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THE PIANO MUSIC OF FRANCIS POULENC,
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The Piano Music of Francis Poulenc

by

Jon Ray Nelson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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Approved by

Demar Irvine

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to Offer Degree

School of Music

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We have carefully read the dissertation entitled The Piano Music of
Francis Poulenc

_____ submitted by
Jon Ray Nelson in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following
joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

This study represents a thorough inventory and descriptive appraisal of the pianistic oeuvre of Poulenc, including the works for solo piano, the two-piano music, the keyboard concertos, and the chamber music with piano.

Besides showing an intimate knowledge of the musical scores, the survey probes the composer's creative talents and tests his interests and affinities. The resulting periodization, in particular, provides a whole view that transcends a mere summation of individual inspections.

We regard the dissertation as a valuable and definitive contribution to the Poulenc literature.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE:

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Doctoral Dissertation

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PREFACE

When this dissertation was begun and the subject matter decided upon, it was to have been exactly as described in the title, The Piano Music of Francis Poulenc. However, the result shows that it has, indeed, expanded into not just the implied solo works, but the works for two pianos, the works for keyboard and orchestra, the chamber works using piano, the vocal works with chamber orchestra, including the piano, and a very cursory look at the role of the piano in the mélodies. There is no regret intended in these statements. The beauty of the works, their craftsmanship, content, and vibrant joie de vivre, led to this happy conclusion.

Pierre Bernac's new book, Francis Poulenc: The Man and his Songs, has just arrived at the time of this writing, in fact, after the writing of Chapter X on the vocal music in this study. In an earlier book, M. Bernac gave a complete list of the mélodies, with a total of 146 (The Interpretation of French Song, 1970). In his new work he reduces that list to 137 "concert songs," and a list of works omitted for various reasons (pp. 15-20). The Rapsodie nègre is not mentioned at all and Le Bal Masqué, although listed, is not discussed. The present writer has retained the former number of songs (146). M. Bernac's book has added to the writer's feelings about the piano in the mélodies. Although more a performer's work, the

quotes from Poulenc's, now out of print, Journal de mes mélodies are invaluable. The one startling piece of information, is that Poulenc's Aunt Liénard, was not his Aunt at all, according to Bernac. This fact is not mentioned by any other writer (p. 30).

However, this mélodie repertoire is so vast; it warrants a study of its own. Therefore, the writer has limited his discussion to the three works of vocal chamber music and two cycles of mélodies. These five works also represent the use of Poulenc's favorite poets: Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Éluard, and Max Jacob.

M. Poulenc was published by several firms, including two outside France. Consequently, the titles of the works will be given in the course of this study, in the language of the edition used, which will account for such things as the word "sonata" being spelled with both an e and an a as a last letter.

Except for the translation by Edward Lockspeiser of Henri Hell's biography, the remaining materials were all in the French language. Except where noted, the translations are those of the writer.

No major undertaking is achieved without the assistance of many willing, kind individuals and firms. The writer offers his thanks and gratitude to Éditions Salabert: their President, Mme Francis Salabert; Éditions Max Eschig; Éditions Alphonse Leduc; Éditions Heugel et Cie and Éditions Durand et Cie: their representative, Nicholas J.

Elsier, Jr., all of Paris: to Editions Wilhelm Hansen of Copenhagen, and J. & W. Chester of London: their representative, Norman A. Goldberg; for their kind permission to quote the musical examples contained here.

My especial thanks to Dr. Almarie Dieckow of Magna-music-Baton of St. Louis, for great assistance in obtaining scores and aid in tracking down those no longer in print. Through Dr. Dieckow's efforts, the kind and generous cooperation of J. & W. Chester, and their representative, Kim Lewis-Lavender, Esq., a photocopy of a long out-of-print Poulenc transcription was made available to the writer. Mr. Lewis-Lavender later provided information concerning the whereabouts of many of the Poulenc autographs. One gratefully acknowledges, with thanks, the exceptional kindness of this English firm and its representative.

My thanks are further extended to Mr. William E. Shepherd, Manager, Consumer Relations, of London Records in New York, for his efforts in the tracking down of errors in recordings of Poulenc works; to Ms. Joyce Bridgman, Professor of Music, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and a graduate Doctor of Musical Arts student at the University of Washington, for xeroxing material for the writer, as well as Ms. Denise Pierce of Washington, D. C., for doing the same at the Library of Congress; to Mr. Keith W. Daniel for his kind offer to let the writer have a preview copy of his doctoral dissertation, "The Style of Francis Poulenc in Its National and Historical Setting"; to Mr. Carl I. Singer,

President, Singer Steel, Inc., Enid, Oklahoma, for the generous use of their duplicating machine in reducing examples and the duplication of the entire study; to Ms. Marge Weber, Zollars Library, Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma, who went far beyond the duties of a reference librarian for the writer; and to Mr. Arthur W. Foster of Cloverdale, California, for both opening his beautiful country home and enduring the social retirement of the writer for months of intensive work, and for his graciously given expertise in the French language. This would never have been completed without Mr. Foster, and this debt of gratitude the writer happily acknowledges.

Sometimes the writer feels that graduate students only progress as far as their committees allow them. His committee, never did anything but constantly expand the possible horizons. For that gift, the writer thanks, Professors Alec Harman, Charles Troy, Paul Tufts, William Dunlop, all virtuosos in their respective classrooms, and his old, dear friend and mentor, Miriam Terry, Professor Emeritus. Professor Demar Irvine chaired the writer's committee, his thinking, his writing, and his philosophy. One is convinced that Dr. Irvine is one of the last "civilized" men. To him, the writer's vocabulary is beggared, in expressing his thanks.

CHAPTER I

1899-1963: BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

Francis-Jean-Marcel Poulenc was born January 7, 1899 at 2, Place des Saussaies in Paris. His father was part owner and director, along with two uncles, of a drug company that bore the family name, Rhône-Poulenc.¹ M. Emile Poulenc was of Aveyron stock, and it was Poulenc's paternal grandfather who had established the drug company in the Marais quarter of Paris. M. Poulenc, père, and his side of the family, although they had a sincere love of music, held painting and literature in little esteem. Poulenc's father was especially fond of Beethoven, Berlioz, Franck, and Massenet.²

Poulenc's mother, née Jenny Royer, was descended from a family of pure Parisians, a very rare thing for even 1899.³ Mme Poulenc was a pianist who had studied with one of the last students of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), a Mme Ris-Arbeau.⁴ Mme Poulenc was her son's first piano teacher and introduced him to the kinds and styles of music that she loved best:

1 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), p. 19.

2 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 13.

3 Ibid., p. 12.

4 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 32.

Mozart, who was to remain her son's greatest love, Chopin, Schubert, Schumann, and Scarlatti. Poulenc felt that all of his artistic heredity came from his mother's side of the family and that her influence on him was great.⁵

The theater was the great passion of Mme Poulenc's brother, Marcel Royer, called Uncle Papoum by young Francis because of being unable to pronounce the French word parrain, which means godfather.⁶ Hidden under the table with his electric train, Poulenc could listen to all that was said about life on the Parisian boulevards. The illustrious names of the theater, like Sarah Bernhardt, were as familiar to him at eight, as the names of generals to other children.⁷

While Poulenc's mother played the piano beautifully, had an impeccable musical sense and a ravishing touch, according to her son, she was not a musical snob and permitted Poulenc to become familiar with some of the small pieces of Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and the famous Melody in F of Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894). It was without doubt for these reasons that Poulenc held a taste for what he called "the adorable bad music."⁸

At age five, Mme Poulenc hired a teacher for her young son. The lady, whose name has been forgotten by the composer, turned out to be a rather drab creature with a hatred

5 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 12-13 and 20.

6 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 33.

7 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 13.

8 Ibid., p. 13-14.

for virtuosity and technical brilliance. Happily at eight, Mlle Boutet de Monvel, a niece of César Franck, became his teacher and according to Poulenc's own testimony, taught him well the principles of technique.⁹

Also at the age of eight, Poulenc heard Debussy for the first time, the Danses sacrée et profane for harp. He was so taken with the sounds that he rushed home to try to reconstruct the chords of the ninth on the piano.¹⁰ Poulenc said that he never forgot Debussy; that he purchased the Jardins sous la pluie and the Soirée dans Grenade; and that Debussy always remained his preferred composer after Mozart - - "I cannot do without his music. It is my oxygen."¹¹

Ages ten and eleven were crucial years for the impressionable young man. In a beautiful lecture on his songs in 1947, Poulenc said: "I have always loved passionately the poets. At ten years of age, I knew by heart Apparition of Mallarmé."¹² Shortly, at eleven, Poulenc came into contact with the songs of Schubert:

During the winter of 1910, in Paris, I found by chance at a music store, the Voyage d'Hiver by Schubert, and suddenly I went from astonishment to astonishment. By a strange co-incidence, I had discovered the beauties

9 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 39.

10 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 21.

11 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 23-24.

12 Francis Poulenc, "Mes mélodies et leurs poètes," Les Annales Conferencia, XXXVI (1947), 507. Quoted in Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 22; William W. Austin, Music in the 20th Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 517; Henri Hell Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 6.

of the country, the winter, and her sublime musical transmutations. I played and replayed without ceasing La Corneille, Le Tilleul, Le Journey de Vielle, and above all the amazing Soleil d'Hiver, which remained for me the most beautiful melody in the world. Thirty-five years later this melody holds for me its same emotional quality. 13

This immediate enchantment endured for the rest of his life, but the short-term result was that from age eleven until age fourteen, Poulenc dreamed of becoming a singer.¹⁴

The third important event of this period was the first knowledge of Erik Satie (1866-1925), mostly through the unusual titles of Satie's compositions.¹⁵ That influence will be discussed with the first piano compositions.

In 1914, Poulenc scandalized his teacher, Mlle de Monvel, by having on his piano not only the Grieg Piano Concerto in a minor, Op. 16, from which he adored the first movement, but also the Six Little Pieces, Op. 19 (1911) of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), and Le Sacre du Printemps and Le Rossignol of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Mlle de Monvel's response was: "My dear, it is truly time to work seriously." Angered, the young man replied that he would not work with her and ran out the door.¹⁶

A friend of the Poulenc family, Mme Geneviève Sienkiewicz, introduced young Francis to the famous Spanish pianist, Ricardo Viñes (1875-1943), who took the

13 Poulenc, "Mes mélodies et leurs poètes," p. 507.

14 Idem, Moi et mes amis, p. 37; Idem, Entretiens, pp. 15-16.

15 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 81.

16 Idem, Entretiens, p. 16.

boy who idolized him "crazily," as a piano student. Later Poulenc stated: "I owe him everything."¹⁷

For his first lesson Poulenc played Schumann's Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op. 26, and some Préludes of Debussy, including Minstrels.¹⁸ In his conversations with Claude Rostand, Poulenc further related how Viñes taught him the proper use of the pedals, so important in modern piano music, and as it was to prove, in Poulenc's own piano works.¹⁹ Going beyond the role of just a piano professor, Viñes also became Poulenc's spiritual mentor and introduced his student to Satie and to a contemporary who was to remain a life-long friend, Georges Auric.²⁰

Poulenc felt that his studies with Viñes provided the first urge he had to write piano music. He had written an earlier composition in frank imitation of Stravinsky's Le Rossignol, but these new Préludes were known only to Georges Auric. They remain unpublished.²¹ A second effort was Three Pastorales, dedicated to Viñes. They were given to Viñes for him to choose the one he liked best. They too went unpublished until 1928; when, Poulenc returned to them for use under a new title.²²

17 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 29.

18 Ibid., p. 30.

19 Ibid., pp. 29-30; Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 43.

20 Ibid., p. 81; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 38; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 25.

21 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 37.

22 Ibid., p. 45; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 21. The first gives the date 1917; while the last gives the date 1918.

As a composer, the Rapsodie nègre, first performed on December 11, 1917, launched the young, eighteen-year-old musician overnight. The work made an immediate impact, was a roaring success, and impressed Stravinsky so much that he introduced Poulenc to Chester of London, who published the young composer's first works.²³ Among those published that pertain to the piano were the Trois Mouvements perpétuels, the Sonate pour piano quatre mains, and the Sonate pour deux clarinettes (this latter of interest because of the composer's piano transcription of this and the two other wind sonatas in 1925). Denise Bourdet gave this picture of the composer at the time of the Rapsodie nègre's composition in 1917:

I knew Francis Poulenc in 1917 at a seaside resort, when he did not utilize the sand, the water, nor the sun. At the tennis court he passed at mid-afternoon without as much as a glance at the courts. He was 18 years old and we knew already that he loved nothing but music. 24

Poulenc was all too aware of his short-comings as a musician. At Nogent-sur-Marne, the home of his maternal grandparents, a Professor M. Muccioli, a violoncellist, perfected his solfege, and an organist friend gave him harmony lessons. By then he was 18 and had to leave for the front, and it was three years, 1921, after his

²³ Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 192; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 7-8.

²⁴ Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 13. Roy took the quote from Denise Bourdet, Pris sur le vif (Paris: 1957), newspaper interviews, including one with Poulenc, p. 225.

demobilization, before he could work seriously again on the study of composition.²⁵

Poulenc was taken into Military service in January, 1918. From January to July, 1918, he was at Fort Vincennes. He was then sent to the front in the Vosges and assigned to an anti-aircraft unit. In July, 1919, he was transferred to the Ministry of Aviation as a typist, and stayed there over two years, being demobilized in October, 1921.²⁶

However, during that period of time, the young composer was not idle. In addition to the works mentioned, all written in 1918, Poulenc wrote, for the piano, the Valse in C, which became part of an album of works by the group known as Les Six, a Suite in C, Five Impromptus, and Ten Promenades.²⁷

The last two compositions, paradoxically, do not follow the supposed tenets of this group, which was virtually constituted in 1917; except, Milhaud was still in Brazil.²⁸ The group consisted of Germaine Tailleferre

25 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, pp. 40-41. The general tenor of the conversation had to do with Poulenc's father not allowing him to enter the Conservatoire until he had passed his other educational requirements. He was after all, the son of an industrialist.

26 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 8; Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letter to Viñes dated September 4, 1918, pp. 19-20. Gives a different view of dates.

27 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 22; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 29.

28 Joseph Machlis, Introduction to Contemporary Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), p. 218. Milhaud was secretary to Paul Claudel, French Ambassador to Brazil, from February, 1917 to the end of 1918. See also Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 22 for a brief mention of this.

(b. 1892), Louis Durey (b. 1888), Georges Auric (b. 1899), Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), Francis Poulenc, and finally, Darius Milhaud (1892-1974). Already at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, these six names had appeared often on the same program. Now at a studio on Montparnasse, under the title of Lyre et Palette, they were joined by the painters, Picasso (1881-1973), Braque (1882-1963), Modigliani (1884-1920), and Juan Gris (1887-1927), who held exhibitions there.

The musicians were united by youth, and a desire to challenge the musical establishment of the day. Arthur Honegger later said:

It is true that around 1920, Cocteau gave the signal for music in the trenchant style -- its champion was Satie and some of my colleagues of the group that was called Les Six. 29

Eric Salzman said that this group was strongly anti-Debussy, but Poulenc maintained that they were against Debussyism and not Debussy.³⁰

The French critic, Henri Collet, wrote in 1920, an article in Comoedia entitled, "The Russian Five, The French Six, and M. Erik Satie."³¹ However, this was a rather arbitrary grouping. There was, actually, never any

29 Arthur Honegger, I am a Composer, trans. by Wilson O. Clough (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 116.

30 Eric Salzman, Twentieth-Century Music (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 56; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 24.

31 Arbie Orenstein, Ravel: Man and Musician (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 80; Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 146. Article written January 16, 1920.

consistent or coherent aesthetic position taken by the six young composers as a whole. Poulenc even mentioned:

Thus, Honegger never loved the music of Satie, and Schmitt, whom he admired, was then the *bête noire* of Milhaud and of myself. 32

The paradox, mentioned above, was that this group cultivated light, popular, music hall, and café styles as well as jazz.³³ They believed that music belonging to the here and now, should meet the hearer on common ground; and that its ingredients should be outgoing melody in sophisticated clothing.³⁴ The Impromptus and the Promenades had the complexities which the group so opposed and contained the gropings of a composer in an experiment that took him out of his natural arena. Fortunately, this was to be short-lived.³⁵

Poulenc's formal, academic training had been interrupted by the First World War, and although enjoying enormous popular success, he was now encouraged to seek formal instruction in composition. Milhaud sent him to Charles Koechlin (1867-1950), considered the best professor of counterpoint alive. Poulenc later felt that Koechlin's real genius lay in his ability to adapt to the individual need of each student -- "I was much more a harmonist than a

32 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 51.

33 Salzman, Twentieth-Century Music, p. 56.

34 Giles Bryant, jacket notes for Poulenc, Mass in G (Seraphim S-60085).

35 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 80.

contrapuntalist."³⁶ Thus, Poulenc's instruction was the harmonization of the Bach chorale tunes. This was to have a decided influence on him, particularly in his later writings for a cappella chorus. These lessons continued through the winter seasons of 1921-1924 at the rate of two per week.³⁷

In 1922, Milhaud and Poulenc went on a trip to Italy together; where, they visited Alfred Casella (1883-1947). On this trip Poulenc started working with ideas that were later to become the suite, Napoli.³⁸ During the same year Poulenc finished the Sonate pour clarinette et basson and the Sonate pour cor, trompette et trombone.

1923 was a turning point in the career of the composer. Serge Diaghilev (1872-1929) suggested that Poulenc write a ballet for the Ballet Russe. Poulenc wrote his own scenario, and the premiere of Les Biches on January 6, 1924, brought the composer another enormous success. It was his first large-scale work and is of interest, because Poulenc transcribed four of the dances for solo piano and later recorded two of them.³⁹

May 2, 1926, was also a date of importance in the life

³⁶ Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 41.

³⁷ Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 28; Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., edited by Bruce Bohle, 1975), p. 1706.

³⁸ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 24.

³⁹ Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 51-55; Idem, "Adagietto and Rondeau from Les Biches," in Francis Poulenc: Pianiste et Accompagnateur (Pathé Marconi EMI 2 C 047-12538), side 1, band 1. Recorded in 1928.

of Francis Poulenc. On that day his Chansons gaillardes were premiered by an unknown singer, Pierre Bernac, with whom the name of Poulenc would soon be inseparable.⁴⁰ On the same program were the first performances of the suite, Napoli and the Trio pour piano, hautbois, et basson, a work which Henri Hell cites as Poulenc's first major achievement in the area of chamber music, and which Jean Roy said was one of the most unified of the Poulenc chamber works.⁴¹

The biographies of Poulenc skip to the writings of the Concert champêtre (1927-1928) and the Aubade (1929). However, in terms of the solo piano music, Poulenc wrote a Pastourelle, which he came to hate,⁴² two Novellettes, had published the Trois pièces, which included parts of the earlier Pastorales for Viñes, a Pièce Brève sur le nom d'Albert Roussel, and began the first of the eight Nocturnes, which were completed nine years later, in 1938.

In 1927, Poulenc purchased a home at Noizay, a village in the Touraine. Here, he was able to find the solitude he sought for his composing. He had been visiting the area for several years because his Aunt Liénard was dear to him, and her home, Nazelles, was near his own. Although he did enjoy the area, he was not influenced by the Touraine.⁴³

40 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 32.

41 Ibid., Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 35. Marcelle Meyer, a friend and fellow student of Viñes, played the Napoli.

42 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 67.

43 Ibid., p. 35.

Poulenc did not return to writing for solo piano until 1932, and then, via a circuitous route. He composed a secular cantata on a text by Max Jacob (1876-1944), which Poulenc entitled Le Bal Masqué. From this composition Poulenc extracted Part II, the Intermède, for piano solo, Part IV, the Bagatelle, for violin and piano, and the finale, Part VI, calling it a Caprice, for solo piano. He even returned a fourth time in 1952 to this same finale and wrote a Capriccio for two pianos.

In addition to Le Bal Masqué, the Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre, the Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach, and the first collection of Improvisations (Nos. 1-6) date from this same year (1932). A Sextuor pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson, et cor was written and possibly, played once, but remained dormant until a new version in 1939 satisfied the composer of its merits.⁴⁴

The piano music of Poulenc was virtually all written between 1918 and 1940, with the years 1932-1939 being the peak years. Two compositions that started originally as incidental music for plays, Villageoises, taken from Jean Giraudoux's play Intermezzo (1933), and Suite Française, taken from Edouard Bourdet's play La Reine Margot (1935),

44 But see Poulenc, Correspondance, pp. 84-100 for possible reasons why the dating of this Sextuor may be in doubt. The first mention is a letter dated March 5, 1931, with a possible performance in June of the same year. The new version dates from August, 1939, but not published until 1945. A full discussion will follow.

are typical of Poulenc's ability to see several purposes served by the one initial writing. The former, becomes a set of pieces for children, and the latter, a sincere homage to sixteenth-century French dance music.

In addition to the many songs and piano works of these years, Poulenc began, in 1936, the long series of choral works that were to continue until the end of his life. Having already tried his hand, in 1922, at writing for a cappella men's voices, he now made a careful study of the motets of Monteverdi and produced the Sept Chansons on poetry of Apollinaire (1880-1918) and Éluard (1895-1952). All this vocal-choral outpouring came from three sources: (1) the teaming of Poulenc and Bernac as a recital duo in April, 1935; (2) the unforgettable presentation of Monteverdi motets by Nadia Boulanger in the home of the Princess de Polignac; and (3) the combination memory of his father, the connecting journey away from his Roman Catholic faith, and the death of a close friend, Pierre-Octave Ferroud, and the subsequent return to his faith. The results in addition to the work mentioned, were the Messe in G and the Litanies à la Vierge noire.⁴⁵

If 1936 marks the beginning of the choral works, it also marked the termination of a piano work begun in 1930, Les soirées de Nazelles. As with Napoli, Poulenc condemned

45 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 44; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 46-48; Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 98 and 100-101.

unreservedly, this work, which is without question programmatic, but which also, perhaps, merits more consideration than the composer was willing to give.⁴⁶

The remaining major work for keyboard of the 1930s, was the Organ Concerto (1938). The organ registrations were worked out with the assistance of Maurice Duruflé (b. 1902); and as will be seen, the supposedly loose, rather fantasie-like scheme of the work, is in actuality, very carefully and cleverly worked out. Of the many works of Poulenc, which will be considered, this composition holds the unique distinction of seldom being performed in France, but enjoying particular favor and many performances in the United States.⁴⁷

War came for a second time to France in 1940. After a very short mobilization, and subsequent demobilization, Poulenc, in addition to spending time in Paris, also sought refuge and quiet at his home, Noizay, and with family and friends at Brive-la Gaillarde.⁴⁸ Those works which are germane to this study and date from 1940 to 1948 are: the Mélancolie for solo piano; the ballet Les Animaux modèles; two additional Improvisations for solo piano that were published in a second collection in 1945; L'Histoire de Babar for solo piano and narrator; the Sonate pour violon et

46 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35.

47 Ibid., p. 115; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 57.

48 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 51; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 60-65.

piano; the Sonate pour violoncelle et piano; the Chansons villageoises; and the last Intermezzo in A-flat major for solo piano, the first two dating from 1934.

However, in all fairness to the composer, it must not be supposed that the above were the only works to come from the war years. Poulenc and Bernac continued to give concerts devoted to French music, and the songs and choral works continued to flow from the composer's pen. The Figure humaine, for double a cappella choir, was written in 1943. It is considered one of the great works of our time and one of the great achievements of Poulenc and the poet, Paul Éluard.⁴⁹

The post-war years saw the production of Poulenc's first opera, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, in 1947. Although completed and handed over to the Opéra-Comique for production in 1944, the opera had not been performed because of the inability of the management to find a suitable ingénu for the leading part. The singer, Denise Duval, was found, and Poulenc, ultimately, wrote, with her in mind, a leading role in the Dialogues des Carmélites, and for her solely, La voix humaine and La Dame de Monte Carlo. In fact, the last concert that Poulenc played, was a recital with Denise Duval in Holland, and he sent her the

49 Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 64-65; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 53-54. The popular song cycle Banalités also came from these years. Fortunately, the Gestapo did not frequent the concert halls or understand French well enough to realize some of the textual implications.

following card after the concert:

Ma Denise,
 Je te dois ma dernière joie.
 Ton pauvre
 FR. 50

In 1948, Poulenc and Bernac began, what was to be, several tours of the United States. Poulenc was able to renew many old friendships interrupted by the war, to give concerts with Bernac, to play as soloist in the piano version of the Concert champêtre, to record his music and that of others, and to enjoy the adulation of the American public. Poulenc loved the American public and knew that they loved him.⁵¹ An added benefit was the acceptance of a commission from the Boston Symphony to write a piano concerto, which he, indeed, later performed on a second tour in 1950.⁵²

The Dialogues des Carmélites occupied Poulenc almost entirely from 1953 until 1956, the first performance being given on January 26, 1957, in Milan.⁵³ However, before Ricordi suggested the opera, Poulenc completed the following works: L'Embarquement pour Cythère for two pianos from a film score, a Stabat Mater, a Thème varié for piano, a Sonate pour deux pianos, and Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël.

50 Poulenc, Correspondance, dated January 26, 1963, p. 270. "My Denise, I owe you my last joy. Your poor Francis."

51 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 59.

52 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 75; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 59-61.

53 Ibid., p. 84; Ibid., p. 69.

The remaining years of Poulenc's life, with the exceptions of the three additional Improvisations, a third Novelette for piano, an Élégie for two pianos, and the vocal works already cited, were devoted to chamber music with piano: the Sonatas for Flute, Oboe, and Clarinet, respectively, and the Elegy for horn.

The mention of the vocal works will remind the reader that the mélodies have only been touched upon. This is not to indicate that they are unimportant, nor that in point of fact, that they do not involve the piano. However, the body of songs is so large in the total output of Poulenc, 146, that they warrant a separate study.⁵⁴ The mélodies mentioned here are those that have an instrumental accompaniment (chamber orchestra), including piano. They and enough samples from the mélodies to give an idea of the role of the piano, will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Francis Poulenc died suddenly at 1:00 P.M. on January 30, 1963.⁵⁵ He had been in the best of spirits, had attended a ballet performance, was to have lunch with Denise Duval the day of his death, called her to say that he was hoarse (enroué); but complications from this respiratory infection led to heart failure (an embolism); and he was

54 Pierre Bernac, The Interpretation of French Song (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 269. There is a complete list of Poulenc's mélodies on pages 270-273.

55 Poulenc, Correspondance, p. 270n.

never hospitalized.⁵⁶ The funeral, February 2, 1963, was held, without music, at Saint-Sulpice.⁵⁷

Allen Hughes pointed out an interesting fact:

. . . he left no unfinished compositions behind,
. . . his date book, which he ordinarily filled methodically with every possible future engagement, had no entry in it beyond the date on which he died. 58

56 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 19. This numbering is from M. Audel's opening remarks.

57 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 75.

58 Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," p. 1708. Mr. Hughes also stated that Poulenc was superstitious.

CHAPTER II

1914-1921: BEGINNINGS AND GROPINGS

Poulenc's first attempts at composition were pieces for the piano.¹ At the age of fifteen, in 1914, he wrote a Processional pour la crémation d'un mandarin, which he later admitted was inspired by Stravinsky's Le Rossignol.²

Shortly after beginning his piano study with Viñes, who Poulenc credits with inspiring him to compose, he wrote some préludes of "incredible complexity, that you would find astonishing even today."³ The préludes were written out on three or four staves in imitation of Debussy. These préludes of 1916, were never played and known only to his new found friend, Georges Auric, whom he met through Viñes in 1916 also.⁴ These préludes remain unpublished.

In 1917, Poulenc wrote a set of Three Pastorales for piano and dedicated them to Viñes.⁵ They were given to

1 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 6.

2 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 37.

3 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 30; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 6.

4 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 30.

5 Idem, Moi et mes amis, p. 45. Moi gives 1917, however, Entretiens gives 1918, p. 30.

Vifès for the purpose of him choosing which one or ones he preferred or to play all three. As late as 1919, Poulenc was still asking Vifès if he had played the Pastorales yet.⁶ Although the set of three remained unpublished, Alfred Casella, knowing of them, encouraged Poulenc, in 1928, to have them published. Poulenc refined the first, added two new compositions, and published the resulting work in 1928 as Trois pièces.⁷ Therefore, this Pastorale of 1928, is actually the earliest of the published works of Poulenc. The Trois pièces will be discussed in chronological order.

First Success

Vifès introduced Poulenc to Jane Bathori (1877-1950), who undertook the direction of the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier when Jacques Copeau, the then director, left for the United States in 1917.⁸ It was Jane Bathori who wished to have Poulenc's Rapsodie nègre performed.⁹ After the initial success of the first performance, December 11, 1917,

6 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letter from Poulenc to Vifès dated January, 1919, p. 28.

7 Ibid., p. 28n; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 30; Idem, Moi et mes amis, p. 45.

8 Arbie Orenstein, Ravel: Man and Musician (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 23n; Poulenc, Correspondance, p. 15n. Jane Bathori was the stage name for Jeanne-Marie Berthier. Her career spanned four decades and she interpreted the vocal works of virtually every important French composer from the 1890s to the 1930s.

9 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Vifès dated October 14, 1917, p. 15.

the same Mme Bathori organized a second performance on January 15, 1918.¹⁰ It was the continued success of this repeat performance (Poulenc had sung the baritone part in the first performance due to a terrified singer.) that aroused the interest of Diaghilev for a possible ballet commission and impressed Stravinsky enough that he secured for Poulenc his first publisher, J. & W. Chester of London, who published the Rapsodie nègre and Poulenc's first published piano work, the Trois Mouvements perpétuels.¹¹

Trois Mouvements perpétuels, which originally numbered four, were written on the piano of a local elementary school at Saint-Martin-sur-le-Pré in October, 1918. In December, 1918, Poulenc, who had entered military service in January, 1918, was transferred to the anti-aircraft school at Pont-sur-Seine.¹² Here, near Paris, Poulenc finished the Mouvements in December, 1918, and dedicated them to Valentine Gross, through whom he had met for the first time, Igor Stravinsky and Guillaume Apollinaire, April 28, 1918.¹³

The Mouvements perpétuels bring into focus some of

¹⁰ See Correspondance, p. 16, for the entire program.

¹¹ Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 7-8.

¹² Ibid., p. 8; Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1964), p. 29.

¹³ Francis Poulenc, Mouvements perpétuels (51st edn., London: J. & W. Chester, c1919), p. 8; Idem, Correspondance, p. 15n. The Mouvements were revised by the composer in 1962. Mlle Gross later married the painter, Jean Hugo, in 1919.

Poulenc's predecessors and influences. The first, chronologically for Poulenc, was Erik Satie (1866-1925). At the age of eleven, 1910, Poulenc was fascinated with this musician, especially with the strange titles he gave to his compositions.¹⁴ Through Viñes, Poulenc met Satie in 1916.¹⁵ And in April, 1917, when Diaghilev produced Satie's ballet Parade, the music and the new spirit found a very receptive echo in Poulenc:

Parade is, in fact, a great date in the history of the art. The joining of Cocteau-Satie-Picasso opened the cycle of great modern ballets by Diaghilev. . . . All was new -- argument, music, spectacle. . . . For the first time -- it has been imitated since -- the music hall invaded the art -- with a capital A. 16

The effect on Poulenc was considerable and he freely admits it.¹⁷

The other continuing influence was Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894). In the book on Chabrier, which Poulenc wrote in 1959, he told of thinking that Chabrier was a minor composer until by chance in February, 1914, he listened to a recording of Idylle from the Dix Pièces pittoresques (1881), played by Edouard Risler (1873-1929):

14 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 81. Trois Morceaux en forme de poire, Embryons desséchés, Véritables Préludes flasques (pour un chien). "Suddenly, his music found in me a very real echo."

15 Ibid., pp. 81-82. The basic honesty of Poulenc always comes to the fore, especially, when it comes to giving credit for influences or various debts of gratitude.

16 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, pp. 47 and 88-89.

