, and classical. His career spanned more than 50 years and included leading his orchestra, composing an inexhaustible songbook, scoring for movies, composing stage musicals, and world tours. He was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1999, and his 125th birthday is being celebrated this year.

Ellington called his music "American Music" rather than jazz, and liked to describe those who impressed him as "beyond category." These included many of the musicians who were members of his orchestra. He often composed specifically for the style and skills of these individuals, such as "Jeep's Blues" for Johnny Hodges, "Concerto for Cootie" for Cootie Williams, which later became "Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me" with Bob Russell's lyrics, and "The Mooche" for Tricky Sam Nanton and Bubber Miley. After 1941, he frequently collaborated with composer-arranger-pianist Billy Strayhorn, whom he called his "writing and arranging companion." Ellington recorded for many American record companies, and appeared in several films.

Ellington wrote the music for "I'm beginning to see the light" together with Johnny Hodges, and Harry James. Ella Fitzgerald recorded a version in 1945 that remained on the pop song hits list for six weeks that year, reaching #5. The lyrics convey the transformative power of love and how it can change one's perspective on life.

PREVIN:

Sir André Previn was born to a Jewish family in Berlin and emigrated with them to the United States in 1939 to escape the Nazis. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1943, and grew up in Los Angeles. An Oscar winner, Previn toured and recorded as a jazz pianist, and was conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1985-89. In the UK, where he was knighted in 1996, Previn is particularly remembered for his performance on the Morecambe and Wise comedy show in 1971, which involved his conducting a spoof performance of the Grieg Piano Concerto. At a concert in Britain afterwards, Previn had to interrupt the concerto to allow the audience time to stop giggling as they remembered the sketch. It is still considered one of the funniest comedy moments of all time.

Previn composed his Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon in 1994 on a joint commission from the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the National Endowment for the Art and the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. Music for this combination of instruments is unusual but by no means unique; French composers in particular loved the sound of woodwinds, and in some ways Previn's Trio shows virtues that might be thought typically French: clarity, careful attention to the character of the individual instruments, and a sense of play and fun. Yet if the impulse behind this music

might be thought French, here it has an American accent: Previn's Trio is full of energy, jazz rhythms, and the open harmonies that have, since the time of Copland and Harris, distinguished American music.

"Jaunty," the third movement, changes meter almost by measure. Previn treats the two wind instruments as a group and sets them in contrast to the piano, which has extended solo passages. The leaping opening idea reappears in many forms, including inversion and near the end the tempo speeds ahead as Previn specifies that the music should be played with "Jazz phrasing": these riffs alternate with brief piano interludes marked "simply." Gradually the movement's opening theme reasserts itself, and the Trio rushes to its blistering close, once again on a unison B-flat. —Eric Bromberger