17 Idem, Entretiens, pp. 46-47. "The influence of Satie on me was considerable, as much spiritually as musically, . . . his music, for me, is one of the great, dear treasures of all music."

Again today I tremble with emotion in dreaming at the miracle which it (the recording) produced: a harmonic universe suddenly opened itself before me and my music has never forgotten this first kiss of love. 18

And venturing into the past before Chabrier, Poulenc felt that it was to Charles Gounod (1818-1893) that Chabrier owed his sense of melody, and that Ravel's piano composition À la Manière de Chabrier, was absolutely correct to use as a melody, the aria of Siebel, "Faites-lui mes aveux," from Gounod's Faust (1859).¹⁹

To continue just a bit further, Poulenc also stated the following concerning Chabrier and French music: the Pièces pittoresques were as important to French music as Debussy's Préludes; Le Roi malgré lui (1887) changed the orientation of French harmony as did Satie's Sarabande of Autumn 1887, (being a second precursor of the French school); and the Bourrée Fantasque was as innovative and as important as the Debussy Études and the Ravel Gaspard de la Nuit.²⁰

Chabrier's last Cinq pièces posthumes were entitled: Aubade, Ballabile, Caprice, Feuillet d'Album, and Ronde champêtre.²¹ Without exception, Poulenc used those title

18 Francis Poulenc, Emmanuel Chabrier, (Paris: La Palatine, 1961), pp. 61-62.

19 Ibid., pp. 35-36. While the book as a whole is very helpful, the reader should be warned that there are either some erroneous typographical and printing slips, or M. Poulenc's memory is slightly inaccurate, e.g., "in 1934, Diaghilev," etc., p. 34 -- Diaghilev died in 1929!

20 Ibid., pp. 57, 96, and 115-116.

21 Ibid., p. 122. Aubade, Caprice, Feuillet d'Album, and champêtre appear as titles of works; while Ballabile and Ronde appear as parts or movements of works.

names in works of his own throughout his creative career -- what better tribute!

If the Mouvements perpétuels have the verve of Chabrier and the economy of Satie, then they also contain elements and characteristics of the composer, Francis Poulenc.

The first, marked Assez modéré, has exactly the same bass line except for the last measure, for the entire piece. This may, indeed, be a perpetual motion, but there is a certain immobility in the harmonic rhythm. This creation of "static" harmony will become a device used in several of the later keyboard works, e.g., the close of the Aubade. The melodic line is essentially diatonic with the dissonances added for "sauce." The treatment is essentially lyric, as are the majority of Poulenc's piano compositions. Poulenc did not often view the piano from a percussive standpoint.²² There is much use of the sustaining pedal (in general, without nuances, very much pedal), which was a point of firmness with Poulenc: "On the whole you can never use too much pedal."²³ The use of repeat signs is present in all three pieces, with the first 19 measures of the first one repeated. The overall formal structure is an AB with a coda built on A. The phrase structure is

22 See Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 88, for his views on Poulenc's treatment of the piano as a percussive instrument. M. Hell and the present writer are in opposition.

23 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 33. The reinforcement was very strong: "Jamais! Jamais!"

regular and a large hand is necessary to encompass the many intervals of the ninth in both hands.

The second of the Mouvements is marked Très modéré (p. 4), and although there is no key signature, the consistent b-flat gives a feeling of the Mixolydian mode. The bass pattern, while not as regularly consistent as in the first, is as follows in terms of measures: 2 + 4 + 4 + 2, all of which is repeated. There is also a hint of transposed Dorian on g in the middle section (meas. 7-10), and the form is an AB with a coda on A.

The third and last, Alerte (pp. 5-8), is again in 4/4 meter, as are all three, but has more meter changes than the second, which has 2 measures of 6/4 (meas. 11-12). This is the longest of the three, and while there is still no key signature, the persistent b-flat gives a modal orientation. The phrase structure is interesting:

- A = 3 + 2 + 2 (The third measure of the first three is a 7/4 compression of the first two. All the others are 4/4.)
- B = 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 5 (This contains a hint of Dorian mode on g, in 3/8.)
- A' = 3 (7/4 compression as above)
- C = 3 + 2 + 2 (Both C sections are in 4/4; measures 47-50 are a repeat of measures 40-44 with added octaves and
- C' = 4 + 2 + 2 a different repetition of phrase members at the end.).

The coda is a measure of 5/4, followed by another in 4/4, with a CC and an a''' sustained against a B-flat major chord of the thirteenth with the fifth missing. This type of concluding chord will also become typical of the later keyboard works.

Poulenc said that these Mouvements perpétuels were freely Satie, but as has been pointed out, Poulenc's fingerprints are also in evidence.²⁴ At Poulenc's request, Vifès gave the first performance of the work on Saturday, February 9, 1919, at the studio of the Lyre et Palette.²⁵ Poulenc's opinion of the work, writing to Vifès, was: "C'est ultra facile."²⁶

Remaining War Compositions

In July, 1919, Poulenc returned to Paris as a typist for the Ministry of Aviation. Here at Pont-sur-Seine where he enjoyed the liberties of being near Paris and remaining, at least partially, active in the city's musical life, he was to stay until his demobilization in October, 1921.²⁷ It was during this period that Poulenc wrote the Valse in C, the Suite in C, the Impromptus, and the Promenades. The shooting war was over, but Poulenc's military duties were still in effect when these works were composed.

The Valse in C was completed in July, 1919.²⁸ Later in 1920 after Henri Collet's pronouncements about Les Six,

24 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 48.

25 Idem, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Vifès dated January, 1919, p. 28; Idem, Entretiens, p. 31.

26 Poulenc, Correspondance, p. 28. This remark was added as a postscript to the same letter along with the name of the person who would bring the score to Vifès.

27 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 8; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 30.

28 Francis Poulenc, Valse pour piano (Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1920), p. 4.

the Valse joined five other compositions by the five other members of Les Six and was published as an Album des Six.²⁹

The Valse, assez vif, contains some of the same characteristics found in the Mouvements perpétuels: simplicity, slow harmonic rhythm, an accessible tune, long pedal points, and a suggestion of the modal, C Lydian, as can be seen in Example 1.

Example 1. Poulenc, "Valse pour piano," meas. 1-26

Assez vif. (♩=M)

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system is marked "Assez vif. (♩=M)". The second system includes the dynamic marking "mf cington les appogiatures". The third system includes the dynamic marking "bien assés".

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29 Francis Poulenc, "Valse pour piano," in Album des Six (Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1920), pp. 8-10. The other five are: Prélude (Georges Auric), pp. 2-3; Romance sans paroles (Louis Durey), pp. 4-5; Sarabande (Arthur Honegger), p. 6; Mazurka (Darius Milhaud), p. 7; and Pastorale (Germaine Tailleferre), pp. 11-12. The earliest composition dates from 1914 (Milhaud). The others, like the Poulenc were composed in 1919. Only the Honegger bears no date of composition.

The form is a concise:

A	= measures 1-40
Transition	= measures 41-44
B	= measures 45-72
A'	= measures 73-112
B'	= measures 113-140
Coda	= measures 141-145 (based on A).

The A' is the result of an octave transposition of the melody, a new counterpoint, although the harmonic scheme remains the same, and a slight figural change (meas. 105-112). B' is the result of the loss of the octaves (meas. 113-124). The coda, with a measure of silence, is equivalent in length to the connecting transition (meas. 41-44). This 3/8 valse is dedicated to Micheline Soule, of whom no mention is made.

The next composition to be completed during Poulenc's military duty was the Suite pour piano. The last page of the score gives the completion date of March, 1920, in Paris, with a dedication to Viñes.³⁰ However, the work was not published until 1926. Entitled a suite, the work is, in reality, a brief three-movement sonatina à la Clementi, although Poulenc mentioned its derivation from Satie.³¹ None of the movements is named after a dance, although in French some of the meanings of the word suite are: order,

³⁰ Francis Poulenc, Suite pour piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1926), p. 12.

³¹ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 48; See also Erik Satie, Sonatine bureaucratique of 1917 for a direct quote from Muzio Clementi's Sonatina in C, Op. 36, No. 1. Available on Angel records, S-36811, with Aldo Ciccolini, piano.

series, and sequence. In this sense of the word, the title applies, although it is doubtful that Poulenc knew very many technical differences in forms at this stage of his career.

The first movement, an alla breve, presto in C, presents two themes, the second of which, in the left hand, is derived from a combination of the first theme and the Alberti-like accompaniment of the first theme (meas. 25-31). The middle section (meas. 44-67), rather than a development, is a rearrangement of the first theme in the tonic minor and a nod toward the second theme in the retransition back to the opening (meas. 62-67). Measures 1-44 equal measures 68-110. A brief two measures of tonic-dominant, bring the movement to a close on a C major triad with an added b- and d-natural, which sounds like a description of a chord of the ninth, however, that major-seventh b-natural is in the bass!

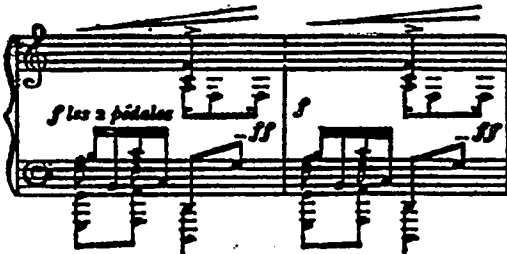
The Andante is very brief -- 22 measures of B-flat major in 4/4 (p. 6). The movement is very Mozartean, with continuously flowing sixteenth-notes and several meter changes, i.e., 1/4, 7/8, 3/4, and 6/4, that do not stop the flow. The same bass line appears in measures 1, 2, 7, and 20, but only measures 7 and 20 are identical in the treble.

The last movement, Vif, a 2/4 in C, is a rondo-like movement with a 4 measure idea recurring four times, each time leading to a different idea (meas. 1-4 = 64-67 and 19-

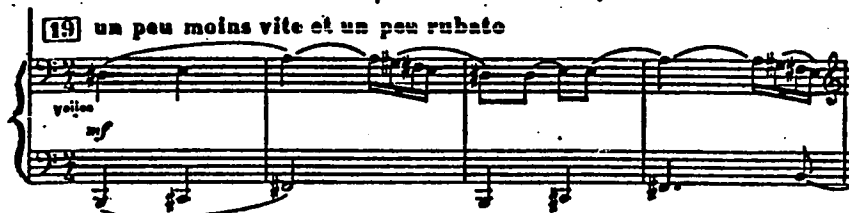
22 equal 84-87). An idea that will occur in the Piano Concerto nearly three decades later, is heard at measures 9-10 (Example 2).

Example 2. (a) Poulenc, Suite pour piano (1920), third movement, meas. 9-10; (b) Piano Concerto (1949), first movement, meas. 163-166 (in the orchestra)

(a)



(b)



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Measures 42-45 and 56-59 are a varied return of the first movement, now in 2/4 and *g* Dorian. The rhythm of the opening theme goes to the left hand (meas. 50), and subsequently, the left hand assumes the leading role (meas. 50 and 68). Measures 82-83 contain an interesting shift to sharps from a key signature of no sharps or flats. Perhaps, these 2 measures would have been better in flats (D-flat major, the Neapolitan key) to pull back to C major for the refrain-like idea? A 4 measure coda brings the Suite to a close.

In conversation with Claude Rostand, twenty-three years later, Poulenc said that he could "tolerate my old

Suite in C."³² In the cold light of retrospection, it would appear that the Trois Mouvements perpétuels, the Valse pour piano, and the Suite pour piano, were closer to the later Poulenc than the two works that follow.

Gropings

Written in Paris during 1920-1921, dedicated to the pianist, Marcelle Meyer, and revised in June, 1939, the Cinq Impromptus are a decided departure from the language that Poulenc had used to this point.³³ They seem overly chromatic, dissonant for dissonance sake, in short, experimental. Poulenc had been familiar with the Six Little Pieces, Op. 19 (1911) of Schoenberg; and, perhaps, like Ravel at an earlier time, on seeing Stravinsky's Poèmes de la lyrique japonaise, whose instrumentation was derived from Pierrot Lunaire, was eager to exploit the coloristic possibilities, and soon completed his Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé.³⁴ However, the Impromptus are instructive from the standpoint of the young, fledgling composer recording his efforts to find his "own voice."

The first Impromptu, Très agité, in 4/8, with its

32 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35.

33 Francis Poulenc, Cinq Impromptus pour piano (8th edn., London: J. & W. Chester, c1922), pp. 1-14.

34 Orenstein, Ravel, p. 66. The biggest difference between the two composers was that Poulenc knew Pierrot Lunaire; whereas, Ravel admitted to only knowing it by hearsay. There is a difference!

continuous triplet figures, is more like an etude or a prelude, although it is very reminiscent of the Chopin Impromptu in A-flat, Op. 29. While basically in C major, there exists much modal ambiguity with the tonic minor. The phrasing is in 2 measure phrases with a closing phrase of 5 measures.

Number two (pp. 4-6), Allegro vivace, 3/4, in C major, is an ABA' with a coda based on the 2 measure transition (meas. 17-18). The middle section is partially repeated with a variation of the rhythmic displacement (meas. 42-45) that had occurred earlier (meas. 19-22). Characteristics of this Impromptu are: secondary dominants that do not resolve (meas. 13-16 and 68-71), bitonality (meas. 60, C and B majors), and a slight similarity in the closing figure (meas. 72-73) with Impromptu No. 4 (meas. 63-72).

The third Impromptu in the set, Très modéré, 3/4, in G major/g minor, is both the most chromatic and contains the most meter changes thus far (pp. 7-8). The bass line is of interest in that it reestablishes the same sort of repeating bass figure that was encountered in the first of the Mouvements perpétuels. This figure of tenths and octaves in eighth-notes, is the same for the first 10 measures; a new repetition begins for the next 7 measures; and the first figure returns briefly at the end. Measures 18-19 stand out in sudden relief, because they burst into the kind of melody line most associated with Poulenc -- lyric, rhapsodic, and memorable.

While containing many chromatic tones, there is still a clear quality to the essentially homophonic texture. Cast as an ABA with coda, the concluding measure is very ambiguous tonally. The concluding chord is a ii^9 of G major (with the fifth missing), following a long ascending scale that combines both the tonic and finally the dominant of E major. Considering the mixture of sharps and flats used to notate the scale, perhaps, the notation would have been better in all sharps or F-flat major? This problem of notation is mentioned by writers on Poulenc, especially concerning those works written before Poulenc began his study of composition with Charles Koechlin. These Impromptus were, indeed, written before his study with Charles Koechlin began.³⁵

Impromptu No. 4 (pp. 9-11) is a violent waltz and the chromaticism goes to more extremes than in the Impromptu just discussed. There is no hint of the use of a tone row to be sure, however, in measures 15-18, the left hand plays in single notes, 9 chromatic tones without repeating a pitch. The same kind of chromaticism is also found in the harmonization of measures 24-29 and 30-32, where 8 or 9 tones are played as chords without repeating a pitch. This is, perhaps, again a reflection of the interest in

³⁵ Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., edited by Bruce Bohle, 1975), p. 1706. Even scores as late as the Piano Concerto (1949) contain examples of Poulenc's rather cavalier attitude toward notation (meas. 59, Violin I).

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) in Paris during the 1920-1921 period? Poulenc was certainly familiar with his compositions and may have been experimenting with the chromatic tones in a similar but non-tone row setting (Example 3).

Example 3. Poulenc, *Impromptu No. 4*, meas. 10-20

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The concluding chords are similar to those that conclude the third movement of the Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 in C, Op. 26, written in the same year, 1921. The similarity of the ending figure with that of Impromptu No. 2 has been mentioned.

The closing Impromptu (pp. 12-14), 3/4, is the only one in the minor mode, c minor, and the only one of the set in a slow tempo, Andante. The ostinato figure in the left hand remains the same in pitch and rhythm for 10 measures; however, the rhythm of the ostinato continues in the other voice parts until returning to the bass at measure 23. It is a very unifying force. The parallel pitches of the

closing measures take advantage of the distinctive timbre of playing the same pitches on the piano three octaves apart. The concluding chord this time contains only the tonic and a picardy third.

This unusual set of compositions in the Poulenc oeuvre will stand out in relief as do the Promenades of the same year.

Poulenc's original idea about the Promenades and the end result appear to be different. He wrote to Paul Collaer, the Belgium musicologist, the following:

With regard to the Promenades, this is how I resolve the problem of these short pieces. Here is my scheme.

Prelude. 10 Promenades. Final. The 10 promenades being considered by me as 10 variations on 10 different themes (1 for each promenade). The special technique of each number is achieved to 'deceive the hearing' seeing that there will be one in thirds, another in repeated octaves, etc., etc. Thus I will obtain a seeming unity.

But it is a beast to write. 36

The letter, written from Nogent-sur-Marne, the home of Poulenc's maternal grandmother, seemed to indicate that the work was in progress. The score bears a completion date of Summer, 1921, in the Touraine.³⁷ Either he left Nogent-sur-Marne and went to the Touraine to finish the work, indicating that it was virtually complete when he wrote the letter, or it was completed in the Touraine, and he came back to Nogent-sur-Marne (15 kilometers outside of Paris).

36 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter dated July 12, 1921, pp. 33-34.

37 Francis Poulenc, Promenades pour piano (9th edn., London: J. & W. Chester, c1923), p. 23.

Whatever the circumstances may be, the fact is that there was not much of the summer left after July 12.

The publication in 1923, and the revised version of August, 1952, do not contain a prelude or a finale, only the 10 Promenades, each with a specific name; and while certain figures and/or intervals do dominate each one, the deception is, indeed, there, because they are not pieces in thirds, repeated octaves, or the kind of association that could be made with say etudes on various technical problems; although to be sure, they are not easy. Further, the work is dedicated to the Polish-American pianist, Arthur Rubinstein (b.1886). It must be remembered that at this period, 1921, Rubinstein was one of the few pianists playing many of the contemporary works of Prokofiev, Poulenc, Falla, and Ravel. However, the rather austere style of the Promenades, and the very special brand of lyricism associated with this great pianist, may be difficult to reconcile. There is no evidence that Rubinstein performed, publically or otherwise, these works to any great extent; although as Henri Hell mentions, Rubinstein did, indeed, perform the Poulenc works throughout his distinguished career.³⁸

The first of the Promenades: A Pied (On Foot), is a $9/8=3/4$ in a minor, marked nonchalant (pp. 2-3). It is rather chromatic, a wandering composition, with some interesting meter changes, e.g., meas. 18, $15/8=5/4$. The

38 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 24.

piece contains many chords of the ninth and seventh as well as diminished and augmented. It seems, however, to maintain a certain separate popularity, because J. & W. Chester publish it apart from the other nine in an album of the composer's compositions.³⁹

No. 2: En Auto (By Auto), très agité, 2/4, A major/a minor, is, indeed, étude-like, with rapid sixteenths moving from right to left hand (pp. 4-6). There is a brief cadenza of chromatic sixths and a curious marking of Chopin, enclosed in a box above measure 13. The sequential measures with the Alberti bass, have some semblance of Chopin's Sonata No. 2 in b-flat minor, Op. 35, first movement, but there seems to be no intent at a direct quote. The Alberti is closer to Mozart than the extended Alberti that Chopin used in say, the Nocturne in D-flat, Op. 27, No. 2. The closing presto (meas. 29), is an upward rush of F-sharp major in the right hand and the natural form of a minor in the left hand, concluding on a chord built on a minor, but containing both a c-natural and a c-sharp (meas. 29).⁴⁰

The Promenade: A Cheval (By Horse), modéré, 2/4, G major, is an interesting combination of both parallel and contrary motion (pp. 7-8). Measures 13-16 are bitonal (D and B majors). This Promenade is more diatonic, with the marking chanté, appearing frequently and with a discernable

³⁹ Francis Poulenc, "A Pied," in Album of Six Pieces for Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1923), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁰ See Impromptu No. 1, last chord, meas. 19.

melody most of the time. In the closing 5/8 measure, there is a delicious touch of the Neapolitan relationship.

En Bateau (By Boat), No. 5, marked agit , 2/4, in c minor, is a violent Promenade with sextuplets in the left hand of the same pattern of wide intervals which Poulenc will use again in the first piece of the Napoli (1922-1925). The mood evoked here is agitation -- not a smooth boat ride. There are many meter changes and the closing presto coda is very dramatic at triple forte with double notes of varying intervals. This would be difficult to perform (pp. 9-11).

No. 5: En Avion (By Plane), has many changes of meter with some instances of one meter in the right hand and another in the left hand (Example 4) (pp. 12-13). Although Example 4. Poulenc, Promenade No. 5, "En Avion," meas. 1-10

Lent $\text{♩} = 68$
 Strictement au m me movt.
 durant tout le morceau

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the beginning with a tempo of 'Lent' and a quarter note equal to 68. The second system features a 'tr s lid' (triple forte) marking. The third system includes a 'mf en dehors' (mezzo-forte out of time) marking. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

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constructed in a straight forward ABA, the idea of plane appears to be operating on two levels here -- meter and tonality, i.e., D and E-flat majors for the A sections and D-flat and C majors for the B section. The last measure of 8/4 has E-flat and D majors in parallel motion until the final resolution in E-flat (meas. 32). This is a very remarkable piece of music for Poulenc (See Example 4 for the key relationships also).

No. 6 is an explosive tour de force (pp. 14-16). Entitled En Autobus (By Autobus), trépidant, in d minor, it is reminiscent of the Chopin Prelude in d minor, Op. 28, No. 24. The right-hand triplet figure is composed of full four-note-chords moving up and down chromatically with octaves in the left hand. Some of the measures (7, 12-16), contain three-note-triads in each hand, two notes of which are common tones with the outside voices moving chromatically in contrary motion. The sound is much thicker than usual in Poulenc. The ending cascade of chords begins in the highest register of the piano with chords a third apart tonally, i.e., E-flat and G, etc. There are many triple and even quadruple forte markings. This far from gentle work is unusually violent and turbulent for Poulenc.

In sharp contrast, the next Promenade: En Voiture (By Carriage), marked très lent, 2/4, in C major, is only 21 measures long (p. 17). Although short and slow, it is nevertheless, very chromatic, with many chords of the ninth chromatically parallel, and only settles in C major at the

close. There is a different kind of tension created here from the frenetic energy of the preceding Promenade.

No. 8: En Chemin de Fer (By Train), marked vif, 2/4, in C major, is a sudden, abrupt clearing of texture (pp. 18-19). With its Alberti-like bass, and sequential treatment, the memory of Mozart is evoked. As was seen in the first movement of the Suite pour piano, the melody goes to the tonic minor (meas. 12). Measures 8-9 and 35-36 are both interesting and similar. They both contain chords of the ninth, occurring on each half of the beat in the right hand, with sixteenth-notes in the left hand in an alternating-note pattern. In the former, the added sixteenth contributes a passing tone to the chord above; whereas in the latter, the added sixteenth merely doubles the chord tones even though the chords still lack their thirds. The Alberti becomes extended, but the lovely, diatonic melody prevails to provide a welcome contrast from the preceding textures.

The penultimate Promenade contains the double notes of which Poulenc spoke in his letter, but certainly not consistent thirds. The intervals vary as the line meanders at times very chromatically in this G-flat major tone picture: A Bicyclette (By Bicycle), marked vite, 4/4 (pp. 20-21). Poulenc changes the meter to 5/4 (meas. 12), but is very explicit that the five is divided into three plus two. Precision of directional markings will become a hallmark of Poulenc and also a spot of derision toward those pianists who ignore them.

This very concise ABA' closes with another of those ambiguous chords of Poulenc's: the tonic g-flat in the bass and soprano, but a b-double-flat and a f-natural in the tenor and alto, respectively. The middle section of this Promenade is unusual in that the tempo marking changes to Presser and opposes the double-notes of the first section with a single-note tracery in the right hand.

The last Promenade: En Diligence (By Stagecoach), is again bitonal (pp. 22-23). Interestingly, the two tonalities are C and F-sharp majors, the famous two-some of Stravinsky's ballet Petrouchka, which the gentleman to whom the Promenades are dedicated, Rubinstein, commissioned for solo piano and made so famous, and which also, Poulenc knew from a very early age. No connection, however, is indicated in this lent, $6/8=2/4$, composition.

There are long f-sharp pedal points and the prevailing texture is chordal. The opening 4 measures are deceiving in that the piece becomes much more chromatic. The closing chord this time: f-sharp pedal, with a chord over it that is really a b-minor-ninth, but contains both c-natural and c-sharp: has become almost an expected signature.

These Promenades were completed in the summer before Poulenc was to begin his compositional study with Charles Koechlin. Koechlin made immediate discoveries about Poulenc's strong as well as weak points.⁴¹ Poulenc was

41 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 28.

not, with few exceptions to be as experimental again. He seems to have closed the door to this type of writing and discovered his true métier. He was to remain true to himself for the rest of his creative career.⁴²

42 Although the Promenades are seldom performed and show no signs of entering into the repertoire of performing pianists, Poulenc apparently was pleased or at least shared them with a number of friends. See the Correspondance, letter from Max Jacob to Poulenc dated September 29, 1922, p. 45:

Bravo also for the Promenades. . . . Admirable! You are my preferred musician. Do not tell the others. Also see a postcard from Manuel de Falla to Poulenc dated September 19, 1923, p. 48:

I have received with joy your Promenades which I adore. Thank you!
They are not mentioned in the Correspondance again and only in the biographies as "gropings" or "strays." They are also not listed in any domestic or foreign recording catalogue at the time of this writing. Their time will come?

CHAPTER III

1922-1929: TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TRENDS

Poulenc was demobilized from the Army in October, 1921.¹ During his period of military service, the Groupe des Six, at least constituted upon Milhaud's return from Brazil at the end of 1918 and named in 1920, had sent salutations to Arnold Schoenberg in recognition of his place in the contemporary musical scene.² Therefore, upon Poulenc's demobilization, he, Milhaud, and Marya Freund (1876-1966) set out on a journey that took them to Vienna; where, they met Gustav Mahler's widow, Alban Berg (1885-1935), Anton Webern (1883-1945), and later, Schoenberg.³

Early in 1922, Milhaud and Poulenc made another journey, this time to Italy. There, they were reunited with Casella, and met Claude Delvincourt (1898-1954), the holder of the Prix de Rome, Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), and Vittorio Rieti (b. 1898), who became a frequent visitor to Paris.⁴ During this trip Poulenc began writing his piano

1 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 8.

2 Ibid., pp. 22-23; Joseph Machlis, Introduction to Contemporary Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), p. 218.

3 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), p. 31; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 23.

4 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 24.

suite, Napoli, which was not published or performed until 1926.⁵ However, a turning point came in Poulenc's career that requires attention before a discussion of the Napoli.

While a ballet may not seem germane to a study of the piano compositions of a composer, in this instance it becomes necessary. Poulenc transcribed and published for solo piano, four of the dances from his ballet Les Biches: Ouverture, Rondeau, Adagietto, and Andantino.⁶

Both Henri Hell and Jean Roy, as well as Poulenc, mention the year 1923, as the date of the composition of Les Biches. Not to contest the composition date, but the idea of a ballet commissioned by Diaghilev, seems to have had a long gestation period.

M. Diaghilev wrote to Poulenc on November 15, 1921, only a month after Poulenc's demobilization, inquiring about the scenario for the ballet Les Demoiselles, which Poulenc later changed to Les Biches. Diaghilev inquired into the fact that Poulenc had apparently said earlier, that he would be able to deliver the piano part in October and the orchestration in December. The word "next" was bothering Diaghilev, and he wished to know if that word "next"

5 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 86.

6 Francis Poulenc, "Ouverture, Rondeau, Adagietto, and Andantino," in Les Biches, Piano score (Paris: Heugel, c1924), pp. 2-11, 2-7, 1-7, and 2-7, respectively as separate publications. The Rondeau is permanently out of print. The photocopy from the Library of Congress, however, has a line of the preceding Ouverture at the top of the page. So they were, probably, published together at one time.

meant 1922? Whatever the complications, in a letter dated October 6, 1923, Stravinsky told Poulenc that he was happy to know of the termination of Les Biches and that he would be happy to be of any assistance possible.⁷

Ever since the combining of musician, Satie, with painter, Picasso, and author, Cocteau, Diaghilev had adored the "marriage of the arts."⁸ For Les Biches the painter Marie Laurencin (1885-1956) did the decor and the costumes. The scenario, by Poulenc who did the scenario for all of his ballets, drew some criticism for its erotic qualities, to which the composer replied: "it is not a question of love but of pleasure."⁹ Diaghilev had wanted a modern Sylphides and Poulenc wanted a Fêtes galantes, 1923.

The first public performance took place in Monte-Carlo on January 6, 1924, but apparently there had been a private performance, possibly for the critics, at the end of December, 1923. Poulenc wrote a letter to Paul Collaer, dated January 1, 1924, declaring the work a triumph and that he was happy with everything about the production.¹⁰

7 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letters from Diaghilev to Poulenc, dated November 15, 1921 and from Stravinsky to Poulenc dated October 6, 1923, pp. 36-37 and 49, respectively.

8 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 51; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 32.

9 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 53. Several pages of this fifth conversation are devoted to Les Biches.

10 Idem, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Paul Collaer dated January 1, 1924, pp. 56-57.

The score is a suite of dances entitled: Ouverture, Rondeau, Chanson dansée, Adagietto, Jeu, Rag-Mazurka, Andantino, Petite chanson dansée, and Final.¹¹ The full title includes the fact that voices sing French folk-songs from the orchestra pit.¹²

The Adagietto was suggested to Poulenc by a variation in Chaikovsky's ballet Sleeping Beauty, but Poulenc said that it should be played without Romantic pathos.¹³ The other influences, to which the composer admitted, were Stravinsky's Les Noces and Pulcinella from which the rhythms of the songs and dances were derived.¹⁴

Of the four dances transcribed for piano solo, only the Ouverture does not appear in the orchestral suite, which includes the Rag-Mazurka and Final. All of these piano solo versions definitely sound better in their orchestral garb and will, probably, never find a place in the pianist's repertoire. They do represent, however, excerpts from the first successful large work of the still young composer.

11 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 25. Biche literally means doe or hind, but in French slang the same word refers to a girl who evokes innocence, or possibly coquetry. The ballet is dedicated to Misia Sert, a personal friend.

12 Ibid., p. 26. See also for a long description of the qualities of the music by M. Hell.

13 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 53 and 55; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 32.

14 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 180-181; Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 191; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 149-150, for critical comments by Jean Cocteau and Darius Milhaud.

Napoli

Poulenc was by heritage a Parisian, on his mother's side, and an Aveyronian, on his father's side. He chose the Touraine for work, because it was a beautiful part of France; he needed the calm and solitude to compose; his Aunt Liénard had a home, Nazelles, near Amboise; and possibly, because Chabrier had also chosen the Touraine for his work.¹⁵ From his Aunt's home, Nazelles (Indre-et-Loire), Poulenc wrote to Valentine Gross, now Mme Jean Hugo, on September 25, 1925:

I have finished a long piece for the piano, Caprice italien, in the genre of the Bourrée fantasque. I am well pleased with it. I believe that in any case it will not make a bad effect -- because for experience, I played it for Lucien (Daudet) who uttered great cries saying of it, what evolution, what flowering brightness!!! I hope that he is not mistaken. 16

Caprice italien is but the third piece of three now under the title Napoli: Suite pour le piano, which was begun in Italy in 1922. Since the score bears the date September, 1925, at Nazelles, it can only be conjectured that Poulenc very shortly altered the title of the work to Napoli or simply decided to join the Caprice italien with the Barcarolle and the Nocturne.¹⁷

15 Francis Poulenc, Emmanuel Chabrier (Paris: La Palatine, 1961), pp. 72-73; Idem, Moi et mes amis, pp. 34-35.

16 Idem, Correspondance, pp. 70-72. Daudet (1883-1946).

17 Francis Poulenc, Napoli: Suite pour le piano (Paris: Salabert, c1926), p. 19. Originally Rouart-Lerolle.

The Barcarolle, marked assez animé, 12/8-4/4, in D major, has the left-hand figuration encountered in the Promenade: En Bateau (pp. 2-4). This very straightforward ABA', calls for little rubato and possesses a single line, diatonic melody of some charm.

The Nocturne, marked lent, 6/8, has five flats in the key signature with every indication of D-flat major; however, it ends in E-flat major (pp. 5-7). Were it not for the last g-natural, a case could be made for transposed Dorian. There is a remarkable resemblance to Chopin, with the consistent accompaniment figure and the very high, single-note melody. Cross rhythms are produced as a result of a meter change to 2/4 in the left hand, while the right hand continues in the 6/8 (meas. 15-23). The middle section is close to b minor but contains many of the cross-relationships of which Poulenc was fond. The first section returns without the introduction.

The Caprice italien, a brilliant 2/8=6/16, presto in E major, is the longest movement, 336 measures (pp. 8-19). The toccata-like first section (meas. 1-130), has a 3 measure introduction that returns three times. There are four distinct ideas in this first section (meas. 4, 12, 31, and 69, respectively). A 10 measure transition leads to a section with four flats in the key signature but which consistently, has the third degree lowered.

This middle section contains two of Poulenc's lovely, lyric inspirations, one in a-flat minor (meas. 140), and

one in A-flat major (meas. 155). There is a rhythmic contrast (meas. 179), and an abbreviated return of the two lyric ideas (meas. 196). Several writers have remarked on the "bitter-sweet" quality of these melodies, completed only a short time after Les Biches.¹⁸ The play between the modes of the same key, A-flat, is very reminiscent of Schubert.

The opening section does not return (meas. 228), but there is an illusion to both the rhythmic qualities of the opening section and the lyric qualities of the middle section. The previous 4/8 now equals 2/4. There is a sense of building toward a climax, with no key signature, but with long pedal f-sharps (meas. 247-257) and a-flats (meas. 258-268). The a-flat, enharmonically, becomes g-sharp for the return of the opening key of E major. The coda begins (meas. 313) and the movement drives forward to a brilliant conclusion. The movement could be outlined thus:

A = abcdabc' (measures 1-130)
 Transition (measures 130-139)
 B = efgef' (measures 140-227)
 C = de'f'd (measures 228-312)
 Coda = (measures 313-336) .

Both Claudio Arrau and Arthur Rubinstein have played this work with great success, yet Henri Hell and Jean Roy join Poulenc, who was "well pleased" in 1925, but who said

¹⁸ Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., edited by Bruce Bohle, 1975), p. 1706. The other references of "bitter-sweet" quality are said in passing by writers of notes on record jackets of Poulenc's works.

in 1953: "I condemn without recourse the Napoli."¹⁹
 Mr. Arrau, who introduced the work to the present writer,
 nor Mr. Rubinstein are in agreement with M. Poulenc.²⁰
 The piano writing is brilliant; it lies well for the hand;
 it is grateful for the performer; and contains enough
 beautiful melody to please any audience. It deserves to be
 heard more!

Transcriptions

As has already been stated previously in this study,
 Igor Stravinsky was responsible for securing Poulenc's
 first publisher, J. & W. Chester of London. In addition to
 the piano compositions, Chester also published a Sonate
pour deux clarinettes (in B-flat and A) in three movements,
 completed at Boulogne-sur-Seine, in the Spring of 1918, a
Sonate pour clarinette et basson in three movements,
 completed in the Touraine, September, 1922, and a Sonate
pour cor, trompette et trombone in three movements, com-
 pleted at Houlgate-Touraine (P. G. C.), August-October,
 1922.²¹

All these facts relate to a study of the piano works
 because in 1925, the same year as the Napoli, Poulenc made

19 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35.

20 In conversations with the present writer in March,
 1958 (Mr. Arrau) and November 12, 1975 (Mr. Rubinstein).
 Mr. Arrau had just closed a recital with the Napoli in
 Stuttgart, Germany. Mr. Rubinstein was in San Francisco
 for a recital.

21 Francis Poulenc, Sonates pour Instruments a Vent,
 piano score (London: J. & W. Chester, c1925), p. 32.

a piano transcription of these three wind sonatas. Long out of print and virtually unknown, the publishers, J. & W. Chester, were kind enough to provide a single copy of this entire transcription for this study. The transcription has not been republished, but two of the original works were revised in 1945, by the composer.²²

Perhaps, the word transcription is incorrect, because Poulenc has simply written out on a treble and bass staff, for two hands, the two, or as in the case of the last sonata, three notes played by the respective instruments.

In the Sonate pour deux clarinettes, the Satie aesthetic appeared in full operation (pp. 3-11). The first movement Presto in D major, is cast in a simple ABA, with the last A repeated exactly, with the exception of 1 measure (pp. 3-5). The rather static-like harmonic effects are reminiscent of the Trois Mouvements perpétuels of 1918 also.

The second movement, Andante, is another ABA in almost Aeolian mode, with the B section a very simple variant of the A (pp. 6-7). And the last movement, Vif, back in D major, has usually only one sharp used -- Mixolydian (pp. 8-11). This is a longer movement, which is an:

A	=	measures 1-18
B	=	measures 19-38
A'	=	measures 39-54
B'	=	measures 55-62
C	=	measures 63-79
Coda	=	measures 80-92.

²² Kim Lewis-Lavender of J. & W. Chester, in a letter of June 28, 1977, to the present writer.

An interesting little technique arises in this last movement which will become a trademark of Poulenc. There is an interesting reshuffling of material. Thus, A' is:

meas. 39-44 equal meas. 1-6; meas. 45-46 equal meas. 13-14; meas. 47-50 equal meas. 9-12; and meas. 51-54 equal meas. 15-18.

Only measures 7 and 8 are omitted. B' is:

meas. 55-56 equal meas. 25-26; meas. 57-58 equal meas. 23-24 down an octave; meas. 59-60 equal meas. 21 and 24 varied one note; and meas. 61-62 equal meas. 27 repeated twice and up an octave.

The coda is based upon measures 15-18, repeated three times with a ritard, an added measure, and a closing 2 measure presto (meas. 80-92). The ideas seem to fit together in any order of linkage.

The Sonate pour clarinette et basson is again very simple, but it has a very Baroque flavor with the soprano and bass polarity of voices. Poulenc was studying with Koechlin at the time of writing this sonata. The opening Allegro in 3/4, but with many meter changes, corresponds to the chromaticism in the Impromptus and the Promenades of 1920-1921 (pp. 12-15). There is an almost mono-thematicism that would be either associated with Haydn, although there is no technique of thematic development at work here, or the single affection so dear to the Baroque. Everything is derived from the rhythmic, intervallic, and melodic ideas expressed in the first 13 measures. They may be transposed, inverted; there may be an omission of a conscientious kind; but nevertheless, the relationships are

there. The writing is of a different kind than that of the Sonate pour deux clarinettes of 1918. It is a very unified movement, with the seams not showing as clearly as in the previous wind sonata. Perhaps this was the beginning of M. Koechlin's influence?

The Romance, a movement of only 28 measures in F major, is based almost entirely upon the diatonically descending scale and a brief chromatic one that looks back to the first movement (pp. 16-17). The bassoon sets up an almost continuous pattern of sixteenth-notes in various alternating-note patterns, while the clarinet weaves an almost consistent melodic pattern over the top. The movement is a very brief ABA'.

The Finale: Très animé, in D major, is an unusual movement formally:

A = measures 1-14 in D major
 Transition based on motives from previous material (meas. 15-25)
 B = measures 26-40 in C major
 Transition (meas. 40-55) to the tempo and melody of the second movement (meas. 56-63)
 Retransition (meas. 64-69) to
 A = measures 69-81 in D major
 Coda = measures 82-104, with presto on previous material.

It is a whirlwind finish. In addition to the previous differences cited, the presence of a soprano and a bass instrument gives a much clearer delineation of the vertical ideas for the ear than the previous sonata.

The Sonate pour cor, trompette et trombone was virtually a first for the combination of these instruments in the literature and has led to others since (pp. 23-32).

The Allegro moderato in G major is much more diatonic than the preceding work (pp. 23-27). This is a return to the kind of texture and harmony that was essentially to remain, and the kind that is known or identified with Poulenc's compositions. The form is:

A = abc (meas. 1-25, with c as a transition)
 B = d (meas. 26-35)
 Transition (meas. 36-39)
 C = b'c' and transition (meas. 40-57)
 A = ac'bc (meas. 57-85)
 Coda = c'' (meas. 86-89).

There is a slight likeness here to the Mozartean conception of the presentation of themes in the first movements of his piano concertos. While there is no thematic development, there is a connection via themes with open ends, the variety of the presentation of those themes, and the jig-saw puzzle arrangement of those themes.²³

The second movement, an Andante in B-flat major, is again very brief -- 27 measures (pp. 28-29). It is very lyric and a simple ABA. The very short middle section just touches on g minor before the return of B-flat major, which opens both times in the tonic minor.

Perhaps the title Rondeau to the last movement refers to the old French dance or simply the idea of recurring material, which does appear four times (pp. 30-32). It is to be doubted that Poulenc at this stage knew the difference

²³ Arthur Hutchings, A Companion to Mozart's Piano Concertos, 2nd edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 15. See also pp. 4-15 of the same work.

in the Italian Rondo and the old French Rondeau in terms of form -- he may in terms of poetry.²⁴ The movement is based upon two ideas, but they come from the first 8 measures:

A	=	measures 1-14
A'	=	measures 15-22
Transition	=	measures 23-25
B	=	measures 26-38
A''	=	measures 39-52
Coda	=	measures 53-56.

The new harmonies and the new counterpoint of measures 39-52, give the old line a new sound. The last A uses some of the minor mode, and the coda combines the major and the minor modes in 1 measure.

All three of these wind sonatas are successful works in their own media. It would be interesting to know just what Poulenc had in mind by the piano transcriptions? It is doubtful that the piano versions will ever supplant the original, albeit both versions are delightful music.²⁵

Trends Toward Shorter Pieces

All during the years accounted for in the preceding pages, Poulenc was also writing songs, incidental music for plays, and even recitatives for Gounod's La Colombe.²⁶ However, it was not until 1927, that Poulenc was to return to the piano, and then via the orchestra first. The

²⁴ Douglass M. Green, Form in Tonal Music (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 150-152.

²⁵ See the criticism of Roland-Manuel on p. 31 of the Jean Roy biography of Poulenc.

²⁶ Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 166.

Parisian hostess, Mme Jeanne Dubost, commissioned a ballet, L'Eventail de Jeanne, to which ten composers contributed music.²⁷ Poulenc's contribution was a Pastourelle, number eight in the order of performance. A small orchestra conducted by Roger Désormière (b. 1898), performed the work in Mme Dubost's salon on June 16, 1927. The official premiere was at the Paris Opéra on March 4, 1929, with J. E. Szyfer conducting. Marie Laurencin, the painter-friend of Poulenc from the days of Les Biches, again did the decor.²⁸ Poulenc immediately transcribed the work for solo piano, a move he lived to regret.²⁹

Many of the other composers chose to make versions of their contributions to L'Eventail de Jeanne, for piano, four hands.³⁰

The Pastourelle is a lovely, lyric composition in B-flat major, marked modéré, sans lenteur (without slowness).³¹ The middle section goes to b-flat minor, a move to the tonic minor that the composer had used before in earlier works, e. g., the Suite pour piano, first movement. The form is an

27 Arbie Orenstein, Ravel: Man and Musician (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 93. Ravel was also a contributing composer to this ballet.

28 Ibid., pp. 238-239.

29 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 67. "Cannot stand to hear it anymore, except as played by Horowitz."

30 See Chronological List of Piano Works at the end of this study for other contributions and composers.

31 Francis Poulenc, "Pastourelle," from L'Eventail de Jeanne (Paris: Heugel, c1929), p. 4. All the other contributions are also available separately from Heugel et Cie.

ABA with a coda in b-flat minor with a new rhythm. The work is very chordal, homophonic, with a basic tonic-dominant-tonic harmonization of the melody. Several times the tenor and the alto move in parallel octaves (meas. 1-4, 15-18, and 42-45). The melodic line is either diatonic or follows a triadic outline. The accessibility of the work undoubtedly makes it appealing to performers and audiences alike.

During this same year, 1927, Poulenc also wrote a Novelette in C for the piano. He wrote another in 1928. They were published together in 1930, and he added a third and final one in 1959. Now all three are published together. The publication of these Novelettes together, like the Nocturnes and the Improvisations, does not provide a chronological approach to the works, and since Poulenc was so generously scrupulous to date the completion of his works in the scores, the chronological dates of completion have been followed rather than the understandable convenience of publication of compositions bearing the same title.

The first Novelette in C was completed at Nazelles, the home of Poulenc's Aunt Liénard, in October, 1927.³² Marked modéré, sans lenteur, in 3/8, this very appealing work, like its sister, the first Nocturne in C, could well

³² Francis Poulenc, "Novelette in C," in Trois Novelettes (London: J. & W. Chester, c1930), pp. 1-4.

have inspired Poulenc to say:

You will find sobriety and sadness in French music, as in German or Russian music. But the French have a finer sense of proportion. We realize that somberness and good humor are not mutually exclusive. French composers, too, write profound music; but when they do, it is leavened with that lightness of spirit without which life would be unendurable. 33

All is lyricism here. A memorable melody is gently rocked by a moving accompaniment in sixteenths (Example 5).

Example 5. Poulenc, "Novelette in C," meas. 1-10



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The form is a very clear ABCA with the keys being C major, c minor, G major, and back to C major. The lyric Poulenc will be so much in evidence from now on. The experimentation seems to be over and the master is settling down to the kind of writing that he does the best. It is also the first work that Poulenc dedicated to his Aunt Liénard.

In 1927, Poulenc purchased his home in the Touraine,

33 David Cox, "France: The Modern Period," in A History of Song, edited by Denis Stevens, Revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton, The Norton Library, 1970), p. 195. Mr. Cox's essay runs from pp. 194-227.

close to that of his Aunt, in the village of Noizay, 17 kilometers East of Tours, and 6 kilometers West of Amboise. During this period of time, he was also writing the Airs chantés for soprano and the Concert champêtre for Harpsichord and Orchestra.³⁴

The second Novelette in b-flat minor was completed the following year, 1928, in Amboise.³⁵ The work is marked très rapide et rythmé, in 2/2. The brilliant piano writing is on a triplet figure of a quarter and an eighth. The middle section is in B-flat major, a reversal of what we have seen so far. The first section returns abbreviated and altered. The entire piece is toccata-like and especially measures 45-52 (Example 6) sound like Prokofiev.

Example 6. Poulenc, "Novelette in b-flat minor," meas. 43-53

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³⁴ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 90; Demar Irvine, in a letter of July 19, 1977, to the present writer.

³⁵ Francis Poulenc, "Novelette in b-flat minor," in Trois Novelettes (London: J. & W. Chester, c1930), pp. 5-8.

Poulenc had met Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) in 1921, during the time when the Ballet Russe was performing the ballet, Chout le Bouffon of Prokofiev. Poulenc was one of the few French musicians who was on friendly terms with the Russian. Poulenc admits that he has been influenced by Prokofiev in "certain little corners."³⁶ This is one of those "little corners" and is a brilliant, accessible piece that should enter the recital repertoire of more pianists. It has been recorded with the two other Novelettes.³⁷

The year 1928, saw Poulenc return to the past for an old piano composition, the three Pastorales of 1917, written for Viñes. He refined the first, discarded the two remaining, and added a Hymne and a Toccata, and published the work under the title, Trois Pièces pour le piano, with the dedication to Viñes, as before.³⁸

The Pastorale, marked calme et mystérieux, 4/4, in e-flat minor, is an ABA' with coda (pp. 3-5). The work is very atmospheric, no little of which is contributed by the chromaticism in the arabesque figures and the rich chords of the ninth.

36 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, pp. 157-158 and 168.

37 Francis Poulenc, "Trois Novelettes," in Piano Music of Francis Poulenc, Gabriel Tacchino, piano (Angel S-36602), side 1, bands 8, 9, and 10.

38 Francis Poulenc, Trois Pièces pour le piano (Paris: Heugel, c1931), p. 15; See Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 45; Idem, Entretiens, p. 30; and Idem, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Viñes dated January, 1919, p. 28.

The second piece, Hymne, requires a large hand to handle the chordal texture of the first section (pp. 6-9). This modéré in E-flat major is an ABA' with the first and last sections resembling a march with written out ornamentation (mordents). The middle section, containing the real climatic point, looks to the future Poulenc of the Toccata movement of the Aubade of 1929, or the first movement of the Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre of 1932 (Example 7). Despite the tonal volume achieved, the piece ends like the first, pianissimo.

Example 7. Poulenc, Trois Pièces "Hymne," meas. 19-22

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The last of the three is a real bravura piece marked très animé in 4/4 (pp. 10-15). This virtuoso Toccata in a minor, still has the melodic qualities of Poulenc, and the percussive qualities of a gentler kind, which performers sometimes forget and over-exaggerate this aspect. It is

written on primarily two thematic ideas, one rising diatonically and the other outlining part of a triad with a passing tone. The customary delineation in legato and staccato touch is in evidence. The ideas appear in various keys, i.e., the triadic idea in a minor (meas. 13), c minor (meas. 21), b-flat minor (meas. 48); and the ascending idea in A-flat major (meas. 28), D-flat major (meas. 42), and a minor (meas. 57) to another version in a minor (meas. 67) with a new counterpoint. The concluding measures use a minor chord of the dominant --non-functioning.

Poulenc said that he "tolerated these Trois Pièces,"³⁹ while Roy did not understand why there was this indulgence; because he (Roy) felt that the first two were "gauche", and that the last was brilliant but superficial.⁴⁰ In the hands of a Horowitz or any pianist capable of the athletics of the last Toccata, Poulenc's statement stands!⁴¹

1929 saw the premiere of the Concert champêtre, the composition and premiere of the Aubade, a short piano piece, and the beginning of the series of eight Nocturnes, which were to take the next nine years to complete.

The short piano piece was entitled Pièce Brève sur le nom d'Albert Roussel, which was completed at Noizay in March, 1929.⁴² Poulenc respected Albert Roussel (1869-

39 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35.

40 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 85.

41 Poulenc, "Toccata," in Piano Music, side 2, band 7.

42 Francis Poulenc, Pièce Brève sur le nom d'Albert Roussel (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, c1929), p. 4.

1937), but felt that his harmonic sense was a hybrid between the contrapuntal and the homophonic textures, which was diametrically opposite to his own taste.⁴³ Presumably, Poulenc intended to use the Renaissance technique of soggetto cavato (a subject or theme carved out of pitch equivalents to letters of the alphabet, vowels, etc.).⁴⁴ However, the use of this technique could hardly be called free in this instance.

If the first seven letters of the alphabet are continually repeated throughout the entire alphabet, then the name Albert Roussel would become, in terms of pitch names, A-E-B-E-D-F D-A-G-E-E-E-E, hardly a memorable tune, especially for the last name. Poulenc chose the key of d minor with the following corresponding pitches:

ALBERT ROUSSEL
ADBEED BGEC ED, with all bs being flat.

Notice the absence of either f-natural or f-sharp in a d minor key -- gives some modal possibilities?

The letters L, R, and U could be accounted for from the hexachord system (La, Re, and Ut) as the French nomenclature for keys still does today (even S could be Si in a modern equivalent). These would give the pitches a, d, and c (b if si were used). Apparently the combination of the hexachord system and the repetition system, did not work well, especially for the last name. Did Poulenc know how to

⁴³ Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 75.

⁴⁴ Donald J. Grout, A History of Western Music, Revised edition, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 196.

derive the necessary musical equivalents from the letters? He did have the special number of the Paris Revue Musicale of October 1922 for reference. That issue contained seven musical hommages to Gabriel Faure' (1845-1924), by as many composers using the name Faure' as the subject or theme.⁴⁵

The question will have to remain unanswered. However, the result was a 58 measure composition, marked très animé, in 4/4. The name Albert Roussel appears (also printed in the score) immediately in the first 2 measures; Albert is written in retrograde (meas. 35-36); and then Albert is written forward in an ascending arpeggio first, and then backward (meas. 52-55). Roussel also appears in the closing measures, 57-58. All these names are printed in the score. However, the first name, Albert, also appears in measures 11-12. The letter T is here translated into the pitch f-natural, the third of a d minor triad. This is one of the few instances in the piece where Poulenc uses the third as part of the soggetto cavato; nor did he elect to use the leading tone, c-sharp. The double s in Roussel is c-natural. In measure 37, where Albert is printed in the score backward, the last A becomes a f-sharp and the A is in the harmony.

⁴⁵ Grout, A History of Western Music, p. 196n; Orenstein, Ravel, pp. 85 and 235. Berceuse sur le nom de Gabriel Faure' for violin and piano, printed in a special musical supplement of La Revue Musicale, October 1, 1922.

This piece is not one of Poulenc's best efforts; although it is lyric, melodic, goes through several modulations so dear to Poulenc, e.g., B-flat major (meas. 14), D-flat major (meas. 22), bears the sequential treatment of the ideas (again so dear to the composer); and in fact, does more to treat the motives of the theme which he created, than to manipulate either half of the name. He will do better with the name BACH later.

The last composition for solo piano in 1929, was the Premier Nocturne en ut majeur, dedicated to Suzette (probably Suzanne Peignot, the preferred interpreter of his early songs). It is another of those memorable, lyric melodies, with especial association to the aforementioned Novelette in C and a later Improvisation No. 7 in C.⁴⁶ The opening portion of the main melody, a singing legato line, is treated in a recurring fashion in several keys, i.e., C major (meas. 1), D major (meas. 28), A-flat major (meas. 51), and finally back to C major (meas. 71), for a version requiring the crossing of hands and three staves to notate (perhaps a backward glance at Poulenc's earlier, complex préludes).

The coda, which is marked at a slower tempo and is distinctly set off from the rest of the work, looks to the future, in that, the Huitième Nocturne (1938) and the last

46. Francis Poulenc, "Premier Nocturne en ut majeur," in Nocturnes pour le piano (Paris: Heugel, c1932), pp. 1-5.

Intermezzo in A-flat Major (1943), will incorporate the same procedure, secondary dominants using enharmonic changes in notation. In measure 87 (of the Nocturne), there is a dominant to tonic resolution in C-sharp major, completed in measure 88. The e-sharp becomes, enharmonically, a f-natural for a dominant-tonic to B-flat major (beats 2 and 3 of meas. 88). The d of the B-flat triad becomes the dominant of G major (beats 4 to 1 of meas. 88-89). Then G major, the dominant of the home key, C major, finally moves to the tonic via some beautiful chords of the ninth with various chord members omitted (Example 8). This simple ABA with coda is one of the loveliest of the Nocturnes and has been recorded by the composer.⁴⁷

Example 8. Poulenc, Nocturnes "Premier Nocturne en ut majeur," meas. 83-92

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system has four measures, and the second system has five measures. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various chords and melodic lines. The music is in a major key and features complex harmonic structures, including secondary dominants and enharmonic changes as described in the text.

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⁴⁷ Francis Poulenc, "Nocturne in C," in Poulenc Plays Poulenc and Satie (Columbia: Odyssey Y 33792), side 1, band 2. The Composer as Performer Series.

Poulenc was not to return to the works for solo piano until 1932, and then via transcriptions from a vocal work. Rather than discussing the Nocturnes all at once and continually dropping back in time as their compositional dates occur, they, like the Novelettes and the Improvisations, will be discussed as they were written, chronologically; and not as they were eventually gathered together as a single unit for publication purposes.

By the time Poulenc completed the Nocturnes in 1938, he thought of them as a cycle. However, four years were to separate the writing of the first and second nocturnes. So although a part of the complete cycle, the first nocturne must, by its date of composition, stand apart from those written in the 1930s. The continued discussion of the remaining seven is a part of the next three chapters. There will be many compositions completed, and many personal and professional changes in Francis Poulenc before the cycle of Nocturnes is completed in 1938.

CHAPTER IV

1930-1933: SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPROVISATION

Poulenc was, in the main, concerned with the production of *mélodies* during the years 1930-1931. In December, 1931, he wrote a letter to the poet Max Jacob (1876-1944), requesting permission to use some of Jacob's poetry for a projected cantata.¹ Earlier in 1931, Poulenc had composed five songs to the poetry of Max Jacob, and now he was returning to that same poet for the composition of a secular cantata to be entitled Le Bal Masqué by Poulenc. The cantata will also be discussed in a later chapter with the *mélodies*, however, it, like Les Biches before, is germane because of the piano transcriptions that resulted from this vocal chamber work.²

Le Bal Masqué is scored for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, cornet, violin, violoncello, percussion, piano, and baritone (or mezzo soprano).³ The poetry was taken from a collection

1 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letter from Poulenc to Max Jacob dated December 11, 1931, p. 89.

2 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), pp. 94 and 104.

3 Idem, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 142; Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), pp. 42-43; Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1964), pp. 40-42.

called Laboratoire central (literally Central Laboratory); and the title, The Masked Ball, was Poulenc's own.⁴

From this one work, which Poulenc felt to be one of his most significant, and which was first performed April 20, 1932, at Hyères, the home of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles, to whom it is dedicated, came four transcriptions: the Première Bagatelle en ré mineur pour violon et piano, from Part IV; the Intermède en ré mineur pour piano, from Part II; the Caprice en ut majeur pour piano, from Part VI; and the Capriccio en ut majeur pour deux pianos, from Part VI.⁵ The first and the last of these transcriptions will be discussed in respective chapters devoted to the chamber music and the music for two pianos.

The Intermède was copyrighted in 1932, but the transcription does not carry the completion date on the score, as do so many of Poulenc's works. This intermezzo is completely instrumental in the cantata, Part II. The piano plays a prominent role as concertant throughout the cantata,

4 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 41; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 141; Francis Poulenc, Le Bal Masqué, Warren Galjour, baritone, Edvard Fendler, conducting (Everest: Counterpoint/Esotheric 5518).

5 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 104; Idem, Entretiens, p. 141; Francis Poulenc, "Première Bagatelle en ré mineur pour violon et piano, Intermède en ré mineur pour piano, and Caprice en ut majeur pour piano," from Le Bal Masqué (Paris: Salabert, c1932), pp. 1-7, 1-5, 1-11, respectively as published separately; Idem, "Capriccio en ut majeur pour deux pianos," from Le Bal Masqué (Paris: Salabert, c1953), p. 20. All were originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. See also Francis Poulenc, Le Bal Masqué, Piano-Vocal score (Paris: Salabert, c1932), pp. 14-18, 24-28, and 34-46.

and the composer was the pianist in the first performance.⁶ It would probably serve the composer better to always refer to this work by its French title rather than translating the word to intermezzo; because Poulenc did, indeed, write Intermezzos, using the Italian name and even numbering the initial work as the first.

The rehearsal numbers from the original score are maintained here. There are several measures between the end of the first part and the beginning of the transcription, which are basically the same materials repeated on different pitch levels, i.e., C major (meas. 11-30, including modulation), a minor (meas. 30-48, a variant including modulation), and D major (meas. 48-54, including modulation back to C). The beginning material returns (meas. 55), having gone to three staves to notate; it is altered and includes material (meas. 74) which will be heard again at the introduction of Part IV.

The remainder of the composition is diatonic and triadic around a minor (meas. 90-105, including a move to d minor), and the close in d minor is on rather static harmonies (meas. 113-135). Because the piano plays such a prominent part in the original, this transcription is not a major achievement; in fact, in a letter to Paul Collaer dated October 1, 1932, Poulenc mentioned that the brilliance

6 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 142.

of the orchestration could not be gleaned from the reduction for two hands.⁷ Therefore, it could be assumed that the entire work existed as a piano version at some point.

The Caprice en ut majeur d'après le Finale du Bal Masqué pour piano was completed in Paris in May, 1932, shortly after the first performance (pp. 1-11). The finale is Part VI of the complete work. A large part of the original ending was instrumental with the voice entering for a closing section. The principal tune of the first section is very much like that of the music hall and even recalls Offenbach. The finale follows closely on the end of Part V, La dame aveugle (The Blind Lady). The form is a rather loose ABCA' D (Tango, at a slower tempo) E (the song at the opening tempo, Frénétique). As in the transcription of the Intermède, the piano simply takes over the parts of the other instruments, which in this clear texture of the chamber orchestra with voice is hardly impossible. Something is lost without the timbre of the baritone declaiming the French text of surrealistic poetry. The qualities of the original will be considered at the appropriate point in this study. Poulenc was, however, to return to this finale in 1952 for a two piano version of the same music.

Later in 1932, the Revue Musicale published several compositions in homage to Bach. Among them were serious efforts by Roussel, Casella, Malipiero, Honegger, and one

7 Poulenc, Correspondance, pp. 89-91.

from Poulenc. Poulenc's contribution, entitled Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach, dedicated to Vladimir Horowitz (b. 1904), and completed at Noizay, October 8, 1932, created a little scandal; and for a time Poulenc was not in fashion, so to speak. Some writers, Jean Roy, included, have made such statements as: "To tell the truth, it was rather an absurd idea to ask Poulenc to write a homage to J. S. Bach."⁸

Upon close examination, perhaps, it was not so absurd as it might seem. This Allegro vivace in the form of a 3/8 valse, is the last of Poulenc's compositions to use soggetto cavato. The first, on the name of Albert Roussel, (see Chapter III) was a very free, almost nonexistent use of this technique. However, on this occasion, each letter of the name Bach was used exactly, although the name improvisation in the title indicates that there was a free play with the "carved-out subject."

The subject is b-flat, down a semi-tone to a-natural, up a minor third to c-natural, and down another semi-tone to b-natural (b-natural in the German usage being h). Thus, a cluster of pitches is produced if played simultaneously, which a contemporary composer might do!

Poulenc began with the subject and even printed the letters in the score. The first 8 measures present the

⁸ Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 42-43; Francis Poulenc, Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach (Paris: Salabert, c1933), pp. 1-5.

name twice, the next 8 measures are on the letters BA, and at measures 17-18 the CH letters are added, but the interval has been expanded to a ninth. The b-natural moves up a diminished third to d-flat before returning to c (meas. 18-19). This touch of the Neapolitan sound is a preview of the move away from the tonic C to the key of D-flat major (meas. 47). However, before measure 47, both HC and CH (meas. 21-22, and 29-30, respectively) are heard again in the original semi-tone relationship.

The d-flat becomes, enharmonically, c-sharp (meas. 49), and the entire variant that was begun at measure 47 is given on the subject, transposed, on d-sharp, c-double-sharp, e-natural, and d-sharp (meas. 65-67 and 69-71, respectively). Measures 75-77 return the letters C, H (a ninth below), and the d-flat (diminished third above), and c-natural. The subject is then given in retrograde (meas. 83-93) twice -- again being spelled out on the score.

Another variant on the subject appears (meas. 99), this time on f and in inversion: f-natural, up a semi-tone to g-flat, down a major third (in sound) to d-natural, and up a semi-tone to e-flat. This is repeated again (meas. 107-109). This variant occurs again (meas. 119-121), this time on g-sharp. Then the bass begins a pattern of semi-tones in the range of a minor third (meas. 125-150). These measures are really a development of the thematic material and undergo rhythmic changes.

The closing octaves (meas. 151-161) begin with the

subject. The work ends with a single b-flat, followed by the other three pitches sounding simultaneously (meas. 164-165) and then an uncluttered e minor sound (Example 9).

Example 9. Poulenc, Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach, meas. 159-166

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This Valse should be heard more, and far from being the impertinent kind of a piece as described by its critics, it actually shows as much or more thought on Poulenc's part to thematic and intervallic manipulation of a kind not generally associated with his oeuvre. This close examination would seem to give it a place of greater importance than either of his biographers or the composer would allow it. True, it is no masterpiece, but neither is it so totally insignificant as they would lead us to believe.

Improvisations I

Poulenc ended the year 1932, at his home in the Touraine, Noizay, by completing the first six of his fifteen Improvisations for the piano. These first six, completed in December, 1932, were published as collection one. They will be discussed together; however, collection two, numbers 7-12, were composed over the years 1933-1941, and not in

chronological order, nor published together until 1945.⁹ The remaining three were published separately. Numbers 7-15 will be discussed as they were composed, and as will be seen, they were not composed nor published in the order of final publication.

"I love very much my two collections of Improvisations," said Francis Poulenc.¹⁰ It might be well to quote another pianist-composer on the writing of short piano pieces. Sergei Rakmaninov (1873-1943) said:

. . . A small piece can become as lasting a masterpiece as a large work. As a matter of fact, I have always found that a short piece for the piano has always given me much more pain, and has presented more problems than a symphony or a concerto. . . . when I write a small piece for the piano I am at the mercy of my thematic idea, which must be presented concisely, and without digression. . . . Every small piece I have produced is the result of great care and hard work. . . . To say what you have to say and to say it briefly, lucidly, and without circumlocution, is still the most difficult problem facing the creative artist. 11

The Première Improvisation en si mineur, marked presto ritmico, in 4/4, begins with a whirlwind of running sixteenth-notes outlining a chord (pp. 1-4). The middle section is more sustained, touching on the keys of f-sharp minor/major. The first pattern returns to give an ABA' with

9 Francis Poulenc, Improvisations: Premier et Deuxième recueil des six (Paris: Salabert, c1933 and 1945), pp. 1-23 and 1-22, respectively.

10 Idem, Entretiens, p. 35.

11 Anonymous, jacket notes for Poulenc, Twelve Improvisations (Lyrichord LL 61); William W. Austin, Music in the 20th Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 68. Austin says that the quote is from an interview with David Ewen in 1941.

a closing arpeggio in b minor that contains only chord tones. Each Improvisation is dedicated to a different person. The first is dedicated to Mme Long de Marliave.

Although marked assez animé, in 3/4, the Deuxième Improvisation en la b majeur is much more sustained throughout (pp. 5-7). The parallel intervals in both hands, marked doux et clair (soft and clear) open the work. The contrast is not great, and A-flat major returns almost unnoticed, except for the variation of the line from the opening. The Improvisation ends quietly on an augmented-tonic-seven-chord.

The Troisième Improvisation en si mineur is dedicated to Poulenc's niece, Brigitte Manceaux (pp. 8-11). Although marked presto très sec in 2/2, the dryness ends after 6 measures, and a lovely, legato line begins. Poulenc had been entertaining Prokofiev during this time and perhaps this was another "little corner" of the Russian's influence?¹² The general character is more like a caprice, although certainly improvisation is not too far removed. This ABA' is very pianistic, and like the rest of the Improvisations in the two collections had been recorded.

Very étude-like, the Quatrième Improvisation en la b majeur, requires three staves to notate (pp. 12-16). The Debussy Préludes, especially the notation, continued to stay

¹² Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 165. Prokofiev had been at Noizay for a week-end in June, 1932.

with Poulenc. Interestingly enough, the A-flat major is in the title, but this presto con fuoco in 4/4, has no key signature. With its alternating and repeated chords in both hands, its rapid passage work of an unusually chromatic texture, its very swiftly moving melody, the work is difficult for the listener to grasp unless the pianist tries very hard for melodic clarity (Example 10). The pattern continues throughout, and the marking très précis, should discourage any pianist with a tendency toward rubato.

Example 10. Poulenc, Quatrième Improvisation en la b majeur, meas. 1-2

The musical score for Example 10 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major). The time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking is 'Presto con fuoco' with a quarter note equal to 132. The first measure is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The second measure is marked 'très précis'. The music is highly chromatic and technically demanding.

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The Cinquième Improvisation en la mineur is dedicated to Poulenc's old friend and fellow-member of Les Six, Georges Auric (pp. 17-19). Using the same basic material of a lyric nature and marked a reasonable modéré, Poulenc moves very much within the parallel modes of the key of A. Only 23 measures long, this quiet, somewhat chromatically tinged work ends with a gentle picardy third.

The first collection concludes with the Sixième Improvisation en si b majeur, marked a toute vitesse, and dedicated to another childhood friend and fellow pianist,

Jacques Février (pp. 20-23). Very dry in sound, the character here is a fast march on a dotted rhythm. In 4 measure phrases, the opening returns (meas. 17) for 8 more measures to lead to a middle section consisting of a lyric melody brought out over a dry, detached harmony (meas. 25). A 4 measure phrase of the opening dotted rhythm returns (meas. 34) to introduce a section in C major (meas. 48-61). The opening figure has begun to take on the appearance of a refrain. B-flat major returns (meas. 62) according to the key signature although the key is really E-flat major. The Improvisation ends in E-flat major. The key of each of the six pieces is printed on the title pages; however, the key in which the composition concludes is not necessarily that of the beginning nor the printed key. And although entitled Improvisations, the speed and technical demands on the performer would verge more on the boundaries of very lyric études. Finally, this last Improvisation of the first collection, may well have come from material not used completely in the third movement of the Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre of 1932.¹³

Jeux d'enfants I

Early in 1933, Poulenc had written incidental music

¹³ Compare meas. 9-10 of the Sixième Improvisation with meas. 44-45 of the third movement of the Concerto pour deux pianos. Also compare the entire Improvisation with pp. 34-42 of the same movement, Two piano score (Paris: Salabert, c1933).

for Jean Giraudoux's play Intermezzo.¹⁴ From this music, he transcribed for piano solo six short pieces for children (petites pièces enfantines) under the title Villageoises.¹⁵ When he used the term "children," he must have had tongue in cheek, for their simplicity is highly sophisticated. The collection is dedicated to Giraudoux and Louis Jouvet, and was completed at Montmartre in February, 1933.

The first piece, Valse Tyrolienne, in which Roy sees an echo of Satie's Tyrolienne turque (pp. 2-3).¹⁶ The form is an ABA' in 16 measure periods, moving from the tonic D major to the dominant A major for the middle section, and with the last 4 measures of the last period, altered for the ending cadence. Marked, gai, in 3/4, the bass is very repetitive, with mostly tonic-dominant-tonic, etc. There is a lilting melodic line, with persistent rhythmic patterns in both hands.

Number two, Staccato, in g minor with a picardy third at the conclusion and an insistent bass pattern of e-flat-b-flat, with an occasional a-flat, has a 16 measure period, an 8 measure middle section, and a 16 measure period slightly varied from the first time, plus a 5 measure coda on both the aforementioned bass and the persistent rhythm of the

14 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 48n.

15 Francis Poulenc, Villageoises: Petites Pièces Enfantines (Paris: Salabert, c1933), pp. 2-11.

16 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 87. From Satie's Croquis et agaceries d'un bon homme en bois (Sketches and Enticements of a Fat Wooden Man), number 1 of 3 pieces.

right hand, an eighth-and-two-sixteenths in 2/4 (pp. 4-5). As the name implies, except for the middle section, the entire piece is very dry and detached.

Rustique is only 20 measures long, in B-flat major and a middle section in A-flat major (pp. 6-7). On the return of A (an ABA'), the line is an octave higher (meas. 12) with an alteration in the last 2 measures to bring the composition to a close. The piece is very rhythmic and very "happy."

All six of the compositions are brief, but numbers four and five are only 28 and 22 measures long, respectively. Number four is a Polka in E-flat and very much linked to the dance (p. 8). This is an ABA' with coda. The middle section is briefly in B-flat major.

The Petite Ronde in D major, number five, begins with 7 measures of just right hand alone. The middle section (meas. 8) of 8 measures on pedal a-naturals, continues the single line melody much like the opening section except that c is natural and b is flat. This gives a modal sound. With the final on A and a c-natural, there is a Dorian quality. However, the b-flat gives a touch of the Phrygian also. The opening section returns in parallel octaves (meas. 16), but is varied at the conclusion to include both c-natural and b-flat. With f-sharp not being heard for some measures, the sound is Phrygian on A.

The concluding composition is simply called Coda, incorporating materials heard previously and back to D major (pp. 10-11). The first 27 measures are taken from number

one, Valse Tyrolienne. A 7 measure transition based on the Valse, but in augmentation, leads to a subito presto in D major (meas. 35) for 12 measures, taken from number two, Staccato, transposed. This is followed by 8 measures of Rustique (meas. 47-54), number three, and finally, a coda of 4 measures without ritard. Poulenc does not clutter the closing chords in any of these pieces with nonharmonic tones. They are all for the most part ABA' with coda. Beguiling simplicity is the key word. Their charm is akin to those teaching pieces (and a welcome addition) for children by Prokofiev and Dimitri Kabalevsky (b. 1904). 17

A Chabrier Title

Another collection from the year 1933, was Feuillets d'Album (Album Leaves), which contains an Ariette, Rêve, and Gigue.¹⁸ Claude Rostand considered that not only was the title a just one, but also that the whole was one of Poulenc's most unified.¹⁹ Henri Hell felt that it was one of the last of Poulenc's youthful works and had a likeness to Les Biches.²⁰ These august gentlemen may be correct;

17 Compare: Prokofiev, Music for Children, Op. 65, and Kabalevsky, 15 Children's Pieces, Op. 27, Bk. 1; 10 Children's Pieces, Op. 27, Bk. 2; 24 Little Pieces, Op. 39; and 4 Little Pieces, Op. 14.

18 Francis Poulenc, Feuillets d'Album (Paris: Salabert, c1933), pp. 1-9.

19 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 87. Quotes Rostand.

20 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 44. Hell says that Poulenc was about to enter a new phase, meaning into choral music. In all fairness, however, the Lockspeiser translation is an abridgment of over 100 pages from the original French text.

however, both Roy and Hell lumped Poulenc's piano solo compositions into the now published versions; and they both move, in their respective biographies, to the Poulenc of the choral and sacred music from 1935-1936 onward. The fact that Poulenc wrote no less than a dozen compositions for solo piano in 1934 alone, seems of little import.

The opening Ariette, dedicated to Yvonne Martin, begins with a short imitation at the octave which is repeated twice and serves as an introduction and ending, although the last return (meas. 24-25) is at the ninth. The introduction is followed by a wavering rhythmic figure for 6 measures (meas. 10-15) in g minor. The home key of G major brings forth a short, but lyric melody (meas. 16), which rises to d''', and then sinks first chromatically, then diatonically to what would have been an augmented-sixth-chord on E-flat, except the chord contains no third (meas. 22), and does not resolve to the dominant of G major, until three-and-one-half beats later (meas. 23). The closing cadence (meas. 26) suspends a g-natural over a minor dominant-seventh chord before resolving to the tonic G.

The Rêve (Dream) is a lyric nocturne for all purposes (pp. 4-6). Marked Allegretto, in essentially e minor, repeated chords or intervals dominate the left hand while the right hand has a wide ranging, single line melody with many chromatically altered tones forming a tracery of figures. There is some repetition of line (meas. 9-11 and

and 17-19, respectively), although even this is slightly varied the second time. The closing 3 measures naturalize the second degree *f* to give a Phrygian sound at the close.

Dedicated to Marcelle Meyer, the pianist who played so many contemporary works and friend of Poulenc, the Gigue is a flashing, brilliant prestissimo in a 6/8 B-flat major (pp. 7-9). The left hand, marked léger, incisif et sans pédale (light, incisive, and without pedal), fairly skips along for the first 8 measures. Measures 9-12 are parallel chords with fourths in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, making a series of mainly seventh chords, with the thirds or fifths missing (Example 11). Each measure also

Example 11. Poulenc, Feuilletts d'Album "Gigue," meas. 8-12



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contains one or more chords with a cross relationship as well as the progression of the chords themselves adds to the dissonant quality of the passage.

The opening figure returns (meas. 15) and comes to a full cadence in B-flat major (meas. 18). The 11 measure

middle section is based upon the first. For a third time the opening idea returns (meas. 30) up a fifth and leads to a series of legato chords (meas. 36) of a rather chorale-like nature in the right hand and a very detached ostinato in the left hand. The left hand ostinato continues (meas. 36-49), while the last chord in the right hand (meas. 48) is allowed 4 measures of decay. A quiet rise in a 9/8 measure of leading-tone-tonic-and-subdominant, lead to the closing 2 measures of 6/8 in B-flat major.

Perhaps these would make good teaching pieces for a change in repertoire, but the Rêve might prevent pianists from being interested in playing the entire set of three.

Improvisations II

The year 1933, ended with the beginning of a second collection of compositions entitled Improvisations, which would be published in 1945, because the composition of these works was spread over the years 1933-1941.²¹ Poulenc also returned to the Nocturnes at the end of 1933 and would do so until their completion in 1938. The Nocturnes, however, did get into publication before the Second World War began, which undoubtedly prevented the Improvisations from reaching the public until 1945.

The Septième Improvisation in ut majeur, dedicated to

²¹ Francis Poulenc, Improvisations: Deuxième recueil des six (Paris: Salabert, c1934, 1945), pp. 1-22. See page 75 also.

the Comtesse A. J. de Noailles, and completed at Noizay in November, 1933, has a melody of great beauty that gives it a kinship with the first Novelette and the first Nocturne in the same key. At the climax of this Improvisation (meas. 28-30), there is a touching homage to the Ravel of Daphnis et Chloé (Example 12). This Improvisation supports Milhaud's

Example 12. Poulenc, Septième Improvisation en ut majeur, meas. 27-30

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comment "of a clean and lean art."²² The form is an ABA³ with coda. The middle section in D-flat major, begins like the opening then deviates and builds to the climax of triple forte for the reference to Ravel already mentioned. The return is varied with the ending containing a lowered sixth, the dominant of the middle D-flat major, and the closing cadence containing the flatted seventh, the blue note.

²² Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 32-33. Milhaud quoted also Vincent d'Indy, which translates, "the music of France will become what the next composer of genius wants her to be." Milhaud was inclined to think that it might be Poulenc.

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1933, Poulenc finished his Deuxième Nocturne en la majeur: Bal de jeunes filles (Dance of the Young Girls).²³ This 4/4, très animé, does contain the spirit of the dance and not the spirit that is usually associated with the genre of the nocturnes. The melodic line is consistently a dotted eighth and a sixteenth with a rather jagged contour. A full cadence on the tonic (meas. 13), leads to the second section which maintains the rhythm of the opening melody, but fills in the rests in the left hand with repeated intervals. Briefly (meas. 21), the left hand joins the right hand in the dotted rhythm in D-flat (enharmonic third of A). The return of the first section is abbreviated (by now a continuing trait of Poulenc). There is a short tenuto (meas. 27), then très lent to end with a minor third in the chord. In the French edition of Chopin's Nocturne No. 9 in B, Op. 32, No. 1, it also ends in b minor, as does Schubert's Impromptu in E-flat, D. 899, end in the minor. Poulenc undoubtedly knew both works from his mother's musical preferences, as well as his own. This Nocturne has also been recorded.²⁴

1934 will see the composition of more Improvisations, and Nocturnes, two Intermezzos, a Presto, a Badinage, and a Humoresque for solo piano as well as more songs, a tour of

23 Francis Poulenc, Nocturnes pour piano (Paris: Heugel, c1934), pp. 6-8.

24 Francis Poulenc, "Nocturne No. 2 in A," in Piano Music of Francis Poulenc, Gabriel Tacchino, piano, jacket notes by Robert T. Jones (Angel S-36602), side 2, band 3.

North Africa with Maria Modrakowska in March, 1934, and the increased desire to augment the income from his inheritance by teaming with a co-partner, preferably a singer for concerts.²⁵ The pattern for practically the remainder of Poulenc's life will be now set, and in that pattern, he carved a new niche for the composer-performer. There is no precedent for the role he created or followed. He did, indeed, create a new role for the composer.

²⁵ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 89. This period immediately precedes that of his final teaming with Pierre Bernac for joint recitals spanning the next twenty-five years.

CHAPTER V

1934-1935: CONTINUATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Poulenc may have had the Huitième Improvisation in his mind or at least partially completed; however, the Neuvième Improvisation en ré majeur was completed in January, 1934, at his country home in the Touraine, Noizay, and it was not until May of the same year that he completed number eight.

Number nine is a presto possible (très sec et très net, very dry and very clean).¹ It is tumultuous and agitated from the opening measure and could, perhaps, be seen as a distant relative of some of the Chopin Préludes, Op. 28, e. g., the f-sharp minor of the b-flat minor. Poulenc's first biographer, Henri Hell, justly said that Poulenc was not overly concerned with structure, and that these are true improvisations.² That may be true, but case in point, number nine, although seemingly very loosely constructed, has several Poulenc fingerprints that point to a carefully thought out construction.

The form is an A of 26 measures with a full cadence in

¹ Francis Poulenc, Improvisations: Deuxième recueil des six (Paris: Salabert, c1934 and 1945), pp. 1-22. The Neuvième Improvisation, pp. 9-12.

² Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 44.

D major. The B section is a new lyric idea which moves away from D but does return to the dominant of section A (meas. 27-44). The pick-up to measure 45 appears to be a return to A, but it only lasts for 5 measures (meas. 45-50 equal 20-26, a rhythmic change accounts for the extra measure). Instead of the return, a closing C section with a coda follows (meas. 51-65 and 66-71, respectively). This use of a fragment of one section to lead into another, is becoming quite typical of Poulenc, and it is to be doubted that his construction was as "improvised" as it might seem.

The Troisième Nocturne en fa majeur: Les cloches de Malines (The Bells of Malines) is not dated, however, since the Quatrième Nocturne is, perhaps this did, indeed, come between the January date of the above discussed Improvisation and the Quatrième Nocturne of March, 1934.³

The Troisième Nocturne, dedicated to the Belgium musicologist, Paul Collaer, marked modéré mais sans lenteur (moderately but without slowness), written in Malines, has a persistent rhythm and pitches in the two outer sections. The b-naturals of the first 25 measures give a Lydian sound. The melodic line is very straightforward, diatonic, and ends the first section not with sound, but with a measure of silence.

³ Francis Poulenc, "Troisième Nocturne," in Nocturnes pour piano (Paris: Heugel, c1934), pp. 9-11. The complete edition was identified in an earlier chapter.

The middle section changes tempo, agit  et myst rieux (agitated and mysterious) and the meter becomes 3/8 in place of the initial 3/4. The unusual sound of the middle section, which like the first is set off by measures of silence, is achieved by acciaccaturas to each chord (meas. 43-67). The pauses come on a b-flat-diminished-triad (meas. 48), a French Sixth (augmented-sixth-chord) on e-flat (meas. 59), and a f-sharp-major-triad (meas. 66).

The return of the first section is abbreviated and altered; the meter signature remains 3/4 without the changes to 4/4 as in the first section; thus the form is an ABA'. The closing cadence is to the minor-three chord, iii, (meas. 97-98). This relationship recalls the Chopin, Ballade No. 2, Op. 38, the so-called F major-a minor ballade.

The Quatri me Nocturne en ut mineur: Bal fant me, completed in Rome, March, 1934, carries a quotation from Le Visionnaire by Julien Green to whom the work is also dedicated:

Not a note of the Waltzes or Schottisches was lost throughout the house, so that the sick person was able to take part in the rejoicings, dreaming on his bed of the unhappy years of his youth. 4

While the Nocturne, marked lent, tr s las et piano (slow, very weary and soft), recalls the Chopin Pr lude In A

4 Francis Poulenc, "Quatri me Nocturne," in Nocturnes pour piano (Paris: Heugel, c1934), p. 12; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 43-44. These pages contain not only the translation of the quote, but also have a cursory appraisal of all the Nocturnes.

Major, Op. 28, No. 7, Chopin of the Nocturnes is also evoked. Although Poulenc has indicated in the full title that the key is c minor, there is no key signature, and this ABA' ends in C major after 36 brief measures.

Intermezzo I

The next composition for the piano was Poulenc's Premier Intermezzo en ut majeur, dedicated to Doctor Raymond Mallet, and completed in Paris in March, 1934.⁵ Poulenc told Claude Rostand in their eighth conversation that in March, 1934, he made a tour of North Africa with Maria Modrakowska.⁶ If Poulenc were at Noizay in January (the Ninth Improvisation), wrote the Fourth Nocturne in Rome in March, and then the First Intermezzo in Paris in March, perhaps, the Third and Fourth Nocturnes were written either going, during, or returning from that tour, and this Intermezzo, although perhaps sketched, was completed upon his return to Paris in say, late March?

The title, first, may be because Poulenc wanted to distinguish this work from the previous transcription of the Intermede from the Bal Masqué or the going and coming through Italy changed the languages? In any event, this was the only Intermezzo marked presto con fuoco, the

5 Francis Poulenc, Premier Intermezzo en ut majeur (Paris: Salabert, c1934), pp. 1-4.

6 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 89

remaining two being slower. In an earlier day, the title would probably have been Capriccio; however, the tempo does not prevent the melodic nature of Poulenc from coming to the fore, even as Brahms' Capriccio in f-sharp minor, Op. 76, No. 1, is both swift and melodic.

There are two basic ideas here: the first (meas. 1-17) mostly staccato and alternating-notes; the second (meas. 18-38) of a more lyric, but somewhat chromatic character. Measures 29-38 equal 18-28 with an octave transposition and a modulation to A-flat major (meas. 38). The first idea returns, combined with lyric suggestions of the second (meas. 39-46) and another modulation to D-flat major for a repeat of the second idea (meas. 47-56). This leads to the fortissimo climax of the composition as well as a modulation back to the home key of C major for a final statement of the chromatic idea (meas. 57), and a coda built on parallel motion in both hands of the first staccato idea, now made legato (meas. 60-68). The work ends quietly in C. There is no sadness, no tinge of melancholy, just a joyous, energetic, buoyant, rapid-fire, exciting work with plenty of bright melody. This unfortunately seems to be the least played of the three intermezzos.

The Cinquième Nocturne en ré mineur: Phalènes (Moths) is not dated (pp. 14-16). However, since the sixth is dated May, and the fourth is dated March, perhaps, the fifth was completed in April, 1934? This presto misterioso, which

Jean Roy likens to the innovations in the accompaniments of the songs, has some structural characteristics like those of the preceding Intermezzo.⁷ There are again two basic ideas: one detached, dry, and rhythmic (meas. 1-16), and a second essentially lyric, at the same tempo but carrying some rhythmic qualities of the first (meas. 17-34). The ideas are combined (meas. 35-55) for the closing section and although Poulenc says d minor, the closing chord is a b-flat-seven-chord, which also incorporates a d minor triad, but the a-natural changes to a-flat at the last moment (meas. 55). It is becoming clear that after the Premier Nocturne, those following are programmatic from the standpoint of alluding to the activities and creatures of the night. Also, Poulenc was obviously familiar with Ravel's Miroirs of 1904-1905, especially Noctuelles (Night Moths).⁸ Here the Moths busily flutter in 3/2 around the intriguing lights of clashing dissonances of sevenths and seconds.

When observed in their respective collections, the Nocturnes and Improvisations would not have the obvious connective characteristics and structural affinities as when observed in successive proximity of their real order of composition.

The Huitième Improvisation en la mineur, dedicated to

7 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), pp. 86-87.

8 Arbie Orenstein, Ravel: Man and Musician (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 159.

Georges Auric's wife, Nora, and completed at Noizay in May, 1934, is a case in point (pp. 5-8). It is out of chronological order, the ninth being completed in January, 1934. The initial musical idea has the same chromatic cast and rhythm as the second idea in the Intermezzo in C of March, 1934, and the structure of presenting ideas separately and then combining them or fragmenting them in close proximity as evidenced in both the Intermezzo and the Cinquième Nocturne is also here. This 2/4 presto, which also carries the instructions très sec et ironique (very dry and ironic), is a puckish caprice, elegantly designed for the piano, its last page containing a haunting wisp of a popular-style melody that is cut off before it has a chance to really assert itself. The interpretative instructions remind us of Prokofiev. The rhythmic patterns persist until measure 56, when the above mentioned melody tries for longevity and loses. The work ends pianissimo with a picardy third.

Also completed at Noizay in May, 1934, was the Sixième Nocturne en sol majeur (pp. 17-19). Although marked très calme mais sans traîner (very calm but without dragging), this Nocturne has a surging and restless quality for a night picture. In fact, this could easily have been an improvisation. The opening idea is an octave melody to the accompaniment of parallel arpeggios in both hands. The texture thickens (meas. 12), but the melody line always remains all important. This Nocturne is very carefully marked as to the

metronomic increases of speed. The opening is 56 to a quarter-note; measure 12 is 60 to a quarter-note; and measure 18 is 66 to a quarter-note. In addition, measure 34 begins an *accelerando* that climaxes fortissimo (meas. 40). The transition back to the opening idea (meas. 45) uses material from measure 12. The tempo of the beginning returns (meas. 64), and the work ends quietly in the minor (see the ending of the second nocturne). Poulenc did not return to the Nocturnes until 1935.

The next composition, a Presto en si b majeur, was completed in July, 1934, at Le Tremblay.⁹ In 1936, Poulenc wrote a letter from the Château du Tremblay, Neubourg-par-Evreux (Eure), the home of his brother-in-law.¹⁰ This presto possible is aptly dedicated to Vladimir Horowitz. Poulenc indicates very dry and very light (très sec et très léger). The opening 6 measures are on a B-flat pedal. The right-hand figuration on continuous sixteenths, outlines a full triad of four notes and also turns back at times on the last note to lead to the next group of four sixteenths. All is staccato for the first 6 measures, but the temptation to get in a melodic line is just too much. Beginning with measure 7, Poulenc starts using accent marks, and then by measure 9, he has double stemmed to give the line greater

9 Francis Poulenc, Presto en si b majeur pour piano (Paris: R. Deiss, c1934; Salabert, c1975), pp. 1-4.

10 Idem, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), letter from Poulenc to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac dated 1936, p. 95.

direction and length of sound. This race continues for 20 measures to a full cadence in B-flat major. The tempo remains the same; the key signature changes to no sharps or flats; and a legato line begins (meas. 21-32). The retransition, based upon the opening material with hints of the second idea (meas. 33-42), returns to the opening idea for an abbreviated version, a 6 measure coda (meas. 57-62) of parallel sixteenths for 4 measures, and soft chords ending quietly in B-flat major with no nonharmonic tones. This work has been recorded.¹¹ Poulenc has played upon the recognized strong points of an international performing artist with a peerless reputation for the ultimate in virtuosity, including speed, brilliance, and excitement.

Intermezzo II

Poulenc went to Kerbastic, Guidel (Morbihan) in August, 1934, and there completed the Deuxième Intermezzo en ré b majeur, which he dedicated to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac to whom he always referred as his "cher Marie-Blanche."¹² Marked assez modéré mais sans lenteur (moderately enough but without dragging), Poulenc also instructed that the left hand melody be played as gently brought out (doucement en

¹¹ Francis Poulenc, "Presto," in Piano Music of Francis Poulenc, Gabriel Tacchino, piano (Angel S-36602), side 2, band 5.

¹² Idem, Deuxième Intermezzo en ré b majeur (Paris: Salabert, c1934), pp. 1-4; Idem, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to "Marie-Blanche" dated May 1, 1936, p. 96.

dehors). This beautiful, lyric melody, played in part with the thumb of the left hand, really is around b-flat minor rather than D-flat major (Example 13). After a 16 measure period, the melody returns in the right hand and up an octave (meas. 17) with a gentle embellishment. This variant

Example 13. Poulenc, "Intermezzo en ré b majeur," meas. 1-8

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pp

le chant doucement en dehors

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leads to the middle section where f-flat and d-flat are changed to e-natural and c-sharp for the key of A, although there is no key signature.

The middle section (meas. 25-54) uses all the patterns and left hand work from the first idea, and the entire material is basically derived from the opening theme. A long building to the climax of the piece begins at measure 36 in the left hand with many enharmonic changes but rising to a fortissimo (meas. 49) and then subsiding to a whisper (meas.

54). The retransition back to the opening in D-flat again, is interesting for its hovering, breathy effect, with a semi-tone movement in the right hand in octaves between the dominant (a-flat), and the lowered sixth step (b-double-flat) (meas. 55-61). The return is abbreviated, and the work ends triple piano.

In his conversations with Claude Rostand, Poulenc mentions his love for the last Intermezzo in A-flat (1943), not numbered as three, but there is no mention of the previous two.¹³ However, during one of his moody, melancholy days, he wrote a letter to his beloved "Marie-Blanche" to whom the Intermezzo was dedicated, in 1936, in which he added the following postscript: "I play all the time the Intermezzo, which makes me cry."¹⁴ Apparently, he did have some greater feeling for the work than he wanted to admit later. The work was later recorded by their mutual friend Arthur Rubinstein, who also knew the Comtesse's Aunt, the Princess Edmond de Polignac, née Singer.¹⁵

Poulenc returned to Paris in September, 1934, and completed the Dixième Improvisation en fa majeur: Eloge des Gammes (In Praise of Scales, pp. 13-16). The work is dedicated to Jacques Lerolle of the publishing company Rouart-

13 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35.

14 Idem, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to the Comtesse de Polignac dated August 15, 1936, pp. 97-99.

15 Francis Poulenc, "Intermezzo No. 2 in D-flat," in A French Program, Artur Rubinstein, piano (RCA LSC-2751), side 2, band 4.

Lerolle, who first published the Improvisations before the later firm of Salabert. Here Poulenc pays his respects to the "art" of scales (not without an idea or two of his own). The result is rewarding for scales by Poulenc inevitably become melodies. Perhaps Poulenc was evoking the image of a child practicing scales? However, the image is soon dispelled, and the listener is forced to exclaim, "What a sophisticated child, and what sophisticated scales!"¹⁶ The various scale patterns are: (1) chromatic (meas. 1); (2) g minor, harmonic form with double leading tones (meas. 3); (3) d minor, pure form (meas. 4); (4) f minor combined with the chromatic (meas. 5); and (5) c minor, harmonic form (meas. 6), etc. (Example 14). The middle section is very

Example 14. Poulenc, Dixième Improvisation en fa majeur, meas. 1-4

Modéré, sans tréner $\text{♩} = 120$

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¹⁶ Francis Poulenc, 12 Improvisations, jacket notes anonymous, Elly Kassman, piano (Lyrichord LL 61), side 2.

lyric (meas 15-31). The abbreviated return of A contains the opening chromatic (meas. 32), a fragment of the middle section (meas. 33-35), and two B-flat scales, one minor (meas. 36) and one major (meas. 37). The scale tribute or tribulation, which ever, ends quietly on a tonic-major-seven-chord.

Back in his country home in the Touraine, Noizay, Poulenc completed in December, 1934, his one work for solo piano entitled Badinage (Banter).¹⁷ The work bears a quotation from Raymond Radiguet, who died tragically young, 20, of typhoid fever in December, 1923.¹⁸ The quote which prefaces the work, which is also dedicated to Radiguet, is:

In the glasses cool the orangeade
One night in August
No importance which. 19

The title may be Banter, but Poulenc was quite disturbed, as was Milhaud, over this young man's death.²⁰ Therefore, the banter merely hides much deeper sentiments.

The opening figure of 11 measures never returns. It is musically like an introduction, a banter, but there could

17 Francis Poulenc, Badinage pour piano (Paris: Salabert, c1935), pp. 1-3.

18 Poulenc, Correspondance, telegram from Milhaud to Poulenc dated December 12, 1923, p. 53.

19 Poulenc, Badinage, p. 1. Radiguet was considered a Homme de lettres even at his young age. See the funeral invitation on p. 54 of the Correspondance.

20 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Milhaud to Poulenc dated 1923, pp. 54-55; letter from M. Radiguet to Poulenc dated December 15, 1923, p. 55; letter from M. Radiguet to Poulenc dated November 24, 1924, p. 63.

also be deeper meanings in this case to "something that never returns." A lovely descending figure begins in the right hand of measure 12. It is repeated chordally, and then turns on itself and begins to rise (meas. 19). The drooping three note figure is not unlike an extension of the melodic sigh of the middle and later eighteenth century, especially the Pre-Classical, K. P. E. Bach. After rising to a third higher than its beginning, the three note figure turns downward again (meas. 37), and as it slows down, rises slightly (meas. 44-47) to end quietly in G major. This is a lovely, lyric work that could, indeed, harbor greater depths than show in the surface shallows.

The Humoresque pour piano, dedicated to the German pianist, Walter Giesecking (1895-1956), is not dated.²¹ Both Henri Hell and Jean Roy list the work as composed in 1934.²² While going along with their lists, the copyright of 1936, does give pause, because except for the wars or short pieces being held for possible publication in collections, Poulenc seldom waited to have a composition published.

The vibrant brilliance of the two main themes, insouciant, but charged with grace and spirit, bear witness to the mauvais garcon aspect of Poulenc's works. The first idea

21 Francis Poulenc, Humoresque pour piano (Paris: Salabert, c1936), pp. 1-4.

22 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 101; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 167; Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., edited by Bruce Bohle, 1975), p. 1710.

lasts 14 measures and then starts a repeat in the same key, however, this is quickly altered, and the melodic transition idea modulates to a brief 4 measure statement of the opening in F (meas. 29-32). Another connecting link in f minor (meas. 33-40) makes use of a full blown, rhapsodic idea of sweeping proportions. The speed aids here. The idea is given in two registers (meas. 41 and 49, respectively), then just as quickly modulates back to the opening staccato idea (meas. 61), which after 4 measures races into the coda, which sweeps to the top of the keyboard and back. The conclusion is a simple gesture of dominant-seven to tonic in the tonic G major. Walter Giesecking was noted for his almost disdainful use of the sustaining pedal. This special quality of dryness could have given Poulenc his ideas for this composition. Being such an able executant himself, Poulenc would well recognize these points.

A Team Is Born

In the eighth conversation with Claude Rostand, Poulenc related, to Rostand's surprise, the need to earn money to augment his inheritance and the royalties from his music. M. Emile Poulenc had retired from the family business before the 1914 War, had died in 1917, and had not left his son in the ease which the world supposed. Poulenc bought his country home, Noizay, in 1927; and as he said, he did not like to live in a mediocre manner. Therefore, it

became imperative that he earn money and of the two solutions, music for films or concerts, Poulenc chose concerts, because he loved playing the piano. Thus, much of his time in 1934, was concerned with looking for a co-partner, preferably a singer. The eventual result, which lasted for twenty-five years, was the teaming with baritone, Pierre Bernac. They gave their first recital together as a team on April 3, 1935.²³ Although Poulenc did continue to write piano music, the amount became less and the lapses of time between compositions became greater. He turned to religious choral music, art songs, concert tours of the United States after the Second World War, and in the last few years, opera and chamber music for a single instrument and the piano.

Poulenc did, however, return to the Nocturnes in 1935, and in August completed the penultimate one, the Septième Nocturne en mi b majeur (By this time it will be observed that Poulenc did not use opus numbers.) (pp. 20-22). Marked assez allant (rather going), the first and last sections consist of mostly moving sixteenths. The melodic invention is not one of his inspired moments; however, measures 9-10, do contain material not unlike the kind that was used by Fauré in his Nocturnes.²⁴ The middle section, which is more lyric, moves rapidly through b-flat minor,

23 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 47; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 91.

24 Gabriel Fauré, "Nocturne in A-flat, Op. 33, No. 3," in Nocturnes (New York: International Music Corporation, c1957), pp. 20-25.

c minor, a minor, and b minor, where the d-natural becomes d-sharp to enharmonically return to E-flat major. The closing chord is a g-minor-seven, the minor three, iii, chord that Poulenc had used on other occasions, e.g., the Troisième Nocturne.

Poulenc was not to return and to complete the cycle of Nocturnes until 1938. The idea of a cycle seems to have occurred to him at that time, because the first seven were copyrighted in the year or the next year of composition and were published separately. An added point of interest is that even though he considered the last as serving as a coda to the cycle, Poulenc was not, apparently, opposed to the individual Nocturnes being excerpted and performed separately, because the composer, himself, recorded the Premier Nocturne without the others.²⁵

Another Transcription

The one remaining work for the piano in 1935, was the result of Poulenc transcribing for the piano, material that was originally for a chamber orchestra of winds, percussion, harpsichord (harp or piano), and written as incidental music for Edouard Bourdet's play La Reine Margot.²⁶ Poulenc took his inspiration for the score from the music of a sixteenth-

²⁵ Francis Poulenc, "Premier Nocturne," in Poulenc Plays Poulenc and Satie, Francis Poulenc, piano (Odyssey Y 33792), side 1, band 2.

²⁶ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 48.

century French composer Claude Gervaise (n.d.), whose six volumes of Daneries a 4 et 5 parties were published by Attaignant from about 1545 to 1556.²⁷ Poulenc entitled the piano version Suite française, which contains seven dances and was completed at Noizay in October, 1935. The piano version was dedicated to the playwright.²⁸

Poulenc arranged the music in a way that was unmistakably his own, but which still retained the flavor of the original model. The Suite in no sense represents a "recomposition" of another person's music, as in some of the works of Stravinsky.²⁹ Poulenc's transcriptions from Gervaise (Bransle de Bourgogne, Pavane, and Bransle de Champagne) are very liberal, but they remain transcriptions. The remainder of the score (Petite marche militaire, Complainte, Sicilienne, and Carillon), although entirely Poulenc, maintains a careful stylistic unity. The result is charming, if distinctly twentieth century, an evocation of a Renaissance atmosphere.³⁰

The branle (sic) was an independent popular dance in the sixteenth century. The branle double and branle simple were in duple meter (the former with phrases of 4 measures,

27 Article "Claude Gervaise," in Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians (5th edn., 1958), p. 554. But only 3 volumes remain; a selection of his dances is included in Vol. 23 (Daneries) of Les Maîtres Musiciens, edited by H. Expert (1908).

28 Francis Poulenc, Suite française pour piano, d'après Claude Gervaise (Paris: Durand, c1935), pp. 1-15.

29 See Punchinello and Le Baiser de la fée by Stravinsky.

30 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 97-98.

the latter of 3 measures).³¹ The first dance in Poulenc's Suite is a Bransle de Bourgogne, marked gai, mais sans hâte (gay, but without haste), in 2/4, and indeed, in 4 measure phrases (pp. 1-2). The phrase structure as set up in the first 20 measures is repeated three times during the course of the dance with only slight chromatic alterations or octave transposition up or down. The dance is 57 measures long, the exact symmetry not being maintained because of the omission of measures 13-16 on the second repeat.

The second dance, Pavane, marked grave et mélancolique (serious and melancholy), has one flat in the key signature, but the d minor is pure Aeolian mode (pp. 3-4). Two 8 measure periods, cadencing on d, form the first section. The second section is 8 + 10 (4 + 6) measures of contrast, cadencing on a. The first section and ideas return with the phrase structure expanded to 12 + 8 measures, concluding exactly as the first section, except that the final chord on d is clouded by an additional e-natural. The entire dance is in familiar style. Even though the middle section is around a, Poulenc carefully avoids b-flat melodically except at the close of the section, and then adds an c-sharp for a picardy third that rather negates the Phrygian sound.

The Petite marche militaire, interestingly enough,

³¹ Willi Apel, "Branle," in Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd edn., revised and enlarged (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 105.

carries a marking with a military meaning: mouvement de pas redoublé (tempo of double or quick time, pp. 5-6). The one flat in the key signature with a cadence on g gives a feeling of g Dorian, although the occasional e-flats toward the cadence, also gives a semblance of the pure form of g minor or the Aeolian mode. The phrase structure is basically in 6 measure phrases with the whole being:

A = 12 + 12 + 11 measures (aba'
 B = $7\frac{1}{2}$ + $7\frac{1}{2}$ + 8 measures (36-58)
 A' = 6 + 5 measures
 Coda = 2 measures.

The last two measures are for two G major chords (a picardy third, with an extra f-sharp twist in the penultimate measure).

The first 8 measures of number four, Complainte, are a single line melody for the right hand alone (p. 7). This calm and melancholy dance adds an additional 4 measures to the end of the first section (meas. 1-12), the return of which is avoided. The second section is a 4 + 3 measure phrase structure (the last measure being a 9/8 in an essentially 6/8 composition), and another 4 + 3 measures with the close being to the dominant. In the orchestral version, numbers four and five are played without pause and on one band of the side.³² Although Poulenc does not instruct, on the piano score, that number 5 be started immediately, there

³² Francis Poulenc, Suite Française, Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de Paris (Angel S-36519), side 2, band 6.

is doubtless less time lapse here than between the previous dances. Ending on the dominant, lends an additional feeling of pushing forward also.

Number five is a Bransle de Champagne: modéré, mais sans lenteur (moderately, but without slowness), in 4/4 (pp. 8-9). Again the one flat in the key signature, hovering around g, gives a Dorian sound, although Poulenc does end on d-natural octaves with an extraneous e-natural, the sound is not d minor. Poulenc's note to the performer is that the piece should be played in a very precise manner and to bring out on alternate repeats, different voice parts of the four-part texture (p. 8n). The phrase structure is unusual because of several extensions of the phrase by almost duplicating the pitches in different octaves. The phrases appear to be in groups of 2 measures each, making five phrases in the first 10 measures; however, in the larger picture, they are really 6 + 4, with 4 measures to close the section with a new octave bass line (meas. 1-14).

The middle section is two phrases of 5 + 5 measures, with endings around the dominant d. The first idea returns (meas. 25) with 1 measure extracted (5 + 4). From that point (meas. 34-43) to the conclusion, there is a variant on what went before at measures 15-20. However, measure 19 becomes 2 (meas. 39-40) by augmentation of the note values. And measure 20 (meas. 41) is prolonged for 3 measures for the closing open octave d-naturals. Like number four, the feeling is of a close on the dominant.

Back to C major for the first time since the opening dance, the Sicilienne, très doucement (very gently), in 6/8 with regular 4 measure phrases, is a lilting, quiet, diatonic melody of rather a haunting quality (pp. 10-11). The first section (meas. 1-12) is three 4 measure phrases cadencing on C. The middle section (meas. 12-20), is two 4 measure phrases that start toward B major, but come quickly around to the dominant G. The return is virtually exact (meas. 21-32), with a coda (meas. 32-37) which crosses hands and descends twice from F to C with a slightly altered rhythm the second time. The piece dies out (morendo) on an open C chord with no third. Like all its predecessors, this dance is chordal.

The concluding dance, Carillon, is the most brilliant and the longest (142 measures, pp. 12-15). The tempo marking for this bright C major is très animé-très gai (alla breve) (very animated-very gay). Did Poulenc understand what alla breve meant? Or did he want this 2/4 to be thought of in one? There is much repetition in this dance. The form is like a rondeau:

A = meas. 1-10
 B = meas. 11-22
 A = meas. 23-32
 C = meas. 33-48
 A = meas. 49-57 (with a codetta, meas. 58-65)
 A = meas. 66-75
 D = meas. 76-91
 A = meas. 92-101
 B = meas. 102-113 (with the same codetta as before
 meas. 114-125)
 A = meas. 126-142 (extended).

There are many instances of 5 and 6 measure phrases. The work ends on the dominant of C major with a deliberately written out and exact diminuendo of eight-and-one-half beats.

This is the most recorded work studied thus far.³³ It is deservedly popular and perhaps responsible in part, for the reference to Poulenc as being "obliquely classical."³⁴ Poulenc was to return once more to Gervaise and write a single work entitled Française in 1939.³⁵

In addition to the piano music discussed, Poulenc also wrote Cinq poèmes de Paul Éluard for Pierre Bernac and their first concert together as a duo, and the film score for La Belle au bois dormant (Sleeping Beauty) in 1935.³⁶ 1936 was to see the beginning of a long series of religious choral works. Poulenc was also to complete his longest piano work in this same year. Started in 1930, Les soirées de Nazelles was completed in 1936. This work and the Thème varié of 1951 belong to the next and last chapter of Poulenc's works for solo piano.

33 See Francis Poulenc, Suite Française as recorded by: Francis Poulenc, piano (Odyssey Y 33792); Gabriel Tacchino, piano (Angel S-36602); Grant Johannesen, piano (Golden Crest CR-4042); and Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de Paris in the orchestral version (Angel S-36519).

34 Robert T. Jones, jacket notes for Poulenc, The Piano Music of Francis Poulenc, (Angel S-36602). Mr. Jones is quoting Bernard Jacobson of High Fidelity.

35 Francis Poulenc, "Française," in Album of Six Pieces for Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1940), pp. 12-13.

36 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 168 and 171. In the complete catalogue of works.

CHAPTER VI

1936-1959: LONG AND SHORT CONCLUSIONS

"I condemn without recourse Napoli and Les soirées de Nazelles," said Francis Poulenc to Claude Rostand during the course of their third conversation. On the other hand Maurice Hinson, in his book on the piano repertoire, considered Napoli one of Poulenc's best piano works and Les soirées de Nazelles his most important.¹ Perhaps, the truth lies somewhere in between?

Les soirées de Nazelles, outlined in 1930 and completed October 1, 1936 at Noizay, his country home in the Touraine, is Poulenc's longest work for solo piano. It consists of a Préambule, Cadenza, Eight Variations, Cadenza, and Finale. The dedication is: "to the memory of my Aunt Liénard, as a souvenir of Nazelles." In addition to this dedication, Poulenc also added:

The variations which constitute the main portion of this work were improvised at Nazelles during the course of long country evenings where the composer played at 'portraits' with some friends grouped around his piano.

¹ Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 35; Maurice Hinson, Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire, edited by Irwin Freundlich (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 495-496.

We now hope that these, presented between a Prélude and a finale, will be able to evoke that diversion within the setting of a Touraine salon, with a window opened to the night. 2

Nazelles was the country home of Poulenc's Aunt to whom the work is dedicated and was also very close to Poulenc's own country home, Noizay (Indre-et-Loire).³

The question that arises is, was Poulenc playing at "portraits" of those present or was he playing musical "portraits" of those composers close to his own heart, those favored individuals of his family, and perhaps, those of the gathered friends? The answer may never be known with certainty, but the following conclusions are made as a result of the actual music itself in terms of "portraits" of composers, most of whom were personal favorites of Poulenc.

Les soirées de Nazelles opens with a Préambule, in the form of a brilliant valse in b-flat minor marked extrêmement animé et décidé (extremely animated and determined, pp. 1-4). The valse moves to G major (meas. 51), with written out turns that are found in nineteenth-century music, then to E-flat major (meas. 67), where the introduction of a triplet figure alludes to the Spanish flavor of a variation to follow, and finally, back to b-flat minor for a largo conclusion in the tonic major.

2 Francis Poulenc, Les soirées de Nazelles: Suite pour piano (Paris: Durand, c1937), pp. iii-iv. The writer is indebted to Dr. Demar Irvine for translation suggestions.

3 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letters from Poulenc showing locale of both homes, pp. 70 and 84.

In retrospect, this preamble could be viewed as a brief synopsis of the variations to come. The first "portrait" would seem to be that of Robert Schumann (1810-1856). For Poulenc's first lesson with Vifès, one of the works that he played was Schumann's Faschingschwank aus Wien, Op. 26 (The Carnival of Vienna), and he loved Schumann, as did his mother.⁴ Both Op. 26 and Op. 9, Carnaval, of Schumann open with a fast valse, in fact, the opening of the Carnaval is also entitled Préambule. And granted, this may be stretching a point, but the opening octaves of Poulenc's Préambule are a minor version of the seventeenth-century theme that Schumann used in the finale of the Carnaval and in both the major and the minor in his Papillons, Op. 2.⁵ Both of these examples are also 3/4 vales (Example 15). The later Example 15. Poulenc, Les soirées de Nazelles, "Préambule," meas. 1-10

Extrêmement animé et décidé (♩ = 76 à 1 tempo)

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⁴ Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 13, 20, and 30.

⁵ Robert Schumann, "Préambule," in Carnaval, Album II for Piano (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d.), pp. 67-69 and 91; Idem, "Papillons," in Complete Works, Vol. 1 (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d.), pp. 13 and 22.

Improvisation of 1941, the Hommage to Schubert, also looks back on this opening.⁶ A last thought: is it possible that Poulenc wrote this Préambule last and incorporated ideas in it from the already written variations?

The Cadence (Cadenza) that follows, is a barred 4/4 largo (p. 5). It is a series of arpeggiated chords followed by thirty-second-note runs leading downward to a low D for a cadence in G major, with a long tenuto. This could be Bach of the Chromatic Fantásie and Fugue in d minor.

The first variation is entitled: Le comble de la distinction (The Consummation of Refinement, pp. 6-7). Poulenc begins this lively variation with instructions to begin under tempo and to exaggerate the rubato until letter A (Commencer très au-dessous du mouvement et exagérément rubato jusqu'à A). The general tempo (Vif et gai, lively and gay) begins with the melody in the left hand (meas. 5). The variation fairly ripples with spicy minor second crushes; the dynamics are on the soft side for the most part; and it evaporates into the highest register of the piano with instructions to continue without pause (attaquez de suite). The wit, the charm, and the humorous aspect would tend to identify with Chabrier, whose music consoled

⁶ Francis Poulenc, "Douzième Improvisation," in Improvisations: Deuxième recueil des six (Paris: Salabert, c1945), pp. 19-22.

Poulenc on his somber days and whose wit made Poulenc laugh as all people of a melancholy nature love to laugh.⁷

The tonic G becomes the fifth of a c minor triad for variation two: Le coeur sur la main (Heart on Sleeve, pp. 8-9). The melody again begins in the left hand but quickly passes to the right hand. The word "rubato," which became such a bane for Poulenc, is much in evidence in this work.⁸ The variation is very vocal. The use of the word rubato so much evokes Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), as does the vocal element. The other possibility would be Jules Massenet (1842-1912) and the link with the quotation from Daudet: "To wear one's heart upon one's sleeve."⁹ Poulenc's father was very fond of Massenet and if the "portrait" were one of the friends gathered around the composer's piano, then it would be Lucien Daudet, a personal friend of Poulenc's.¹⁰ For Poulenc, this modéré is unusually free in its tempo instructions for the performer.

Again variation two ends on the dominant to lead immediately into variation three: La désinvolture et la discrétion (Easy Grace and Prudent Reserve, pp. 10-11).

7 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), pp. 66-67.

8 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 32. "I hate rubato."

9 The writer is indebted to Dr. Demar Irvine for this quote and the information, from a letter dated July 19, 1977.

10 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Valentine Gross dated September 25, 1925, pp. 70-72. In the letter Poulenc mentions playing for Daudet in his home -- the Napoli.

This 2/2 presto in G major, is very dry and light for the first 20 measures and then pure melody, first in c minor, then back in G. There are two characteristics of Poulenc's melodic writing here: (1) rocking back and forth on two pitches over 2 measures (21-22); and (2) starting on a pitch, moving in either direction a short distance and then returning to that pitch (meas. 37-39). Poulenc also indicated here that the entire work could be abbreviated by connecting variation three with variation seven (p. 11n). The easiest "portrait" here would be Mozart; however, when Poulenc wrote in homage or evoking the memory of Mozart, there was no question.¹¹ The strong melodic content, the texture, and the lack of even an Alberti-bass figure, leads toward Franz Schubert (1797-1828), again a great love of both Poulenc and his mother.¹²

Variation four: La suite dans les idées (Connection of Ideas), brings back the notation in three staves (pp. 12-13). There seems to be no doubt that Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is evoked here, especially Debussy of the Préludes, specifically the Book II.¹³ With no key signature, but certainly around e-flat minor, the g-flat becomes an f-sharp for the immediate beginning of the next variation. The

¹¹ Compare the second movement of the Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre of 1932.

¹² Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 13.

¹³ Claude Debussy, "La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune," in Préludes, 2e Livre (Paris: Durand, c1910), pp. 36-41.

primary effect here is the double-dotting of the French Baroque. Instead of the double-dot, Poulenc writes a dotted-eighth, a thirty-second rest, and then the thirty-second-note (Example 16). He will do the same later in the Thème varié of 1951 (var. 2), except by then he will employ the double-dot also. The rhythmic figure also evokes Schumann again, of the Études symphoniques, Op. 13 (Variation VII, Étude VIII).¹⁴

Example 16. Poulenc, Les soirées de Nazelles, "La suite dans les idées," meas. 1-2

Très large et pompeux $\text{♩} = 48$

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Très large et pompeux' with a quarter note equal to 48 beats. The dynamic is marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The notation includes dotted-eighths, thirty-second notes, and various rests.

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The next variation: Le charme enjôleur (The Charm that Coaxes), a très allant (very going), beginning in 6/8, f-sharp minor, is very melodic and leads to a fortissimo climax (meas. 20, pp. 14-16). However, there is much contrast of ideas, and the D-flat major section (meas. 32-55) introduces the triplet figure from the opening valse (see meas. 67-70 of the Préambule), and this will also return

¹⁴ Robert Schumann, "Etude VIII," in Études symphoniques, Op. 13, in Complete Works, Vol. II (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d.), p. 51.

in the finale (meas. 59-63) in the same key, and meter, 3/8 (Example 17). The triplet lends a touch of Spanish flavor, and with the title of the variation, it is difficult not to think of Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), especially of his El Amor Brujo (Love the Magician). He was also a personal friend of Poulenc.

Example 17. Poulenc, Les soirées de Nazelles, "Le charme enjôleur," meas. 40-47

The image shows a musical score for Example 17. It consists of two systems. The upper system shows a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The vocal line has a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The lower system shows a piano accompaniment in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in the treble clef. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment in the treble clef has a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'bien marqué' and '(deuxes)'.

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Le contentement de soi (Contentment with oneself), variation six, is the first clear cut C major, marked très vite et très sec (very fast and very dry, pp. 17-19). It is a charming, witty, chatter of a tune, the type to be found in the finale of the Trio pour piano, hautbois, et basson, whose inspiration of form came from the scherzo of Saint-Saëns Second Piano Concerto in g minor, Op. 22.¹⁵ There is lots of vitality, and a sharp contrast between legato and staccato (meas. 1-8 and 8-37, respectively). The markings

¹⁵ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 121; see Chapter IX of this study.

précis (precise, meas. 20), sec (dry, meas. 12), turbulent (turbulant, meas. 16 and 58), as well as the writings in the highest register (meas. 22-27), full chords and octaves (meas. 58-65), make for a breath-taking variation and indeed, a great satisfaction with oneself. The "portrait" is virtually unmistakable, Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953).¹⁶ The full cadence in C major requires a marking for a long pause before continuing.

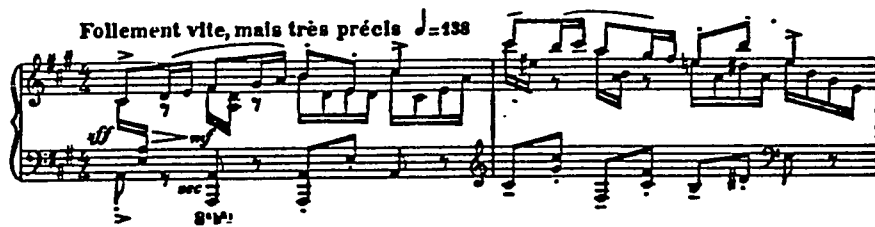
Variation seven: Le goût du malheur (A Taste for Misfortune), is a slow, melancholy 4/8 in e-flat minor (pp. 20-21). The melody line is marked gently and brought out (le chant doucement et dehors), but the harmony blurred (l'harmonie très estompée). The Aeolian mode gives the archaic flavor found in certain works of Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). The figures and the line are continuous in this variation.

The last variation: L'Alerte vieillesse (Alert Old Age) would seem to evoke Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), who composed until the very end of his long life (pp. 22-24). This is a very rapid, articulated, light variation in a minor, with some lovely legato moments (meas. 28-35). The driving quality comes from the speed and not from the dynamics, which until the conclusion are soft. There is no question of conclusion here; the cadence, with its picardy third, is very definite, although quiet.

¹⁶ Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, pp. 162-163. Poulenc twice said that Prokofiev's only interest was SA MU-SI-QUE!

The connecting Cadence (Cadenza) to the finale is not at all like its Baroque, Bach-like predecessor (p. 25). It is brilliant, with full chords, parallel scale passages, and a wide dynamic range. It ends quietly on an E major cadence. Its very dramatic qualities almost make the listener think that Poulenc is giving a "portrait" of Poulenc of the last movement of the Concert champêtre of 1927-1928.

The Final, marked follement vite, mais très précis (wildly fast, but very precise), is pure Poulenc (pp. 26-31). The opening tune is much like that of the Rondeau from Les Biches, if not quite the music hall type of the finale of Le Bal Masqué. All is singing line and melody here, except for the very brief looks back to the variations and the preamble (Example 18). Beginning in A major (meas. 1-22), moving to Example 18. Poulenc, Les soirées de Nazelles, "Final," meas. 1-2



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C major (meas. 23-43) with some delicious accidents in altered notes and modulating to b-flat minor/D-flat major (44-100, with meas. 59-62 containing the Spanish triplet), and finally, despite the five-flat key signature, ending triple forte in C major! Some of the chords from the second cadenza are brought

back. What began as a valse, ends with a 4/4 -- 3/4 -- finally 4/4. This very personal work may have caused the composer regrets because of that very personal quality. However, it deserves to be heard, despite the composer's injunctions against it.¹⁷

Conclusion of the Nocturnes

Les soirées de Nazelles was the only solo piano work of 1936. 1937, also produced only one solo piano work: the Bourrée, au Pavillon d'Auvergne (Bourrée, at the Auvergne Pavilion).¹⁸ Completed at Noizay, May 7, 1937, this brief piece is an imitation of the primitive flute and drums of the folk music of the Auvergne of France. It was part of a complete set of eight pieces written by eight French composers for the Paris Exhibition of 1937.¹⁹ Jean Roy said that it was an occasion for Poulenc to pay homage to Chabrier.²⁰

The piece is simplicity itself, yet very effective and appealing in its melodic contours. A very legato, single line melody of a folk-like nature, weaves its way over an

17 See also, Correspondance, pp. 100-101, letter dated August 10, 1936, announcing completion of Les soirées de Nazelles; letter dated August 15, 1936, pp. 97-98: "The end of the period of Les Biches, that is to say, 20 minutes of brilliant piano."

18 Francis Poulenc, Bourrée, au Pavillon d'Auvergne (Paris: Salabert, c1975), pp. 1-3. R. Deiss, c1937.

19 Ibid., p. ln.; See catalogue for composers and works.

20 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), p. 48.

ostinato ninth on each beat of the 2/2. The middle section is in the tonic minor and the return is abbreviated. The consistent wide reaches testify to Poulenc's span of over an octave-and-a-half.²¹ All eight compositions are dedicated to Mme Marguerite Long (1874-1966), the French pianist and teacher.

1938 was the year of the Organ Concerto, many songs, and the return to and the conclusion of the set of Nocturnes, not yet conceived as a set.²² The Huitième Nocturne en ut majeur, although the key signature is one sharp, was intended to serve as a coda to the cycle (pour servir de Coda au Cycle).²³ It was completed at Noizay in December, 1938. It is a very lyric, melodic conclusion to the cycle. The melody is many times in parallel octaves with the suggestions by the composer for a well-marked melody, much pedal, and much discretion of chords surrounding the line (mettre beaucoup de pédale, le chant doucement en dehors, les batteries tres discrètes). There are similarities between the close of this Nocturne and the close of the Premier Nocturne. The coda uses the same kind of secondary dominant approach as the first with dominant-tonic movements to A, to F, to G via a

21 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. ix. The preface of this translation is also by Mr. Lockspeiser.

22 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 168.

23 Francis Poulenc, "Huitième Nocturne," in Nocturnes pour piano (Paris: Heugel, c1939), pp. 23-24.

minor dominant, and finally to C major (Example 19). Hell said that Schumann was evoked here. The other similarity in the last Nocturne and the others is, there were nine years between the first and the last Nocturne, with four years between number one and number two and three years between number seven and number eight.²⁴

Example 19. Poulenc, Huitième Nocturne en ut majeur, meas. 30-34

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While Poulenc never wrote another Nocturne, he did return for another brief moment to the sixteenth-century world of Claude Gervaise in 1939 to write a single composition entitled simple Française.²⁵ This chordal work maintains the characteristics described in the Suite Française (perhaps it

²⁴ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 44.

²⁵ Francis Poulenc, "Française," in Album of Six Pieces for Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1940), pp. 12-13. The composition is only available now in this album. It is dedicated to Luigi Rognoni.

was part of that original incidental music, see Chapter V). There is much repetition in the brief 33 measures, but the Poulenc signature is in the closing measures. Measure 31 contains, for two beats, an A-flat-eleventh chord (the Neapolitan relationship to G major, but with the fifth in the bass), while the third beat moves to an augmented-sixth-chord on a-flat, but also containing the resolution pitch of g. Everything resolves to a G major triad for the next 2 measures, but certainly, it was not a sixteenth-century chord progression -- if such a term could be used for that century, or even an orthodox progression for later practice!

Works of the Second War

In 1939, the world was on the brink of War again. Poulenc used 1939 and part of 1940 as a period of rethinking. He reorchestrated Les Biches and returned to his earlier Sextuor pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson, et cor. When the war did begin, Poulenc returned to an anti-aircraft unit. At the time of the French armistice he was in Bordeaux, and was demobilized shortly afterward. He was then invited to spend the summer of 1940 at Brive-la-Gaillarde with friends and cousins.²⁶ There he began several works: the outline of what later became the Sonate pour violoncelle et piano, the start of the Histoire de Babar for

²⁶ Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 59-60; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 50-51.

piano and narrator, the ballet Les Animaux modèles; and he completed his only work for solo piano, the Mélancolie en re b majeur, which is dated Talence, June, and Brive, August, 1940.²⁷

The dates on the score and the known facts of the time, would seem to indicate that Poulenc was out of his beloved Paris when the German Fifth Army marched in on Saturday, June 14, 1940, to a stunned populace.

Many of the by now accustomed markings, i.e., gently for the melody, the accompaniment with much pedal, are further enhanced by the fact that there are few solidly played block chords in the entire work, but rather arpeggios outlining triads, which add to the lyric, singing quality of the piano. It is a quality that Poulenc continually exploited, rather than the percussive, motor-like aspect so favored by many twentieth-century composers. Another feature of this composition asserts itself as early as measure 1: what the right hand plays in the first two beats of the measure, the left hand imitates at the same pitches and rhythm an octave lower. These very brief points of imitation were also seen in the "Ariette," from the Feuillets d'Album of 1933, and will return again in the first movement of the Oboe Sonata of 1962 (Example 20, p. 126).

²⁷ Francis Poulenc, Mélancolie pour piano (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1945), pp. 1-9.

Example 20. Poulenc, *Mélancolie* pour piano, meas. 1-2

Très modéré (♩ = 60)
le chant doucement en dehors

PIANO *p*
sans rubato

l'accompagnement très enveloppé de pédales

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Essentially an ABA' with a coda of a peculiar wandering quality to the melody, measures 30-35 are in complete contrast to the remainder of the composition. The function seems to be both modulatory and to introduce a new rhythmic figure in the left hand of an eighth and two sixteenths per beat, outlining triads and marked *très égal et estompé* (very equal and blurred). A new melodic line begins (meas. 36) with the indication of a progressively quickening of speed building to a *fortissimo* (meas. 55), from which the surge begins to lessen and to begin a retransition for the return of the opening (meas. 79), first in C major and then to D-flat major (meas. 87). The coda begins (meas. 99) with the instructions to maintain the tempo until the end. However, Poulenc carefully builds in his own ritard with larger and larger note values. The final chord is marked quadruple *piano* with a beautiful sound of D-flat major clouded with a lowered sixth (b-double-flat). It is almost impossible not to hear that lowered sixth going to the dominant and then

resolving to the tonic in your inner ear. This type of resolution by the listener, occurs in several piano compositions of Poulenc.

Henri Hell criticizes this composition for its lack of conciseness, but it deserves better at the hands of performers who would seek out its beauty. It is the only work that bears the title Mélancolie in the Poulenc oeuvre, although many works have the instructions to be played with melancholy or in a melancholy manner. What thoughts might have surged and struggled in this Frenchman's mind with an alien force in his beloved country?²⁸

More Ballet Transcriptions

Poulenc left Brive-la-Gaillarde on September 9, 1940. In that same letter to Milhaud telling of his departure, Poulenc gave Milhaud a list of his projects for the coming winter. He further stated that his ballet on the Fables of La Fontaine, was very advanced, and that he should be able to finish the orchestration in January.²⁹

Like Les Biches, a ballet score would not come under the area of piano music; however, Poulenc, again, made a piano score of Les Animaux modèles.³⁰ There seemed to be no

28 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 62.

29 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Darius Milhaud dated September 9, 1940, p. 125.

30 Francis Poulenc, Les Animaux modèles, piano score by the composer (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1942), pp. 2-52. This score contains all 8 dances.

intention on Poulenc's part that this work enter the pianist's repertoire; however, the American pianist, Grant Johannesen, has drawn a suite from that piano version of Poulenc's score. Unfortunately, Mr. Johannesen has not, at the time of this writing, published his version, nor has he given permission for a duplication of that score before the publication. However, he has recorded his suite from the ballet, and the portions that he has chosen are at least known.³¹

Again Poulenc wrote his own scenario. He chose the Fables of La Fontaine and had the animal characters presented as real people. Originally entitled Les Animaux et leurs hommes (The Animals and Their People) by Poulenc, the name, which had come from a collection by Paul Éluard, was changed to the present title by the poet with the help of his daughter and her friends.³²

The music is in a suite of dances like that of Les Biches. Poulenc chose six Fables: The Bear and His Two Friends, The Grasshopper and the Ant, The Amorous Lion, The

31. Francis Poulenc, "Suite from Les Animaux modèles," in Grant Johannesen Plays Poulenc, Grant Johannesen, piano (Golden Crest CR-4042), side 1, band 1. Le petit jour, L'ours et ses deux compagnons, La cigale et la fourmi, Le lion amoureux, Les deux coqs, and Le repas de midi.

32 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Paul Éluard to Poulenc dated 1944, p. 137; Idem, Entretiens, p. 58. Éluard gave Poulenc five choices: A la Lueur de l'homme, Les Animaux modèles, Mouvements animaux, A la mode Animale, and Mille Pattes. Éluard's two daughters were enthusiastic for Les Animaux modèles, while the poet, "with my habitual bad taste," loved A la mode Animale.

Two Ages of Man, Death and the Woodcutter, and The Two Cocks. Poulenc added two musical numbers to open and close the ballet: Early Morning and The Noon Repast.³³ The setting was at the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV (reigned 1643-1715) because:

. . . it was in the tragic days of the Summer of 1940, from an imperious desire to rediscover in this most characteristic period of French history a reason for belief in the destiny of my country. 34

The ballet, dedicated to his beloved childhood friend, Raymonde Linassier, who had died so tragically young, was given its first performance on August 8, 1942, with great success.³⁵ Poulenc, himself, was very pleased and told Claude Rostand how he could not help but smile when the trumpets play, during the combat of the Two Cocks, the song, Non, non, vous n'aurez pas notre Alsace-Lorraine (No, No, You Shall Not Have Our Alsace-Lorraine) -- the opera house being full of Nazis!³⁶ Nevertheless, it is doubtful that his score will ever enter the pianist's domain and that it will always remain first an orchestral work with its beautiful Ravel-like harmonies.

Despite all the activity for the first performance of Les Animaux modèles, Poulenc did return to the piano in 1941

33 Francis Poulenc, Les Animaux modèles, Orchestral score (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1949), pp. 1-103. Composed Brive, August, 1940-Noizay, September, 1941.

34 Idem, Entretiens, p. 57; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 62-63.

35 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to André Schaeffner dated December, 1942, p. 127.

36 Idem, Entretiens, pp. 58 and 181.

to complete two Improvisations that now form the conclusion of the second collection (Nos. 7-12). The Onzième Improvisation en sol mineur was completed in Paris, June, 1941.³⁷ It is dedicated to Claude Delvincourt (1898-1954), the Prix de Rome winner that Poulenc and Milhaud met in Rome in 1922, and who was to die in an automobile accident in 1954. This Improvisation is very brief, with legato descending triads against a staccato bass, moving in octaves in eighth-notes. Measures 5 and 7 allude to the fourth movement of the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 83. The right hand never changes, but the left hand goes to two-note phrases (meas. 9), and then returns to the staccato (meas. 14). It is a very concise statement.

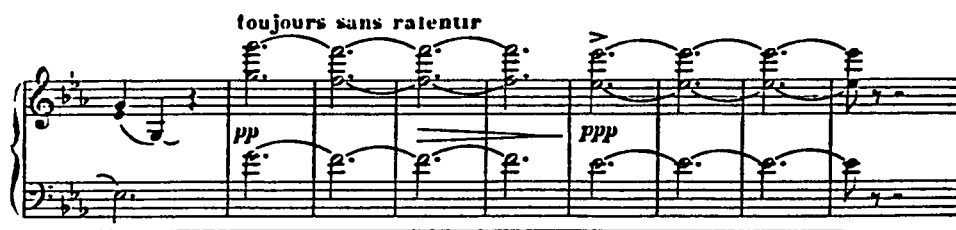
The Douzième Improvisation en mi b majeur (Hommage à Schubert), was completed in Paris in November, 1941.³⁸ This is a Valse Noble, joyously evoking a faraway epoch, but ending its vigorous life on three descending octave notes of affecting tenderness. They are reminiscent of the Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat major, Op. 81a, "Les Adieux" or "Lebewohl," first movement introduction, the Lebewohl motto, and in part, in the same composer's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58, the close of the second movement.

37 Francis Poulenc, "Onzième Improvisation," in Improvisations: Deuxième recueil des six (Paris: Salabert, c1945), pp. 17-18.

38 Idem, "Douzième Improvisation," in Improvisations (Paris: Salabert, c1945), pp. 19-22.

This is one of the longest Improvisations. The introduction of 8 measures leads to the opening section (meas. 9-48). The middle section (meas. 49-100) is very legato in contrast to the first. The return (meas. 101-116) is abbreviated, and the coda (meas. 117-136) touches the subdominant side of the key. The concluding measures are on one pedal to simply let the strings respond to the overtone series on e-flat. This open octave Les Adieux motive is spun out over the last 8 measures (Example 21).

Example 21. Poulenc, Douzième Improvisation, meas. 129-136



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Intermezzo III

Poulenc wrote no works for solo piano until 1943. Most of his compositions during that period from 1941 until the end of 1943, were songs, a cantata, Figure humaine, a film score, La duchesse de Langeais, and two works to be discussed later, a Sonate pour violon et piano, and the Chansons villageoises for voice and chamber orchestra, including piano. However, when he did return to the piano, the resulting Intermezzo en la b majeur, completed in Paris in

March, 1943, became one of Poulenc's favorite piano compositions, and he mentioned it fondly in conversations.³⁹

Nine years and a World War separated this work from its two predecessors. The marking, très allant, tout droit, sans aucun rubato (very going, right through without any rubato), indicates Poulenc's growing concern over the excessive rubato that pianists were introducing into his piano music. He was to speak out on this subject in a strong manner ten years later.⁴⁰

It is little wonder that the composer loved this composition. The melody is lyric, memorable, and accessible. Stated first in the home key of A-flat major, rising to a climax (meas. 16), then restated in an abbreviated form in D-flat major (meas. 18), this melody gives way to a transition built on the previous idea, creates a Niagara of sound, and gently leads into the middle section (meas. 41).

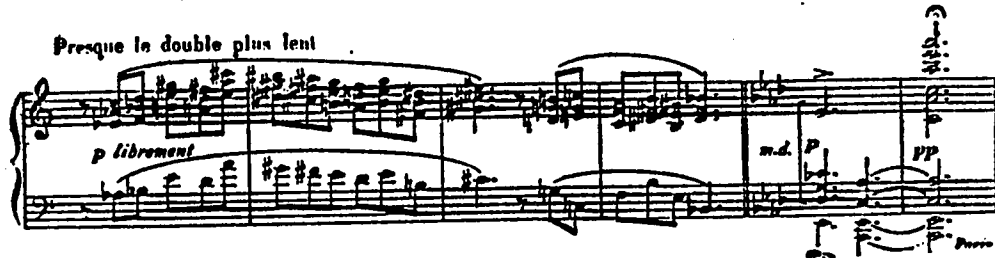
The outpouring of melody does not cease, but the a minor key, now adds a touch of melancholy. Again a climax is reached (meas. 59), and the retransition that follows moves very gently and lyrically back to the first idea (meas. 72), which is abbreviated, rises to yet another climax, and then trails off for the coda of the kind observed in the first and last of the Nocturnes. Here a series of parallel triads

³⁹ Francis Poulenc, Intermezzo en la b majeur (Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1947), pp. 1-7; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 35. Dedicated to Mme Mante Rostand.

⁴⁰ Idem, Entretiens, p. 32.

(meas. 89-91) are followed by secondary dominants to C, B, B-flat, and finally to an E-flat-seven chord for the resolution to the tonic A-flat major (Example 22).

Example 22. Poulenc, *Intermezzo en la b majeur*, meas. 89-94



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This is by far the best and most mature of the Intermezzos. Like many of his classic predecessors, now all aspects of form are used for his melodic gifts, even the transitions are becoming areas of great beauty where the material seems to grow naturally out of the preceding ideas. Here the composer's admiration and love for his composition, can be equally shared by all performers and listeners alike.

Jeux d'enfants II

The following year, 1944, Poulenc was to write Pierre Bernac that he had outlined his Babar and felt that it would be very droll. This made reference to one of the works begun during the summer of 1940 at Brive-la-Gaillarde. The following August, 1945, Poulenc was to write Henri Sauguet that he had finished his suite for the piano, Babar.⁴¹

⁴¹ Poulenc, Correspondance, letters dated July 22, 1944, and August 9, 1945, respectively, pp. 167-169.

This Babar to which Poulenc kept referring was the Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant (Story of Babar the Little Elephant, for piano and narrator).⁴² The work began as an accident, when his cousin's daughter objected to what Poulenc was playing on the piano one day at Brive in 1940, and put the story of Babar in front of him. Soon Poulenc was improvising, much to the delight of the neighborhood children, not to mention that of the composer himself. He never forgot the experience and returned to the work, on a text by Jean de Brunhoff, in 1944.⁴³

The work consists of very small pieces between the text of the story, or as Poulenc said in a letter: "18 winks of the eye at the tail of a young elephant."⁴⁴ The music is purely descriptive with no titles as such, but certainly of the kind that could be titled. Here Poulenc gives free reign to his imagination to the delight of youngsters and young-oldsters alike. The score has been orchestrated by Jean Françaix. Henri Hell likens the work to Schumann's Kinderscenen, Op. 15 and Debussy's Children's Corner.⁴⁵ Indeed, recent efforts by Peter Ustinov, may make the work a children's classic.⁴⁶

42 Francis Poulenc, L'Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant (London: J. & W. Chester, c1949), pp. 1-31.

43 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 51-52.

44 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Henri Sauguet dated August 9, 1945, pp. 168-169.

45 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 68.

46 Francis Poulenc, The Story of Babar, Orchestration by Jean Françaix, Peter Ustinov, narrator, Georges Prêtre conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Angel S-36357), side 1.

Another Large Work: Thème varié

Babar was not published until 1949, after the War, by which time Poulenc had completed the Sonate pour violoncelle et piano, also started that Summer of 1940, the Sérénade pour violoncelle et piano, and the Piano Concerto, all of which will be discussed in later chapters. However, he was not to return to a work for solo piano until 1951. By that time Poulenc and Bernac (b. 1899) had made two successful concert tours to the United States, written many songs, several choral works including the Stabat Mater, and another film score, Le Voyage en Amérique, from which came the two-piano score, L'Embarquement pour Cythère, recalling his childhood days at Nogent-sur-Marne.⁴⁷

The Thème varié en la b majeur was written and completed between February and September, 1951, at Noizay.⁴⁸ The work is dedicated to Geneviève Sienkiewicz, the friend of his family who introduced Poulenc to Viñes.⁴⁹ The work consists of an original theme and 11 variations, the last being also entitled a finale.

The theme, marked très calme et sans hâte (very calm and without haste), is a 34 measure ternary in 3/8: A = meas. 1-16; B = meas. 16-26; and A' = 26-34. It is very

⁴⁷ Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 37; Idem, Entretiens, pp. 32 and 176.

⁴⁸ Francis Poulenc, Thème varié pour piano (Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1952), pp. 1-16.

⁴⁹ Idem, Entretiens, p. 29.

lyric, virtually in familiar style, i.e., all the voices of the essentially four-part harmony, although with much doubling, move in nearly the same rhythm. The first four phrases end on V, V₇, or an inversion of the same. There is an interesting emphasis on the subdominant and the submediant in between the phrase endings (Example 23). The Example 23. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, "Theme," meas. 1-13

THEME
Très calme et sans hâte $\text{♩} = 88$

PIANO *mf*

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middle section incorporates the use of the lowered sixth (f-flat), but rather than progress to the dominant, will move to a tonic-six-four or be enharmonically respelled (e-g-sharp-b-d, meas. 23), and move to a raised tonic.

The theme is essentially diatonic throughout. The flated sixth is hinted at in the third phrase (meas. 8-12). The closing measures consist of a return to the opening 2 measures (meas. 27-28), followed by 2 measures of the flat-ted sixth, which resolves to a tonic-six-four, but this

time over a pedal A-flat, and leading to a subdominant chord of the ninth (meas. 31). The closing cadence is spread over 3 measures with a preparatory arpeggiated up-beat, one long pedal (meas. 31-32) tenutoed beyond a full measure, and finally resolving upward to an a-flat octave (meas. 33-34) in the right hand and a C octave in the left hand over the unchanged damper pedal with the a-flat.

This is a very soft, gentle theme. What follows could almost be called improvisations on a theme rather than variations. The keys used other than A-flat are: E and A major/minor, undoubtedly derived from the move toward those areas, briefly, in the middle section of the theme (meas. 23-24), E-flat, D-flat, F, F-sharp, and C major, this time a borrowed major III chord and not the minor iii, that has ended earlier piano compositions.

Variation I, A-flat major, 2/4, Joyeuse: Allegro molto, 21 measures long, is one of an harmonic nature rather than any attempt to follow the melodic line (p. 2). The harmonies are compressed to slightly fewer measures, but not too many, when it is realized that the theme, 3/8, is now a variation in 2/4 (4/8), making an extra eighth-note for each measure now. With consistent sixteenths with double stems on the half-beats in the right hand, and mostly staccato eighths (sans pédale) in the left hand, the melody is only hinted at. The closing cadence is just the opposite of that of the theme. Here the chord contains the seventh with no resolution.

Variation II, E major, 4/4, Noble: Lent, 13 measures long, is based entirely upon either double-dotting or its equivalent, one eighth-note and the appropriate dotted-sixteenth rest (p.3). It is fortissimo throughout and contains some examples of Poulenc's rather cavalier manner of enharmonic spellings, e.g., meas. 10 and 12.

Variation III, C major, 3/8, Pastorale: Allegretto (a 1 temps), 42 measures long, however, with the obligatory repeat, 67 measures, is the only variation on the borrowed major III chord of A-flat (pp. 4-5). This is a variation on the melody, but it is also of the lovely melodic type that has already been seen in the Premier Novelette, the Premier Nocturne, and the Septième Improvisation, all in the same key of C major (Example 24). There is absolute simplicity

Example 24. Poulenc, Thème varié, "Variation III," meas. 1-11

VARIATION III. *Pastorale*. Allegretto (à 1 temps) *♩ = 66*

Jouer toute cette variation, claire, avec beaucoup de pédale. *

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of expression here, a clear, blue-green, running stream that disappears in the highest register of the piano, pianissimo,

and is held by a long pedal with the instruction of a short silence before the next variation begins. Poulenc, like Beethoven, was very careful to mark in long pedals when he wanted them, especially those necessary for effects or those that continue longer than the ear of the performer of today would allow, with all the harmonic changes.

Variation IV, A major, 3/4, Sarcastique: Allegro molto, très violent, 30 measures long, is predominantly chordal and very energetic (p. 5). The melodic line comes through now and then, but again this variation is on the harmony. Measures 25-26 contain the same cadential formula found in variation II (meas. 12), but the last chord is adjusted a semi-tone, b-natural instead of c-natural (meas. 26), in order to get to the dominant of A major instead of E major (Example 25). The last 4 measures are on one pedal

Example 25. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, (a) "Variation II," meas. 11-13: (b) "Variation IV," meas. 24-26

(a)

(b)

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starting fortissimo (meas. 27-30), with the right hand crossing over the left hand and descending to the lowest A on the keyboard, at the same time going to a pianissimo.

Variation V, D-flat major, 4/8, Mélancolique: très calme, 11 measures long, uses the subdominant key that was stressed early in the first presentation of the A-flat major theme (p. 6). The opening 2 measures contain exactly the type of very brief imitation at the octave between the two hands that marked the earlier Mélancolie of 1940, in the same key. This very brief, wisp of a variation is all quiet, lyric sixteenths moving either up an octave from their beginning or down an octave. A very long tenuto on the last 2 measures of a D-flat arpeggio, leads immediately to the next variation (attaquer).

Variation VI, F major, ζ , Ironique: Allegretto, 28 measures long, should bring several things to the fore: (1) each of the variations has a descriptive title as well as a tempo marking which (2), offers an interesting combination of Italian and French; and (3) this variation on the borrowed major VI chord of A-flat major, parallels variation III on the borrowed major III of the tonic (pp. 6-7). This variation combines duple eighths with triplets in double-notes marked très sec (very dry). Measures 21-23 contain a very exacting amount of silence! The closing cadence pattern is descending rather than rising this time.

Variation VII, A major, 4/4, Élégiaque: Excessivement

lent, 10 measures long, opens with double pedal A-naturals in quarter-notes with eighth-notes in the inner voices in two-note phrases (p. 8). This pattern continues through the variation but without the pedal notes of such long duration. While the two-note phrases are diatonic in the opening measure, they have become chromatic by measure 7. The same cadential formula from variations II and IV occurs again in the penultimate measure of this variation (meas. 9), and the key of that of variation IV, but the formula terminates like variation II, the variation in E major (Example 26). The last chord is clouded by a g-natural.

Example 26. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, "Variation VII," meas. 8-10

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Variation VIII, F-sharp major, 4/4, Volubile: presto, 14 measures long, is an unceasing swirl of thirty-seconds and sixteenths in groups of six, seven, and eight (pp. 8-9). Poulenc very thoughtfully indicates the semblance of a melodic line by agogic accents at the beginnings of the beats, but by measure 7, he is double-stemming for longer held melodic emphasis. The variation builds to a fortissimo (meas 11), then suddenly drops to a pianissimo on an F-sharp

major triad. On the whole there is the type of figuration that is not found too often in Poulenc's piano music, although in the Piano Concerto of 1949, these numerically uneven arpeggios appear with great frequency as accompaniment figures to the orchestral melodies, especially in the first movement.

Variation IX, E-flat major, 4/4, Fantastique: Allegro molto, 14 measures long, is the only variation on the dominant of the A-flat theme (p. 10). It begins on a dotted eighth-sixteenth-note rhythmic figure in the right hand descending, with octaves in the left hand on the second and third sixteenth of the groups of four sixteenths per beat. It is very easy to follow the line and melodies here. The other figure that is prominent is that of broken chords in alternating hands. The cadential formula from variations II, IV, and VII returns in yet another rhythm, but the spelling fits the flat key signature (meas. 12). This is a very forceful variation that ends on a clear, clean, e-flat triad. In a different guise, it will return in the coda of the finale (variation 11).

Variation X, A-flat major, 4/4, Sybilline: Bien lent, 10 measures long, is a straight four-part chorale (p. 11). There are only 2 measures with any moving inner parts (meas. 5-6). It begins fortissimo but ends pianissimo. Most of the chords are of the ninth although two of them are chords of the eleventh (meas. 4, beat one; meas. 7, beat three).

The harshness comes in their spacing and in the tones that the composer chose to omit, such as the fifth of the opening chord and the fifth and seventh of the second chord. This gives major and minor second sounds, e.g., e-flat and g-natural in the left hand against f-natural and a-flat in the right hand. Each of the half-note chords carries an accent with the barest harmonic outline of the original theme in evidence, possibly not to the listener, but after analysis. This music vaults back to the qualities found in the experimental gropings of the Impromptus and the Promenades (Example 27). The closing chord is simply two pitches held

Example 27. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, "Variation X," meas. 1-10 (complete)

VARIATION X. *Sybilline. Bien lent* ♩ = 68

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against each other, the tonic a-flat and the major seventh g-natural. Poulenc again directed the immediate beginning of the last variation and finale.

Variation XI, A-flat major, 4/4, Finale: Allegro molto, 66 measures long, is an extended variation on the melody with Alberti-like extensions in the left hand and intervallic inversions in the right hand, i.e., the opening of the theme was an a-flat, g-natural, f-natural, e-flat, d-flat, and c-natural diatonically descending; here the a-flat is given on the first beat in the bass and the g-natural on beat two of the right hand as a chord, but a iii and not a V as before; the next f-natural jumps up the interval of a seventh before descending to the e-flat, and the chord on the f-natural is a vi instead of a IV as in the theme (pp. 11-16). This type of expansion of intervals and chordal substitution is characteristic of this last variation, with tones (numbered) 2, 3, 4, and 5, which are seconds in the theme becoming sevenths in the inversions.

The 4/4 meter naturally augments the original eighth-note values to quarters, so that every 2 measures is now equal to a phrase before. Certain pick-up beats of the theme are omitted in this variation, e.g., measure 5 of the theme: the pick-up to measure 5 and the first two beats of measure 5 are omitted so that measure 3 of variation XI continues with beat three of measure 5 of the theme; beat three of measure 8 and beats one and two of measure 9 of the theme are also omitted, so that measure 5 of the final variation continues with beat three of measure 9 of the theme. This procedure continues in variation XI.

A downward rush in sextuplets ends on the dominant, e-flat (meas. 25). Measure 26 is silence. Measures 27-29 give the opening phrase of the theme in the left hand alone. This is followed by the cadential figure from variations II, IV, VII, and IX (meas. 29) (Example 28). Measures 30-34 lead back to A-flat major through a reference to E major from measure 23 of the theme. Poulenc seems intent on returning to the salient characteristics of his theme in these brief moments of retrospection.

Example 28. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, "Variation XI," meas. 27-30 (the finale)

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The movement to the coda (meas. 35-56) is marked by a constant rhythm of two longs and two shorts (melodically taken from the last phrase of the theme, meas. 26-34), the scale line of the theme, and the rising and falling intervals of the sixth and the fifth. The left hand is a constant, driving group of four sixteenth-notes per beat.

The coda (meas. 57-66) returns the rhythmic dotted figure from variation IX, except in reverse, the left hand now has the dotted eighth-sixteenth notes and the right hand the second and third sixteenth-notes in the group of four.

The closing line takes the opening phrase of the theme in equal quarter-notes, in double octaves, and rising, spreads them over nearly four octaves of the piano's range to the highest c-flat "'''' (meas. 63-65). The penultimate chord is built on the lowered sixth, spelled correctly this time (meas. 65), falling to a tonic without passing through the dominant e-flat chord (Example 29).

Example 29. Poulenc, *Thème varié*, "Variation XI," meas. 63-66 (Coda)

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Critical comment has been divergent. Henri Hell hardly ranks it as a successful piano work. Maurice Hinson considers the work Poulenc's most important for the piano. Jean Roy felt the impossibilities of the work lay in Poulenc's attempt to draw from a single idea the substance of an entire work of major proportions. As Poulenc said about all of his piano music, perhaps the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes.⁵⁰ The lyric appeal is there; the work requires a fully developed piano technique; and the

⁵⁰ Hell, *Francis Poulenc*, p. 78; Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, p. 496; Roy, *Francis Poulenc*, p. 83; Poulenc, *Entretiens*, p. 32.

formal approach to the variation technique itself must be forgotten. There are no sectional variations here, nor figural except in Poulenc's sense of figures, no continuous variations, nor even free variations in the sense that is applied to say the Brahms-Handel Variations and Fugue, Op. 24. Free, the Poulenc variations are, but as was mentioned at the beginning of the discussion of this work, in the improvisational sense, although even here there is also a sense that Poulenc worked very carefully and perhaps even tediously, to write down the exact notation he wanted, after the many possible improvisational attempts were refined. They are lyric variations with no connotation of form intended. In fact, the continuous quality of each variation gives them a prelude- or etude-like appearance. Remember Poulenc himself said that the variations that formed Les soirées de Nazelles were improvised, were played "at portraits." The same method applies here. This work should be performed more for a wider audience. There is a recording by Jacques Février, but it has been unavailable at this writing. A summation of Poulenc's pianistic art must wait until a later chapter.

Improvisations III

In the years following, Poulenc was busily engaged in concertizing and writing his opera the Dialogues des Carmélites (1953-1956) as well as beginning a return that

was to last until his death, to chamber music. The remaining compositions for solo piano came from the years 1958 and 1959, during which time he added three additional Improvisations to the former twelve, and a third and last Novelette.

The Treizième Improvisation en la mineur, marked Allegretto commodo, was completed at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes in March, 1958.⁵¹ A note on the first page of the score indicates that the composer preferred that this and the next Improvisation be played together as a suite. The melodic line has a melancholy cast to it due to the pure form of the minor (Aeolian mode). The melody is repeated up an octave after the first 8 measures with a canonic effect in the left hand beginning the melody again two octaves below (meas. 10-11) and at the distance of 1 measure. The phrases overlap in the same way they sometimes do in the Lieder of Schumann or Brahms where the voice begins a phrase and the piano begins the same phrase before the voice has concluded. The melody is altered during the repeat (meas. 12), so that it also functions as a modulation to repeat the melody in f minor, fortissimo (meas. 22). After 8 measures, a ritard, and a semi-cadence on the dominant of f minor, the melodic idea of the previous transition leads to a middle section and a melody in C major (meas. 36).

⁵¹ Francis Poulenc, Treizième Improvisation (Paris: Salabert, c1958), pp. 1-4.

In 6 measures, this idea moves to E major (meas. 42), where it becomes modulatory again to lead to a final statement of the opening idea in the tonic, a minor (meas. 50). In reality this is the beginning of a coda also and the germ idea of a diatonic rising minor third (a' to c'', the inversion of the opening of the Schumann Piano Concerto in a minor, Op. 54) very quietly moves through both hands from the lowest to the highest registers of the piano to end triple piano. This work has a very haunting quality and as it fades away and slows down, it seems to disappear into nothing at the conclusion. This lyric 3/4 is dedicated to Mme Auguste Lambiotte.

The Quatorzième Improvisation en ré b majeur, marked Allegretto (strictement au même tempo d'un bout à l'autre) was also completed at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes in March of 1958, and is dedicated to Poulenc's first biographer, Henri Hell, whose book Francis Poulenc, musicien français, was published in Paris in 1958.⁵² Melodically this piece is not as interesting as its predecessor, but the 6/8 gives a nice lilt to the rhythm. This is one of Poulenc's miniatures that seems to almost overflow with ideas, in fact, too many for its brief 44 measures. The two most prominent rhythmic ideas are an even flow of melodic eighth-notes and a recurring rhythmic dotted-sixteenth and thirty-second. In

⁵² Francis Poulenc, Quatorzième Improvisation (Paris: Salabert, c1958), pp. 1-3.

fact, the mere wandering through the various keys and with these two basic melodic and rhythmic ideas intertwined, gives the work the sounds of being improvised. Measures 25-28 move down sequentially in a modulation based upon a measure of g-flat, e-flat, c-natural, and finally into what seems to be D-flat major, but with an a-flat melody dominating. However, in looking back in retrograde, the chord is really the dominant-seventh of D-flat major, the home key. It is all there but Poulenc stretches the ear over 4 measures rather than a sequence of four chords. The diatonic, although sometimes chromatically colored idea that now arises is a free retrograde of the opening melody, plus the dotted rhythmic idea, in combination.

As the Treizième Improvisation faded away in the upper registers of the piano, the Quatorzième Improvisation disappears into the lowest register with a favorite device of Poulenc's: a cluster sound of g-natural, b-double-flat in four thirty-second-notes (meas. 44) with an a-flat octave eighth-note followed by an open, low D-flat octave. This one measure tells much of the piano story of Francis Poulenc: one moment a snarling, confusing cluster of seeming chaos, and just as suddenly, absolute Gallic simplicity, clarity, and resolution. The cluster adds color, but the end result is a clear tonal center -- always!

During the summer of 1959, Poulenc wrote his last works for solo piano. The first was the concluding Novelette en

mi mineur sur un thème de Manuel de Falla from El Amor Brujo (Love the Magician).⁵³ The occasion that prompted the composition was the Centenary of Poulenc's first publisher, J. & W. Chester of London. The company published a centenary album in 1960, which included this composition dedicated to one of the gentlemen with whom Poulenc had dealt, Mr. Gibson. The original Falla theme was in 7/8, but Poulenc chose an Andantino tranquillo in 3/8 (Example 30). The indication baigné de pédales (bathed in pedal)

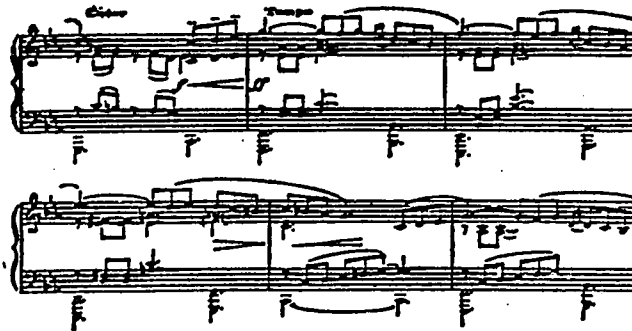
Example 30. Poulenc, Novelette en mi mineur, "the Falla theme on which it is based"



chords both their major and minor third simultaneously (meas. 68-69). The closing triad in the tonic major, E, contains a c-sharp and a f-sharp. As in the case of all transcriptions, it is possible to go to the original. However, Poulenc does give a loving, sincere facet to this theme, and to his old friend Manuel de Falla.

The last work for solo piano by Poulenc, was the Quinzième Improvisation en ut mineur (Hommage à Edith Piaf), completed in the summer of 1959, at Bagnols-en-Forêt.⁵⁵ This minor key Improvisation is a tribute to the late French chanteuse, who evoked the same kind of heart breaking sadness in so many of her songs. There are 6 measures of introduction, a lent lead in, and a subito a tempo (meas. 7). The melody is 12 measures long and is repeated fortissimo in octaves (meas. 18, Example 31) for an abbreviated 8 measures. The key goes to C major (meas. 27) for 15 measures

Example 31. Poulenc, Quinzième Improvisation, meas. 18-23



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⁵⁵ Francis Poulenc, Quinzième Improvisation (Paris: Salabert, c1960), pp. 1-5.

with a legato line based upon the first section. The c minor idea returns (meas. 40) in the upper register, pianissimo, and builds to a climatic fortissimo (meas. 53), dying away to a pianissimo on a picardy third. There is a quick breath pause, and then two c minor chords (meas. 72-64) -- no happy ending here, as with the lady's songs.

The listener may think of Piaf and even though the Sparrow's efforts were more effective than this composition, there is no doubting the sincerity of the gesture from a known contemporary in one field to a known contemporary in another. So few of Poulenc's piano compositions are in the minor mode. Piaf must have struck a chord on the melancholy side of the composer. One cannot argue with his taste. She was a thrilling performer, and France lost her, Cocteau, and Francis Poulenc in the same year, 1963!

If this chapter ends the discussion of the solo works, it does not end the discussion of works by Francis Poulenc that involve the piano. The following chapters are devoted to the areas of multiple keyboards, the concerti, the chamber music with piano, the vocal works with chamber orchestra which include piano, a brief look at the *mélodies*, and a summation of this composer's pianistic art.

CHAPTER VII

1918-1959: THE TWO PIANO MUSIC

Francis Poulenc's music for two pianos is very unevenly spread over his creative life. His earliest effort, the Sonate for Piano, Four Hands or Two Pianos, was written, along with the Trois Mouvements perpétuels, on the piano of an elementary school at Saint-Martin-sur-le-Pré in 1918, during the First World War.¹ Thirty-three years later, the composer returned to the music for two pianos and composed three additional works in 1951, 1952, and 1953. His last composition in this genre came in the summer of 1959, to bring the total to only five compositions. There is a Concerto for Two Pianos, but that will be discussed in the following chapter, which is devoted to the works for keyboard and orchestra.

Although the Sonate for Piano, Four Hands or Two Pianos was written during wartime, the completed work was dated June, 1918, at Boulogne-sur-Seine, which was before Poulenc was sent to the front.² In fact, this Sonate

1 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 8; Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), p. 29.

2 Francis Poulenc, Sonate for Piano, Four Hands or Two Pianos (London: J. & W. Chester, c1919), pp. 3-18. Titles are given as spelled in the edition consulted.

is dated earlier than the Trois Mouvements perpétuels (December, 1918), and may not have been composed as M. Hell indicated. The Sonate was revised by the composer in 1939, still cast in its original three movements.

The opening Prélude, marked modéré, 4/4, in c minor, is a very well balanced ABA with coda (pp. 3-8). The A contains two ideas over the same rhythmic figure in the *seconda* (meas. 1-25). The B is based upon the second idea of the A, an elaboration really, but hardly a development with many foreign key areas or the dramatic and dynamic tension associated with that section. Even this early work shows Poulenc's penchant for melodic invention (meas. 26-44). The A returns exactly as before (meas. 45-69), with all the keys identical to the first (exact repetition). The first movement ends with 2 measures of coda (presto strident) in 2/4, on a c minor chord of the ninth.

The second movement, entitled Rustique and marked Naif et lent, is a very short movement in a 4/4, C major (pp. 9-11). The simple, diatonic, repetitive line ranges over the octave only once, while remaining within the range of a perfect fourth the rest of the time. The effect is gently hypnotic. The first idea centers around c' and c'', with some feeling of the pentatonic (meas. 5) -- the entire idea, measures 1-8. The second idea, based upon the first is around g'' and g', with a more rhythmic punctuation, which is not really much (meas. 9-14). Measure 17 leads back to the idea from measures 5-8 with a couple of variants in

measures 17 and 19. Measure 21 recalls measures 13-14, and the closing measure is based upon measure 15. This movement is also a very straightforward ABA' with a coda based upon B.

The Final, marked très vite, 4/4, in C major, divides itself via tempi: Tempo 1 (meas. 1-16), presto (meas. 17-54), tempo 1 (meas. 55-70), and coda (meas. 71-72, pp. 12-18). The opening idea is another diatonic melody confined for the most part to the range of a perfect fifth but occasionally expanding to an octave. Obviously this idea is related to all of the ideas in both the first and second movement; in fact, it could be viewed as a peroration of the previous material. Measures 3 and 4 of the primo are derived in toto and inverted, at twice the speed, from the opening of the second movement. In measures 7 and 8 of the seconda, the figure is derived from the seconda of measure 37 of the first movement. Measures 11-15 are also derived from the first movement (meas. 37-40), and measure 16 is measure 22 of the second movement.

The presto (meas. 17) is on a G-pedal in the seconda (meas. 17-26), with the rhythm of the seconda of the first movement (meas. 1-25 and 45-69, respectively). The first idea of the presto appears against this rhythm in c minor, starting on the dominant, g (meas. 19, seconda). At measure 27, both hands of the primo and the left hand of the seconda, are from measure 37 (first movement), while the

right hand of the *seconda* plays simultaneously the opening idea of the third movement, but not in c minor. The necessary flats are added with just a hint of Phrygian on c. Measure 30 is measure 9 of the second movement in the minor (*primo*), while the *seconda* is measures 41-44 of the first movement. Measures 35-36 give the chord and the rhythm of the very opening of the sonata. Measures 42, 44, 46, and 48 are single note versions of measures 31-34 (*seconda*), which are in turn from measures 41-44 of the *seconda* of the first movement. The rhythmic ostinato from the first movement returns (meas. 49) on the single note g-natural in octaves (*seconda*). The *primo* (meas. 51-54) is an augmentation of the right hand figure in the *seconda* of the opening of the second movement (meas. 1-4).

Tempo 1 returns (meas. 55) with a variant on the opening idea of the third movement, which is taken from measures 5-6. Measures 57-68 equal 3-14 of the opening of the movement. Measures 69-70 are an octave addition and a 2 measure expansion of measure 15. The closing presto is from measure 37 of the last movement, and the final chord is a C major triad with an e-flat minor seventh simultaneously.

This sonata is a very compact, intergrated work. The middle section of the last movement is cyclic and could be considered developmental in that sense, i.e., the forms of Dvorak, Franck, etc. It is written with a dry astringency, which characterizes several of the early piano pieces and

with the "wrong-note" harmonies so typical. The Sonate is lucid in texture, and despite its brevity, is a miniature, which nevertheless, earns its title. The words of the late conductor Ernest Ansermet are worth remembering from the occasion of the publication in 1919:

I do not wish to hide my pleasure in seeing this music which strikes me as the most genuine and alive music that France has recently produced. Each of the three short movements establishes new harmonic boundaries without, however, any unnecessary embroidery. Using the simplest of musical devices and built on an equally simple though by no means unattractive pattern, the three movements do in fact, amount to a Sonata in the sense that Debussy's Pour le Piano and the earliest examples of the form may be considered Sonatas. Both harmonically and melodically they are very much to the point, showing a thoughtful knowledge of Stravinsky but unmistakably French in spirit: they reveal something of the subtlety of Ravel, the joviality of Satie, particularly in the Finale, and occasionally a spirit of abandon (in the sixth bar of the movement entitled Rustique) that recalls Chabrier. The somewhat child-like impression of these fresh and spontaneous pieces, of which the best seems to be the Rustique, is exactly what we are looking for in the music of youth. . . . (Poulenc) is one of the most attractive personalities in the new music of our time. 3

Childhood Revisited

For the next thirty-three years, with the exception of the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, Poulenc was not to return to the music for two pianos. However, in 1951, he wrote a film score entitled Le Voyage en Amérique. From that

3 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 9. M. Hell does not give the source of this quote, but it is possible that it is from Maestro Ansermet's own book, Entretiens en Musique?

film score, Poulenc, wrote: L'Embarquement pour Cythère: Valse-Musette pour deux pianos.⁴

The dedication reads: "to Henri Lavoirell, this evocation of the shores of the Marne, very dear to my childhood."⁵ Nogent-sur-Marne was the home of Poulenc's maternal grandmother. Poulenc explained to Claude Rostand, that Cythère was the shore of the Marne, within reach of the subway (Métro) system of Paris.⁶ The composer also mentioned the work to Stéphane Audel, as also evoking the small suburban taverns (usually with a pleasure garden).⁷

The composition is a lovely, simple, straightforward rondo, with the themes first in one piano and then in the other piano. The key is E-flat major and marked très vite et gai (a 1 temps sans aucun rubato), very lively and gay, at one beat to the bar without any rubato. The rondo looks like this:

A	=	meas. 1-16	E-flat major
B	=	meas. 17-47	B-flat major
A	=	meas. 48-63	E-flat major
B'	=	meas. 64-79	G and B-flat majors
A	=	meas. 80-95	E-flat major
C	=	meas. 96-127	C major
A	=	meas. 128-142	E-flat major
Coda	=	meas. 142-171	E-flat major.

4 Francis Poulenc, L'Embarquement pour Cythère: Valse-Musette pour deux pianos (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1952), pp. 1-11.

5 Ibid., p. ii.

6 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), pp. 32 and 176.

7 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 37; Francis Poulenc, Emmanuel Chabrier (Paris: La Palatine, 1961), p. 108.

This very accessible, rather leisurely, work was completed in Paris in July, 1951.

Le Bal Masqué Revisited

In the following year, 1952, Poulenc returned to Le Bal Masqué for the fourth and final time, after a hiatus of twenty years. This time, it was to write the Capriccio pour deux pianos, which like its solo piano sister, is based upon Part VI, the finale, of Le Bal Masqué. The work was completed at his country home in the Touraine, Noizay, in September, 1952, and simply dedicated to "Sam Barber," the American composer (b. 1910), a personal friend.⁸ A comparison of the earlier Caprice for piano solo, will show very little change, except a brief introduction of 8 measures, and the fuller sound possible with the two instruments rather than one. It is in the main, a very effective piece of writing, and perhaps, the idea for this medium presented itself to Poulenc because the year of Le Bal Masqué (1932), was also the year of the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra. It should not be supposed, however, that Poulenc would return to this work and do the two piano version exactly like the one for solo piano. While the change is small, there is, nevertheless, a very brief quasi cadenza inserted at rehearsal number 14, just prior to the entrance

⁸ Francis Poulenc, Capriccio, d'après le Bal Masqué pour deux pianos (Paris: Salabert, c1953), pp. 1-20.

of the voice part. Curiously, this work does not appear with any frequency on two piano recitals. While the duo-piano teams seem very content to play transcriptions of all sorts of literature, it is strange that they would shy away from a ready-made work that is so accessible and would bring rewards both to themselves and their audiences.

A Masterpiece

Shortly after completing the Capriccio, Poulenc took a trip to Marseille, where according to the score and his correspondence, he started his finest work for two pianos, the Sonate pour deux pianos. Begun in the Autumn of 1952, the work was completed in the Spring of 1953, at Noizay and dedicated to the inspiration of the work, the duo-piano team of Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale "with as much friendship as admiration."⁹

Cast, unusually so, in four movements, the first, entitled Prologue: Extrêmement lent et calme (Extremely slow and calm), is a 3/4, in C-sharp major (pp. 1-8). The first 15 measures are an introduction, consisting primarily of chords of the seventh and of the ninth. The analysis could extend to chords of the eleventh in order not to cover non-harmonic tones. The first idea in c-sharp minor, begins at measure 16. A slow, serene melody of 6 measures in

⁹ Francis Poulenc, Sonate pour deux pianos (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1954), pp. 1-39.

octaves in piano 1, is followed in the next 7 measures of consequent phrase, by a divided melody between the two pianos. Piano 2 takes the opening 6 measures again (meas. 16-21=29-34), but altering the last measure from d-sharp to d-flat in order to lead into the transition.

The tempo increases at the transition (meas. 35), with continuous sixteenth-note accompaniment in one or the other of the pianos, against an idea on a dotted rhythm, plus rising eighth-notes. This a preview of the second theme.

The second theme in a minor (Aeolian mode), is more symmetric than the opening idea (meas. 43-50, a 4 + 4 measure phrase, with the last measure a 2/4 each time). At measure 50, the end of the phrase is modified slightly in order to give a varied version of the second idea in 4 measures of C-sharp major (meas. 51-54), with a 2 measure extension taken from the transition idea to get back to a minor (meas. 57) to conclude the phrase, and another 2 measure extension from the transition (meas. 61-62), but this time leading abruptly back to the calme of the opening and moving to C major (meas. 63-67). This gorgeous melody of sublime serenity in C major, is like the first idea; it is presented in octaves between the two pianos as well as bearing a melodic resemblance. This idea (meas 68) is a retransition back to the opening C-sharp major idea of the movement (meas. 93), from measure 16 (Example 32, piano 1, page 163). This return is slightly varied until measure

108, when the introduction returns exactly for 3 measures, and introduces a coda based upon the introduction. The final cadence is C-sharp major with slow arpeggios rising (meas. 121-123), and a final b-natural that is reminiscent of the Prelude No. 2 in c-sharp minor by George Gershwin (1898-1937).

Example 32. Poulenc, *Sonate pour deux pianos*, first movement, meas. 63-78 (Piano 1)

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The second movement, Allegro molto: très rythmé, is a 4/4 in a minor (pp. 9-21). Although it is not so named, this movement is a scherzo-trio-scherzo. The scherzo has three ideas: (1) measures 1-16; (2) measures 17-27, a slight return of the first idea (meas. 27-32) to bridge into the third idea; (3) très allant (meas. 33-50), which in the closing measures (meas. 46-47) carries the rhythms from the transition of the first movement. A transition (meas. 51-54) leads into the trio (Surtout sans presser, above all

without pressing) at measure 55. There is a further indication of "extraordinarily peaceful," which marks the change to the trio.

The trio is a small aba with two basic ideas: one chordal (meas. 55-65), and a single line melody, first in single notes with a quiet accompaniment (meas. 66-73) to a gradual intensifier, thicker, chromatic texture (meas. 74-88). The chordal idea returns (meas. 91) and with a 3 measure extension leads back to the scherzo (meas. 97-99).

The first 9 measures (meas. 100-108) are almost exactly the same as the first 9 measures of the opening. Measure 109 is measure 17, but this time in the tonic, a minor, instead of C major as before. Measures 109-110 equal measures 17-18. Then theme two is varied (meas. 111-118). Theme one returns (meas. 119-122), varied to serve as a coda. Theme three from the first scherzo does not return in the repeat. Thus the movement looks like:

Scherzo:	A = meas. 1-16	a minor
	B = meas. 17-27	C major
	A = meas. 27-32	a minor to move to C
	C = meas. 33-50 51-54	A major; includes transition to Trio
Trio:	D = meas. 55-65	Trio an ABA
	E = meas. 66-90	
	D = meas. 91-99	
Scherzo:	A = meas. 100-108	a minor
	B = meas. 109-118	a minor
Coda	= meas. 119-122	a minor; based on A.

Poulenc directs that there be a very long silence before playing the Andante Lyrico: Lentement (pp. 22-28). Back to the key of C-sharp major, 3/4, Poulenc wrote a movement which

he thought the center and the most important movement of the work.¹⁰ Although the movement moves dynamically from fortissimo to triple piano, the general mood is one of contemplation and serenity. A choral-like motion of 12 measures, first in one piano and then the other, leads to the main idea, which is almost hypnotic in effect, with its constant a-sharps (meas. 12-20, Example 33). The consequent

Example 33. Poulenc, *Sonate pour deux pianos*, third movement, meas. 9-18 (Piano 1)

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phrase (meas. 20-27) varies slightly the opening 8 measures, and measures 28-34, provide a last idea that will play a greater role at the close of the movement.

The middle section (meas. 35-80) has several ideas: (1) open parallel octaves in piano 2 (meas. 35-45), with mostly a B-flat pedal in piano 1; (2) massive chords in

¹⁰ Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 172-173.

piano 2 (meas. 46-56), all fortissimo; and (3) a subito pianissimo wandering around outlining triads with appoggiaturas (meas. 57-67). Then a transition passage based upon the opening idea of the movement with repeated c-sharps (meas. 68-80) leads back to the opening idea, which returns (meas. 80) and duplicates measures 12-20. However, measure 28, in F-sharp major before, returns now greatly expanded (meas. 88), and this time leads into the coda with piano 2 playing nothing but c-sharps and b-sharps up four octaves and back, triple piano (meas. 95-108). Piano 1 elaborates a choral-like melody in chords in the right hand, with continuous eighths in the left hand based on measures 20-28. The closing measures are arpeggios with e-naturals and b-naturals, although the close is in the major. It is, indeed, a gorgeous movement of absolute simplicity.

The last movement, entitled Epilogue: Allegro giocoso, is very reminiscent of the opening of the last movement of the Piano Concerto of 1949 (pp. 29-39). This 4/4, in b-flat minor, has a phrase structure of 4 + 3 measures. The antecedent (meas. 1-4) and the consequent (meas. 5-7) have, upon repeat, measures 8-11 equal to measures 1-4, but the consequent phrase (meas. 12-14) is up a third to lead into a brief contrasting passage (meas. 15-17), which modulates to b minor, and the return of the opening 4 measures of the movement in b minor (meas. 18-21). The next 6 measures (meas. 22-27) have a rising scale passage that will assume

much greater significance in the coda, and measure 27 also contains the dotted transition idea from the first movement. Measures 28-30 are again the opening idea in b-flat minor, with measures 31-34 taken from measures 15-17. Measure 29 leads to a contrasting section (meas. 35-45) of brilliant chords (see third movement, meas. 46-56). Measures 42-43 contain alternating chords in both pianos, which will also play a role at the end of the sonate (meas. 93-94).

An abrupt halt to the motion brings a surtout très lent et calme (above all, very slow and calm) with an indication of the tempo of the Prologue. A 5 measure transition (meas. 46-50) leads into the C major melody, this time in full chords, from measures 68-80 of the first movement. Another transition (meas. 64-67) modulates to a subito tempo allegro gracioso (meas. 68-72), which contains material from measure 35. The opening idea returns (meas. 73) in e-flat minor for 4 measures modulation back to the tonic key of b-flat minor (meas. 78-84), which duplicates measures 1-7 of the movement. A brilliant downward rush in thirds by piano 1, leads to the coda, which contains several elements previously heard: (1) measures 88-90 from measures 22-26, (2) measures 91-94 from measures 41-43. Measure 95 brings a sudden change to tempo: très exactement le double plus lent (very exactly twice slower), which is a grandiose version of material from the first movement, i.e., measures 84-87 for measures 99-102 and measure 43, following, for

measures 95-98. Measures 105-112 are equal to the introduction and the coda of the first movement. The closing 2 measures (113-114) return to tempo 1 of the fourth movement, with the opening measure of the first idea of that movement and two b-flat minor chords.

At rehearsal number 16 (meas. 99), the London recording (CS-6583) with duo-pianists Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, inserts 4 measures that are not in the score. A later recording, made in 1973, with Jacques Février and Gabriel Tacchino, plays the score as written.¹¹ At this writing London records has no information due to the recording being made in 1968, and the production personnel being no longer employed at London.¹² Neither the pianists nor the publisher have offered any explanation or response to inquiries. The insertion is a logical, sequential 4 measures leading directly to the chord in the score at measure 100, except, of course, the 4 measures are not written in the score! An additional letter of inquiry was sent to the duo-piano team to whom the work was dedicated, Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, with no response at this writing.

Poulenc's biographers both feel that the Sonate pour deux pianos is an exceptional work. Jean Roy does not

¹¹ Francis Poulenc, Sonate pour deux pianos, Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, pianos (London CS-6583), side 2; Idem, Sonate pour deux pianos, Jacques Février and Gabriel Tacchino, pianos (EMI C 165-12519/22), side 8.

¹² William E. Shepherd, in a letter dated August 16, 1977, to the present writer. Mr. Shepherd is Manager, Consumer Relations, London Records, Inc., New York.

hesitate to designate it as the masterpiece of Poulenc not only in the area of the piano music but also in all of Poulenc's instrumental music. Roy reiterates that opinion when he later discusses some of the piano works.¹³ Poulenc liked the work, said that he took his inspiration from the painter Matisse, and that the piano writing was much better than that of some of his other works.¹⁴

In addition, Poulenc wrote a letter in 1955 to Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale which is concerned almost in its entirety with this Sonate. Although lengthy, Poulenc's ideas about the work are important:

It is with the Andante that I began, knowing already the general architecture of the work. Surrounded by a Prologue, an Allegro molto, and an Epilogue, this Andante is, for me, the very center of the work. It is not further a question, as in the Andante of the Concerto pour 2 pianos, of a poetic play before a portrait of Mozart, attached to my wall, but of a lyric and profound spirit. Inspiring me sometimes, from the writing of my choral music, I have attempted with passages, a great purity of lines -- example, the unison basses in the last measures of the Andante.

The first movement is conceived not as a first movement of the classic sonata, but as a true Prologue. Its second theme, animé, is not a rhythmic progression destined to better the lyricism of the melody, extrêmement lent, in C major, which forms the central episode.

The Allergo molto is a scherzo whose principal interest lies in the middle episode, extraordinairement paisible.

The Epilogue is not, to speak properly, a Final, but preceded by a new theme, the recapitulation of the 3 other movements.

¹³ Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 65 and 89; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 78.

¹⁴ Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 172-173.

I will say voluntarily that the Concerto pour 2 pianos is joyfully variegated whereas the present work has the seriousness of a string quartet. The proofs from this recording, to which you have had me listen, have ravished me. 15

The French have always valued good taste. M. Poulenc's did not fail him here. This Sonate, along with that of Bela Bartok, is a major contribution to the twentieth-century two piano literature. It is as said, a masterpiece!

A Remembrance

The last work of Poulenc for two pianos was an Élégie (en accords alternés, in alternating chords), which was completed at Bagnols-en-Forêt in the summer of 1959, and was dedicated to the memory of Marie-Blanche (Comtesse Jean de Polignac). Poulenc noted on the score that:

This Elegy should be played as if you were improvising it, a cigar in your mouth and a glass of cognac on the piano.

The syncopated notes (a sort of vibration of the preceding chord) should hardly be touched on.

On the whole you can never use too much pedal. 16

In his book on Chabrier, Poulenc attributes the first part of that quote to Claude Rostand in speaking of the Chabrier Valses romantiques.¹⁷ The last sentence is Poulenc quoting Poulenc from his Conversations with Claude Rostand, in the

15 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), letter dated September 17, 1955, Noizay, pp. 233-234.

16 Francis Poulenc, Élégie (en accords alternés) pour deux pianos (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1960), pp. 1-11.

17 Poulenc, Emmanuel Chabrier, pp. 75-76.

third conversation on the piano music.¹⁸ Poulenc became very definite on his feelings about the use or lack of use of the pedals in his music.

The Élégie is marked très calme et mélancolique, 3/4, in F-sharp major. The form is:

- A = meas. 1-32
- B = meas. 33-92, en animant peu à peu, with two ideas: (meas. 33-48 and 46-78, respectively), a small *abb'a*
- A = meas. 98-107
- Coda = meas. 107-120.

As the title implies, with the exception of the coda, whenever one of the pianos is playing the melody on the beat, the other piano echoes the same chord and harmonies off the beat. Poulenc's note is very careful to explain the desired sound. This is one of his lovely, lyric, singing melodies. The contrast in the middle section is achieved by speed and dynamics, with the ideas being expressed in different keys. In the coda the pianos play together in gentle rhythmic figures and more chromatically than in the previous sections.

This is, indeed, a loving tribute to a very close friend and patron of the arts. The Princess Edmond de Polignac was the aunt of the Comtesse Jean de Polignac, and they both commissioned many works and held notable salons during the period prior to the Second World War. The Marie-Blanche was the name the Comtesse used when signing poetry which she had authored.¹⁹

¹⁸ Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 27-35.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

Although few in number, the works for two pianos do contain two of the best compositions of Poulenc, the Sonate for Piano, Four Hands or Two Pianos (1918) and the Sonate pour deux pianos (1952-1953). These works are only five in number, which is exactly the same as the number of the concertos for keyboard and orchestra, all of which are also excellent works and all of which will be discussed in the next chapter devoted to the concertos.

CHAPTER VIII

1927-1949: THE KEYBOARD CONCERTOS

Poulenc started writing concertos by accident. In the home of the Princess Edmond de Polignac, he met the distinguished Polish harpsichordist, Wanda Landowska (1877-1959), who was preparing for the first performance of Manuel de Falla's El Retablo del Maese Pedro (Master Peter's Puppet Show), and who played the harpsichord in the first performance of the work, June 25, 1923.¹ This was the first time the harpsichord was used in a modern work. Poulenc was fascinated by the Falla work and by Landowska. On further acquaintance, Landowska said: "Write me a concerto." Poulenc promised that he would try.²

Even though Landowska, over the years of their friendship, led Poulenc to his eventual great love of J. S. Bach (1685-1750), for the writing of this work, he was led toward D. Scarlatti (1685-1757) and the French school of clavecin

1 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), p. 36.

2 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 76; Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 35; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 36.

composers. Poulenc explained the origins of the title Concert champêtre (rustic concert):

For a young man who, until he was eighteen, knew nothing of the 'country' but the Woods of Vincennes and the hills of Champigny, 'rural' means the outer suburbs. Landowska lived in 1928 in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, not far from Ermenonville and the work is set in a very definite atmosphere of the eighteenth century. This concerto is rustic as Diderot and Rousseau; the country of Reveries du promeneur solitaire if you wish.

This explains the refined character of some of my melodic material. 3

Poulenc did not rush immediately into the composition of the Concert champêtre pour Clavecin (ou piano) et orchestre. It was actually composed between April, 1927, and August, 1928.⁴ The first performance took place on May 3, 1929, with Wanda Landowska, to whom the work is dedicated, as soloist and the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, conducted by Pierre Monteux.⁵

The first movement, Adagio: Allegro molto, 4/4, D major/minor, is 397 measures long (pp. 1-32). The slow, stately introduction, with on-the-beat-written-out ornamentation by the soloist consisting mainly of mordents (meas. 1-27), is a dialogue between soloist and orchestra that rises to a triple forte climax (meas. 27) on the dominant. Cast in an overall trisectional form, the first section of the first movement (meas. 27-110) is a 2/2 with the opening

3 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 78; also quoted in Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 37.

4 Francis Poulenc, Concert champêtre pour Clavecin (ou Piano) et Orchestre (Paris: Salabert, c1929), pp. 1-68.

5 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 37.

theme presented by the soloist in D major (meas. 27-43). The second idea serves as a transition (meas. 44-70), and while this idea does modulate to A major, the opening returns in that key (meas. 71-82). New material appears (meas. 82) and functions as a closing theme for the first section. All the constant running eighth-notes have the same effect as the constant sixteenths in the J. S. Bach keyboard concerti. The first section ends on an a minor triad; the key signature changes to no sharps or flats; there is a grand pause; and the second section begins.

The second section (meas. 111-286) opens rather stentoriously in the brass of the orchestra, which is not a large orchestra, in open octaves, and the soloist does likewise (meas. 111-127). The persistent a-sharps change, enharmonically, to b-flats, and it becomes apparent that measures 111-138 are again a rather stately introduction (stately by virtue of the large note values, not any slackening of tempo) to a fierce, turbulent middle section, which begins percussively in the harpsichord on a f-flat-fully-diminished seventh chord. Poulenc prolongs this ambiguity (meas. 139-154) until the real spelling of the chord becomes clear, an a-double-flat-fully-diminished-seventh, resolving down a semi-tone to f-sharp, the dominant of the key of b minor (meas. 155). This cadence comes as a real release and is followed immediately by a driving

military-like theme on the solo instrument with many b-naturals repeated in alternating hands (meas. 155-170). The orchestra takes up the idea, repeats it in two parts, a modulation using this idea begins (meas. 203), and the idea is repeated in g minor. The key changes to e minor (meas. 242), and the orchestra drives relentlessly, with brilliantly blaring trumpets, onward in a swirling mass of sound, stopping abruptly on a half-diminished seventh, a grand pause, and followed by an accompanied cadenza (meas. 287-313). Poulenc will use this device again in the Piano Concerto (1949). There is, incidently, a tune in the cadenza (meas. 298-304) that returns in the finale in full orchestra, that suggested some vulgar connotations to one critic and to which Poulenc later replied (Example 34).

Example 34. Poulenc, *Concert champêtre*, first movement, meas. 293-304

The image shows a musical score for measures 293-304 of the first movement of Poulenc's *Concert champêtre*. The score is in G minor and features a cadenza. It includes piano and orchestra parts with various markings such as "Allargando molto", "p", and "ff". The score is arranged in three systems, with the piano part on the top two staves and the orchestra part on the bottom two staves. The tempo marking "Allargando molto" is present in the first system. The score ends with a grand pause and a cadenza.

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A subito Allegro molto ushers in the final section of the first movement, serving as a retransition back to the opening idea, which only is given once (meas. 333-349). Thematic material from measures 82-91 follows (meas. 349-358). The material from the middle section serves as closing material for the movement, which ends triple forte in d minor.

Poulenc was not a composer who used the compositional technique of thematic development. The compositional technique used is not unlike that of the Baroque, melodic ideas being spun out. Poulenc used sectional forms with themes presented in alternation with one another. However, in this work, the middle section does work up to the greatest point of tension, not by manipulation of the foregoing material, but by the nature of the new thematic ideas, the frequency of modulation, and the keys used away from the tonic D major/minor.

The second movement, an Andante in the Mouvement de Sicilienne, a 6/8 in g minor, opens in the orchestra with one of Poulenc's most attractive ideas (pp. 33-43). The idea recalls the first movement theme of Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 in a minor, Op. 56, "Scotch." The soloist enters (meas. 17), alternates between the major and minor mode of the key, modulates, and shares the opening idea with new counterpoint against the orchestra in b-flat minor (meas. 23-34). A further modulation brings the new

key of A-flat major and a new idea based upon the first, over which the soloist embroiders arpeggios (meas. 36-53); the idea is restated in E-flat major (meas. 53-65). A brief cadenza for the soloist (meas. 65-83), which is joined at the close by the orchestra, is based on the second half of the first idea of the first movement. There follows a very interesting retransition of close harmonies between the soloist and the orchestra for a return of a variant of the first idea of the movement, this time in the tonic major, G (meas. 94). The statement is repeated in part, and the coda, with much use of a lowered third and sixth steps, plays on the major-minor idea of the harpsichord's first statement in the movement.

The soloist has the first word in the finale, marked presto, 2/4, in D major (pp. 44-68). This idea is in triplets to the half-beat, which is reminiscent of the triple division so favored by Vivaldi in his concerti. These sextuplets soon give way to quadruplets as the orchestra enters (meas. 17). The metronome suggestion increases the speed from 108 to 132 to a quarter note. The opening triplet idea never returns completely. When it returns in part as a variant, it is actually the main idea of the movement (meas. 94). This variant leads to a cadence and is shared by the soloist until the orchestra takes up the soloist's very first idea, only now in groups of four rather than six (meas. 40). It soon is apparent

that this is a transition based upon the opening material. The move is toward g minor, but leads instead to G major, with the triplet figures from measures 5-6 of the soloist's opening. This is a marvelous use of the materials, and it is interesting to note how well the various fragments of thematic material combine with one another.

Orchestra and soloist reach a resounding g octave, which appears to be the tonic of g minor, but is actually the third of E-flat major, and finally moves down to f-sharp to become the dominant of b minor (meas. 74, 80, and 84, respectively). All this preparation has been leading up to the moment of a soft melody with its insinuating dotted rhythms in b minor. Harmonically, Poulenc has done a rather unusual thing in both of the outer movements. In the Classical era, it was usually the minor mode that moved to the relative major and the major mode usually moved to the dominant. Poulenc has moved from the major to the relative minor in both outer movements and is thus, being true to certain Baroque, not Classical, practices, e.g., Handel's opera Julius Caesar (1724), Cleopatra's aria, Piangero, in E major for the A section of the da capo aria and then moves to c-sharp minor for the B section.

The dotted figure, rather than a tune, appears or touches various tonal areas (meas. 88-135). The momentum is great, much like that of the middle section of the first movement. There is finally a dominant preparation on b-flat

for a brilliant chordal theme (meas. 136) in E-flat major in successive measures of 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 4/4. This idea will play a greater role later, now however, it leads to the barracks tune, which the critic attacked later, and which had already been given in brief, in the cadenza of the first movement. An abrupt tonal change brings the tune back in b minor (meas. 148 and 156, respectively). In the midst of this whelter of sound comes the soloist with one of those indescribably beautiful melodies which seem to be always on the tip of Poulenc's pen, with a long and very legato line (meas. 165). It is short lived, for Poulenc never allows sentimentality to take over. The E-flat major idea returns, this time in B major (meas. 185). The momentum halts for another accompanied cadenza on the dominant of D major (meas. 192-203).

The coda is based upon the E-flat chordal idea from measure 136. It begins with a solo passage on this idea (meas. 204-213); there are brief interruptions by the orchestra; and the solo continues as the orchestra gives an idea which is much like a fanfare. All is brilliance, and instead of getting dominant-tonic and vice versa, the orchestra, on a D pedal, plays a tonic-six-four followed by a minor submediant chord (vi, meas. 269). A grand halt (meas. 285) returns the tempo to that of the first movement with the soloist again fluctuating between the major and minor mode as in the second movement opening. This time, as

before, the minor wins in an arpeggiated chord by the soloist alone and then a single low D (meas. 291).

This impressive first concerto was attacked by the critic Gabriel Marcel. Later Poulenc replied:

. . . he found in the finale, shocking and inexplicable 'barracks noises'. That is very exact. For me, a confirmed city-dweller, the bugles from the Fort de Vincennes, heard from the nearby woods, were as poetic as hunting horns in a vast forest for Weber. 6

Whatever the tune denoted to the critic, the lady in question, Wanda Landowska, loved the concerto, played it often, and put her feelings in writing.⁷ Although the title reads for harpsichord or piano, Poulenc preferred the harpsichord even though he played the piano version in New York during one of his tours to the United States with Pierre Bernac.⁸

Aubade

The premiere of the Concert champêtre, May 3, 1929, occurred at a time when Poulenc was busily fulfilling another compositional commission. His friends, the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles, had asked him to write a ballet for a private party they were giving at their hotel in Paris. Poulenc's idea was to compose a choreographic

6 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 78; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 37.

7 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), letters from Wanda Landowska to Poulenc dated August 2, 1928, September 5, 1928, and May, 1929, pp. 74-76.

8 Idem, Entretiens, pp.76-77.

concerto for a pianist and a dancer simultaneously. The Vicomte had put eighteen musicians at Poulenc's disposal. Thus, what Poulenc called an "amphibious" work, was born.⁹

The Aubade: Concerto chorégraphique pour piano et dix-huit instruments is then, a hybrid between a concerto and a ballet. In the score Poulenc directed that for concert performances, only the word concerto be printed with a list of the movements and no subtitles.¹⁰

As with each of his ballets, Poulenc wrote his own scenario.¹¹ The story in this instance is about the chastity of Diana, and was given, as such, at the private party on June 18, 1929, Poulenc having written the work at Fontainebleau and Paris during the short period of May and June, 1929.¹² However, at the first public presentation on January 21, 1930, George Balanchine introduced male dancers and entitled the work Diane et d'Acteon. This was totally against Poulenc's wishes.¹³

The work is scored for 2 each of the woodwinds, 1 trumpet, 2 horns, 3 tympani, 2 violas, 2 violoncelli, 2 string basses, and piano.¹⁴ As Poulenc well stated,

9 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 79-80; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 37-38; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 37 and 108-110.

10 Francis Poulenc, Aubade, Study Score (Paris: Salabert, c1931), pp. 1-72.

11 Idem, Entretiens, p. 80.

12 Poulenc, Aubade, p. 72.

13 Idem, Entretiens, pp. 80-81. Poulenc goes to great length to explain the idiocy of the idea.

14 Poulenc, Aubade, p. iii. This study score also shows the desired placement of the forces. There is also a score for the piano concertant, which is 23 p. long.

the scenario alone gives the work its form, which is eight movements to be played without pause.

As the title, concerto, implies, the piano is the concertant instrument, and its lead role is immediately established in the first movement: Toccata: Lento e pesante (cadence: molto animato, pp. 1-5). "It is a glade at dawn, a fanfare-like opening serves as an introduction for piano and winds."¹⁵ The rest of the movement is devoted to a solo piano toccata of driving brilliance (meas. 12-63, Example 35, meas. 12-13). As in his earlier Example 35. Poulenc, Aubade, "Toccata," meas. 12-13

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Toccata of 1928, it is almost impossible for Poulenc to remain completely dry and percussive, relying solely on the motor, muscle of the instrument and the performer. He must get melodic, lyric, singing, and, indeed, he does. He was the pianist at the first performance. Many of the figures will appear later in the keyboard concertos, notably in the Concerto pour deux pianos and in the Concerto pour orgue,

¹⁵ Francis Poulenc, "Scenario," in Aubade: Concerto chorégraphique pour piano et dix-huit instruments, Piano Concertant Score (Paris: Salabert, c1931), p. ii. The entire score is 23 p. long.

orchestre à cordes et timbales. The figures have been encountered previously, at slower tempo, at measures 19-20 of "Hymne," in Trois Pièces of 1928 (See Chapter III, Example 7, p. 61).

The second movement, Récitatif: Les compagnes de Diane, marked Larghetto, finds the companions of Diana asleep on the ground (pp. 6-10, Study Score). "They rouse themselves one by one, oppressed by an ill foreboding." (p. iii, Piano Score). This movement as the title indicates is a lyric declamation on a larghetto theme that serves as an introduction to the next movement.

The Rondeau: Diane et Compagnes, marked Allegro, in A major, shows Diana, "consumed by a burning passion, passing among her companions with disordered robes, going out and returning again with signs of weariness" (p. iii, Piano Score, pp. 10-26, Study Score). This long movement (meas. 88-202) is an ABA' with a beautiful opening melody that is reminiscent, in a gentle way, of the Brahms Rhapsody in E-flat, Op. 119, No. 4. All is charm and grace now.

The middle section in C-sharp major, marked piu mosso, is a rather frenetic affair with lines much like those of the allegros of the later Organ Concerto (1938). The piano moves to an accompanying role here, while the winds fairly gasp out their figurations at the required speed. There is a brief contrasting area before the C-sharp idea reasserts itself, to lead back to the opening Rondeau material. The

movement ends on strokes of the tympani, trying to decide on the major or minor mode of the key of A -- the minor wins. There are so few compositions of Poulenc completely in the minor mode, but how he does favor the last chord being in the minor in a major mode composition.

A brief tenuto leads to a Presto: Toilette de Diane (meas. 203-282, pp. 27-37, Study Score). "Diana's friends are eager to adorn her, but she yields with bad grace" (p. iii, Piano Score). The minor ending of the previous movement is brightened in this spritely C major -- that lowered third had a purpose. What remarkable agility is required of all concerned here. Even the trumpet gets a turn at the tune. This movement never stops, and through much use of secondary dominants, keeps the tension level high. This Frenchman makes the winds fairly take to wing.

A second Récitatif: Introduction à la Variation de Diane: Larghetto follows (pp. 38-42, Study Score). Here:

Diana presses to her heart a bow which has been given to her and dances a sad and dejected Andante. The dance finished she throws away the bow, lies down, and abandons herself to despair. 16

As is indicated, this movement is a variation on the lyric declamation of the second movement. There are many dotted rhythms, trills in the strings, lyric lines in the oboe, clarinet, and piano, all leading to a sff, a brilliant

16 Poulenc, "Scenario," in Aubade, p. iii. Piano Score.

burst in E-flat major. Without pause the clarinet takes the pick-up to the lovely melody of the next movement.

This Andante con moto (meas. 318-374), is a long lined melody taken first by the clarinet, then the oboe, and finally the piano (pp. 43-49, Study Score). The melody is similar to those of Carl Marie von Weber (1786-1826). On the restatement by the oboe, the modulation leads to a faster middle section. The first tempo is returned, this time by the piano. Poulenc uses his customary abbreviation of the first idea, and the deceptive cadence to vi, continues through the coda, giving the end of the movement a feeling of c minor, but the chord is in the six-four position.

Diana rises and flees into the wood, returning almost immediately. Her companions surround her as she begs them to leave her alone. The youngest one gives her her bow which she thrusts away with a movement of dejection. She continues to be crestfallen. Then suddenly, profiting by the distraction of her companions, who are questioning each other with their eyes, she bounds afresh into the forest. Dismayed they look uncomprehendingly in the direction in which she has disappeared and see her arms making a final gesture of farewell. 17

The marking is Allegro feroce: Désespoir de Diane (meas. 375-406, pp. 50-56, Study Score). This is, indeed, a truly amazing ferocity. The piano role is now mainly one of accompaniment, although every now and then, it punctuates the silences with driving triplet figures, which eventually

17 Poulenc, "Scenario," in Aubade, p. iii. Piano Score.

plunge into the bass of the piano to a cadence. The wind parts require agility and accuracy plus, with rather sharp dissonances, there would be an intonation problem as well.

The conclusion, the Adieux et depart de Diane is an Adagio (pp. 57-72, Study Score). The concluding lines of the scenario read: "overcome, they fall to the ground, and

little by little become motionless with grief. Quickly the dawn approaches. Everything is still. It is morning." (p. iii, Piano Score)

This movement is of majestic serenity. Very stately, chorale-like chords in the piano open this portion of the movement (meas. 407-474). There are brief moments of dialogue, where the winds and the brass take over for 2 measures, and then the piano returns with its continuing chorale-like movement of chords. The coming of dawn is a rather immobile affair; the sunrise is depicted by the rising dynamic level. The flutes, clarinets, and piano establish a reiterating arpeggiated figure which continues to the end. The climax comes when the tympani join the ensemble with broad strokes outlining an a minor triad. Then the instruments begin to drop out. By measure 471, only the string bass, violoncelli, tympani, and flute remain, with long sustained (immobile) tones in the clarinet and bassoon. The piano enters alone (meas. 472), followed by the winds, and the piano has the last word with an open octave A (meas. 474).

Poulenc was fond of the Aubade and spoke with real

affection for it to both Claude Rostand and Stéphane Audel.¹⁸ In his Correspondance, Poulenc speaks several times of the possibility of recording the work.¹⁹ Apparently he never got the opportunity, for the Henri Hell biography contains a discography dating from 1959, and no mention is made of a recording with the composer.²⁰ However, Poulenc does speak to Stéphane Audel of a "recent mounting at the Opera-Comique," and thanks to Dr. Demar Irvine's reliable information, the composer did, indeed, participate in a performance of the Aubade on November 20, 1952, under the direction of Pierre Dervaux.²¹

Concerto For Two

The Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre was commissioned by the Princess Edmond de Polignac for the Festival of Venice in 1932. It was the desire of the Princess that Poulenc and his friend from childhood, Jacques Février, play at the festival, hence the idea for a double concerto. Poulenc was delighted with the commission and wrote the work rapidly -- he said in two-and-one-half months.²² The score

18 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 65; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 81.

19 See letters on pp. 192 and 250. These references were made while Poulenc was on tour in the United States.

20 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 113.

21 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 65; Dr. Demar Irvine, in a letter of July 19, 1977, to the present writer.

22 Idem, Entretiens, p. 82.

simply states that the work was completed at Le Tremblay in the summer of 1932.²³ The first performance was given on September 5, 1932 at the International Festival of Music of Venice, with the composer and Février at the pianos and the Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, under the direction of Desire Defauw; a performance that Poulenc called flawless.²⁴ In the two piano score Poulenc gives the placement of the musicians, the orchestration, the number of players, and the caution that the number of strings should be exactly as given.²⁵

Two brilliant d minor chords usher in a whirlwind introduction of the opening Allegro ma non troppo (pp. 1-19). Poulenc said it was the playing of Alfred Casella that gave him the idea for the opening, especially measures 7-18 (Example 36).²⁶ Perhaps Casella also gave Ravel

Example 36. Poulenc, Concerto pour deux pianos, first movement, meas. 7-9

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23 Francis Poulenc, Concerto pour deux pianos, Two piano score (Paris: Salabert, c1933), pp. 1-53.

24 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 82; Idem, Moi et mes amis, p. 66; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 43.

25 Poulenc, Concerto pour deux pianos, p. ii.

26 Idem, Entretiens, p. 34.

the idea for the opening of his Piano Concerto in G, written about the same time. Excepting the bitonality of the Ravel opening, the opening of the two works have similar qualities and sounds.

The first theme (meas. 19) is reminiscent of the opening toccata of the previously discussed Aubade. This theme begins a long dialogue between the two pianos themselves, and the orchestra. Measure 62 gives a tune that will return later in the movement in the same guise, which is much like that of the Braziliera from Milhaud's Scaramouche Suite. In reality, perhaps, it is the other way around. Milhaud's suite was not written until five years after the concerto, 1937. The orchestra picks up the first idea and races head long into a lento subito (meas. 92-125). This area is characterized by a lyric theme on a dotted rhythm of short range, in 2 measure phrases, and with the repetition of the pattern on several pitch levels. Tempo 1 returns (meas. 126) suddenly with a catchy idea in E-flat major and built practically on the E-flat triad. The dance tune (meas. 82) returns (meas. 143), and a chromatic idea from measure 135 reasserts itself (meas. 151) and builds to a climax. The coda is lento subito (meas. 164) et très calme until the close. Poulenc was especially fond of this coda which he said was inspired by the Balinese music heard at the last exposition in Paris.²⁷

27 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 83.

The larghetto in B-flat major is in Poulenc's own words, a return to Mozart, because he preferred Mozart above all other composers, and because he felt he was a descendent of Mozart in the sense of his own emphasis and abilities with a melodic line (pp. 20-31).²⁸ Not only melodically, but there are also similarities to the slow movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 in d minor, K. 466, in both key and form.

The first theme is a long, flowing, legato idea, given first to piano 1 and then on the restatement, now in E-flat major, to piano 2 (meas. 1-25, Example 37). There is a

Example 37. Poulenc, Concerto pour deux pianos, second movement, meas. 1-7

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled '1^{er} PIANO' and contains the first theme in B-flat major, measures 1-7. The bottom staff shows the restatement of the theme in E-flat major, also measures 1-7. Both staves feature a flowing, legato melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

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peaceful codetta played in turn by each pianist that brings the first section to a quiet close (meas. 26-50).

The key changes to A-flat major, and the tempo becomes faster. The melodic line is doubled in both pianos. A

²⁸ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 83.

transition (meas. 59-66) leads to a repeat of the idea in E-flat major, and then immediately back to A-flat major again (meas. 67-78). The middle section closes with two ideas: (1) the transition idea from measures 59-66, greatly expanded in several keys, and (2) a retransition back to the opening idea, based upon measures 9-12 from piano 1, and with a new counterpoint in piano 2.

The return of the opening (meas. 125) is abbreviated and followed by the same codetta material that closed the first section. Just before the end of the movement, the melodic and rhythmic ideas from the middle section are touched upon (meas. 143-145).

The finale: Allegro molto, opens with 2 measures of chords cadencing in D major, much like the d minor opening of the first movement (pp. 32-53). Piano 1 leads off again with a driving idea in triplets between the hands in measures of 2/2. Piano 2 joins, they modulate to b-flat minor for a second idea which is reminiscent of the Deuxième Novelette (1928) in the same key (Example 38). This is one

Example 38. Poulenc, Concerto pour deux pianos, third movement, meas. 42-45

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of those Prokofiev "corners" (meas. 36-78). Measures 79-126 are a contrasting area away from b-flat minor and with greater melodic emphasis although the ubiquitous triplets are ever present. B-flat minor returns (meas. 126), is abbreviated, and yields to yet another melody (meas. 137), first in B-flat major, and then D major. Measures 169-180 lead to one of the most rhapsodic, passionate, and powerful themes of the movement (meas. 181-207). It is obviously derived from the first idea of the middle section of the second movement, speeded up, but also has an ancestry in the first movement of the Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2 in g minor, Op. 22. The volume builds to fortissimo for a link to the transition theme from measure 115. This modulates (meas. 208-235) to a plus calme (meas. 236), for a peaceful, serene melody not unlike that of the last movement of the Concert champêtre (meas. 165 of that work). All the performing forces get a chance at this idea (meas. 236-259).

Tempo 1 returns with triplets, et al (meas. 260), but the triplets are from measure 79 and not the opening of the movement. A grand pause of a measure of 5/2, leads to the coda, which is suspended harmonically for measures on the dominant and the submediant of d minor (meas. 272-278). The ending comes without ritard in alternating chromatic chords between the pianos playing on and off the beats in a 6/2 measure. This too is very reminiscent of the close of the first movement of the Ravel Piano Concerto in G (meas. 279).

There are almost too many ideas in this concerto. Poulenc was absolutely overflowing with creativity here; however, the ideas are related, do flow well together, are presented in a varied way, and they seem to connect with each other like box-cars on a train. If this sounds like Arthur Hutchings describing the Mozartean conception of the first movement of his piano concertos; then, so be it. The developmental technique of the Classical era is not there, but Poulenc manipulates speed, modulations, dynamics, textures, hence, his own view of the developmental idea.

Poulenc did love this concerto, but admitted that it was a work that he never thought about.²⁹ However, the composer was very pleased over the success of this concerto in the United States, and he said:

The reason for the success of this Concerto in America is very simple. There, they adore music for two pianos and the teams of duo-pianists are as great in number as string quartets in Europe. . . . (Its place of importance) is not so much its intrinsic musical value as its instrumental success. It is incontestable for example that my Concerto for Organ, is one of much greater musical complexity. ³⁰

An Organ Concerto

The Concerto en sol mineur pour orgue, orchestre à cordes et timbales was completed between April and August, 1938, at Noizay and Anost, respectively.³¹ This work, like

29 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 82-83.

30 Idem, Moi et mes amis, pp. 65-66.

31 Francis Poulenc, Concerto pour orgue, orchestre à cordes et timbales, Study score (Paris: Salabert, c1939), pp. 1-47.

the previous Concerto pour deux pianos, was dedicated to the Princess Edmond de Polignac, who had also commissioned it. Poulenc went to the French organist-composer Maurice Duruflé (b. 1902) for aid in the organ registrations.³²

While the Poulenc biographers also give the date 1938, the work must have been composed over a long period of time. Poulenc mentions playing the concerto for the Princess in a letter to her niece early in 1936.³³ Again on May 1, 1936, Poulenc addressed himself to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac:

The Concerto approaches completion. It has given me a very bad time but I hope that such as it is, it is good and will please you. It is not the pleasing Poulenc genre as the two pianos, but rather of the Poulenc in route to the cloister, very fifteenth century (sic), if you wish. 34

On August 15, 1936, Poulenc again addressed himself to the Comtesse, lamenting what an unhappy year 1936 was; that he had music stacked on his piano for concerts; that there was so much work to be done; and finally, he mentioned the Concerto as, "a serious and austere work in a very new inclination."³⁵ The last letter of 1936, to the Comtesse again, said that the Concerto was not going well because of pressures from editors, who wanted him to write for the piano; however, the underlying tone was a hint that the

32 Poulenc, Concerto pour orgue, p. 1.

33 Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 56-57; Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 49; Poulenc, Correspondance, letter to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac dated 1936, p. 95.

34 Poulenc, Correspondance, pp. 96-97.

35 Ibid., pp. 97-99.

way the concerto was going to turn out was not congenial with his personality at the moment.³⁶ The letters contain no further reference to the concerto until September 17, 1938, when the Princess Edmond de Polignac wrote from England to the composer about her great pleasure over the new concerto.³⁷

The opening fanfare for the organ alone, resembles Baroque ornaments, written out (mordents and slides, meas. 1-49). The several e-naturals lend a g Dorian sound. The remainder of this first section, the entire concerto being played without pause, is a dialogue between the organ and the string orchestra, moving toward a dominant preparation for the opening Allegro in g minor (meas. 50).

The energetic idea of the Allegro giocoso (meas. 50-97) is built on alternating thirds and arpeggios in thirty-second-notes (Example 39). Measure 56 contains the germ

Example 39. Poulenc, Concerto pour orgue, meas. 50-52

The image shows a musical score for Example 39, which is a short excerpt from Poulenc's Concerto pour orgue, measures 50-52. The score is written for organ and string orchestra. It features a complex rhythmic pattern of thirty-second notes and arpeggios. The organ part is in the upper staves, and the string orchestra part is in the lower staves. The music is characterized by its energetic and rhythmic quality.

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36 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac dated 1936, pp. 99-100.

37 Ibid., letter from the Princess Edmond de Polignac to Poulenc dated September 17, 1938, pp. 113-114.

element of triplets that will be a major feature of a later allegro section. While the sectional features are Baroque in the main, and despite Poulenc's reference to the fifteenth century, there is also the ever present nineteenth-century technique of thematic transformation, so dear to the heart of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), e.g., Les Preludes. This first allegro is basically in quadruplets; the next time it will be sextuplets and triplets.

Much of the energy comes from the rapid change of keys, i.e., g minor (meas. 54), f-sharp minor (meas. 61), d minor (meas. 64), and finally f minor (meas. 66). Obviously, these tonal areas are only touched upon and sometimes not even fully established before a change of tonal center. The organ on a C pedal (meas. 76-84) exchanges repeated four note figures with the orchestra. This leads briefly to e minor for a transition back to g minor and the opening statement of the section. However, the mode changes to G major and a G pedal continues until the section ends abruptly (meas. 97) on a g minor-ninth chord containing both a f-sharp and a f-natural.

The next section, number 3, subito Andante moderato is the longest section (meas. 98-217). The organ begins a long solo in which a dotted eighth-sixteenth rhythm modulates to A major for an orchestral theme (meas. 115) not unlike that found in Franck's organ chorales. The material is constant, but the enharmonic changes bring again several

tonal moves. These tonal moves, based upon secondary dominants, cloud a basic C major until a tonic-seventh chord definitely resolves to F major (V/IV, meas. 138). At this point three important figures appear that are connected throughout the work: (1) a thirty-second to sixteenth figure, descending along a F major triad (meas. 139), (2) a sextuplet figure for solo violoncello appearing later in an allegro section and probably derived from the first allegro section (meas. 140), and (3) the repeated eighth-notes in the second violins and the violas (meas. 138-147, Example 40).

Example 40. Poulenc, Concerto pour orgue, meas, 138-141



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There are some beautiful harmonic moments in this section, e.g., a misspelled fully-diminished-seventh chord on c in the organ leading to a poignant tonal confusion with f-sharp against f-natural and g-sharp against a-natural. The cross-relationships are not grinding due to the slow tempo and the soft dynamic level, which aids the hearing of

of them, as well as the spacing of two octaves between the first violins and the solo organ (meas. 142). The section is further characterized by the long organ pedal points: F (meas. 138-141), C (meas. 142-145), D-flat (meas. 146-148), B-flat (meas. 150-152), and A-flat (meas. 153-156), to finally resolve to G.

Now the organ part is written out as even eighth-notes in a variation of the Franck-like theme (meas. 158). This modulates back to F major (meas. 178), which is harmonically like measure 138, but the rhythm is evened out to quarter-notes along a F major triad. The strings go to thirty-second-note tremolos (meas. 200), and the organ begins to move in even quarters. The general atmosphere is one of forward movement (meas. 200-217). The tempo accelerates, but just before the change, there is an abrupt halt, and the high strings have 2 measures not unlike the sound found in the Preludes to Acts I and III of Giuseppe Verdi's opera La Traviata (meas. 215-216).

The effect is momentary for the next section, Allegro molto agitato, follows immediately, in a minor. This section is based upon the first allegro, but with the sextuplets hinted at by triplets in measure 56. The entire section (meas. 217-278) is triplet based until measure 253. A modulation by circle of fifths (Baroque again?), descending from A, G, F, E-flat, and finally D-flat major, with material from measures 76 and 53. A turbulent organ solo

(meas. 262-271) leads to an exchange, triple forte, of a chord in the organ followed by tympani strokes on A and c (meas. 272), which is like the beginning G and B-flat (meas. 3). Measures 274-276 have the Verdi-like motive again and lead to the next section.

Section 5, marked Très calme: Lent (meas. 279-314) is related to section 3. Measures 290 and 179 are alike except that the key is now A-flat major instead of F major. This very quiet, short section is a transition back to tempo de l'Allegro initial (meas. 315).

This Allegro section is related to section 2. The section is based upon the second idea of section 2 (meas. 76), the static repetitions, again in G major. Poulenc adds to the rhythmic excitement by repeating the same material on several pitch levels, but never long enough to really be in a key. The material is inverted (meas. 360), and finally comes to a halt on a D major-minor-seventh-minor-ninth chord (meas. 362).

The last section, marked Tempo introduction: Largo, has the effect of a coda or epilogue (meas. 363-403). On a very long G pedal (meas. 373-398), against pizzicato strings, there is a beautiful viola solo (meas. 373-380), and then one for solo violoncello (meas. 385-388), with the entire violoncello section sustaining an inverted pedal d' (meas. 373-396). It is very coloristic. The closing measures are in the organ, on the opening material, and triple

forte. The close is in octave g-naturals in the organ and pizzicato g-naturals throughout the other instruments, très sec et pizzicato.

The overall form is:

<u>Measures:</u>	<u>Sections:</u>	<u>Keys:</u>	<u>Tempo:</u>
1-49	1	g - - - - -	<u>Andante</u>
50-97	2	g-D-f-g-G	<u>Allegro giocoso</u>
98-217	3	A-C-F-G-F	<u>Andante moderato</u>
217-278	4	a-f-D ^b -e-a	<u>Allegro molto</u>
279-314	5	a-A ^b -D	<u>Tres calme: Lent</u>
315-362	6	G-C-D	<u>L'Allegro initial</u>
363-403	7	g/G-g	<u>Introduction: Largo.</u>

Poulenc may have been off the mark when he referred to the fifteenth century in his letter concerning the concerto; the biographers may have hit upon part of the truth when they made reference to a Baroque fantasie in the manner of Buxtehude; but one of them, Henri Hell, was so wise to assert, "the external, rhapsodic quality is very well worked out in terms of form."³⁸ He could have gone farther just in terms of measures and sectional relationships:

<u>Sections:</u>	<u>Measures:</u>	<u>Combined Measures:</u>
1 and 7	49 and 40	89
2, 4, and 6	47, 61, and 47	155
3 and 5	119 and 35	154.

If this work was, indeed, a labor, then the long labor was

³⁸ Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to the Comtesse Jean de Polignac dated May 1, 1936, pp. 96-97; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 56-57.

worth it, considering the results. The Organ Concerto is one of Poulenc's finest compositions in any genre! The composer's concluding words on the subject were:

The Concerto for Organ occupies an important place in my works, on the margin of my religious music.

It is not a Concerto da chiesa, but by limiting the orchestra to strings alone and three tympani, I have made it possible for a performance in the church.

Played only two times in France, the first under the direction of Désormière in 1939, the second with Charles Munch in 1943, it is incredibly popular in America.

I regret that it is not represented in the French record catalogues because if one wishes to get an exact idea of the serious side of my music, it is here that one should look, as in my religious works. 39

Return to the Piano

Poulenc's last work in this genre, was the Concerto pour piano et orchestre, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, completed at Noizay between May and October, 1949, and first performed by that group with the composer as soloist and Charles Munch conducting, on January 6, 1950.⁴⁰ Like the Organ Concerto, Poulenc seems to have had the idea of writing a piano concerto long before the commission was offered. Writing to Pierre Bernac in 1945, the composer said: "I wish to write in part, in the spring, a new Concerto for piano, destined for the winter season, 1946-1947."⁴¹

39 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 115-116.

40 Francis Poulenc, Concerto pour piano et orchestre, Two Piano score (Paris: Salabert, c1950), pp. 1-55.

41 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter from Poulenc to Pierre Bernac dated 1945 (possibly October?), pp. 170-171).

During the first American tour of Poulenc and Bernac in 1948, came the commission from the Boston Symphony. They returned to France in January, 1949, and in July, Poulenc was writing to Darius Milhaud:

. . . and then I have advanced my Concerto for Boston (the first movement finished and the second completely outlined). This work fills me with anguish because only an oven would be happy to commence this, my second tour (of America in the winter). 42

The next letter mentioning the Concerto was written to Poulenc's niece, Brigitte Manceaux, three days before the premiere. He was in great anticipation of the performance and could not praise the symphony and the conductor enough, especially the "thirty Frenchmen among them."⁴³

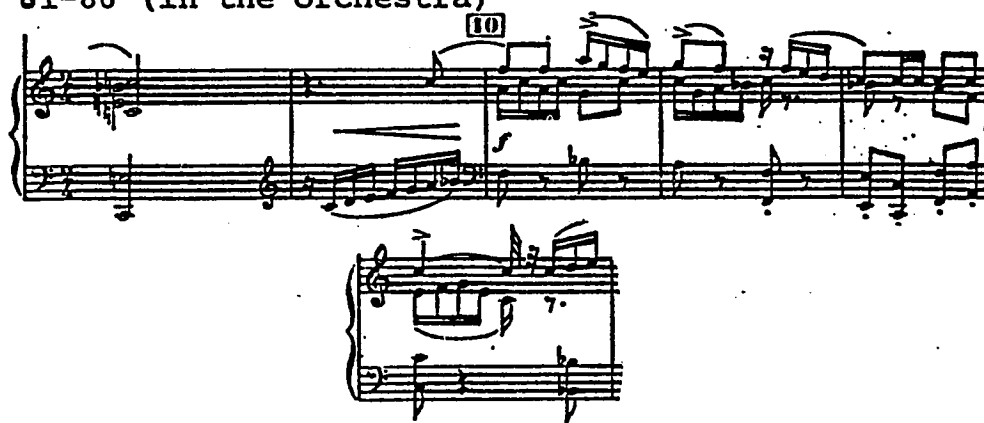
This is a concerto of melodies and not a concerto in the sense of a nineteenth-century virtuoso concerto. The opening Allegretto in C-sharp major, begins with a two-note upbeat by the soloist in the tonic minor (pp. 1-27). This melody is heard four times: in c-sharp minor (meas. 1-13), in a-flat minor (meas. 14-30), in f-sharp minor (meas. 40-43), and again in a grandiose manner in c-sharp minor (meas. 43-59) to close this first portion.

A second melody begins in the orchestra in E-flat major (meas. 60), and this transition theme and its variant will be used quite a bit during the course of this movement.

42 Poulenc, Correspondance, letter dated July 25, 1949, p. 187.

43 Ibid., letter dated January 3, 1950, p. 189.

The real second idea (meas. 82-145) is heard in F major and touches several other tonal areas to come finally to C major that turns into c minor for a return of the transition idea, this time in D major (meas. 146-162, Example 41). The key Example 41. Poulenc, Concerto pour piano, first movement, meas. 81-86 (in the orchestra)



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of this transition theme is deceiving, because the theme begins on a minor two (ii) chord.

The transition theme flows directly into yet another melody (meas. 163), and still another (meas. 186), but they are all derived from the transition idea, and the consequent phrase of the opening theme of the movement. The forward momentum comes abruptly to a halt at a subito largo, for an accompanied cadenza such as was seen in the Concert champêtre. Here brass and piano carry on a dialogue in choral-like fashion with the piano interjecting short phrases alike each time and finally leading to a return of the transition theme (meas. 241) as a link back to the opening idea of the movement. The first and second themes (sounds a bit

like Gershwin) return abbreviated and lead to a coda at a quicker tempo (meas. 304). The material used comes from one of those melodic ideas derived from the transition melody. The movement ends with a smash in C-sharp major.

Before passing to the second movement, mention should be made of the high flute solo that begins at measure 241 to connect the cadenza with the first idea. This is very reminiscent of the same spot and functioning for the same purpose as in the Rakhmaninov Piano Concerto No. 3 in d minor, Op. 30, first movement.

The second movement, Andante con moto in E-flat major, is the melancholy Poulenc, of the beautiful singing melodic lines (pp. 20-31). The melody is heard first by the orchestra (meas. 1-12), then the soloist, a brief start again in a new key (G major), cut short, for a contrasting episode that builds tension as well as preview what is to come in the middle section, but however, modulates for an abbreviated repeat of the opening melody once more, in A-flat major (meas. 25).

The serenity is cut short by a subito piu mosso (tempo exactly of the first movement) for a middle section (meas. 33-74). The emphasis here is bravura, flashing scales, fortissimo chords, and dotted rhythmic figures at various tonal levels. The retransition back to the opening melody (meas. 74) is based upon the trombone idea from measure 52. The opening returns and leads to a quiet coda, again based

based on the trombone idea from the middle section, gently fluctuating between the major and minor modes of the key of E-flat. The major wins this round.

The finale: Rondeau à la française: presto giocoso, is a romp (pp. 32-53). This rondeau Poulenc hoped would be a fond souvenir of Paris for the American audiences. He felt the Americans were disappointed, but did love the American public and spoke highly of them.⁴⁴ The movement is literally a potpourri of tunes, some familiar to the French audiences, some to the American audiences. The rondeau idea that starts the movement is like a cement that holds the rest of the tunes and the movement together. The piano begins, and it is joined by the orchestra (meas. 1-22). Poulenc must have known the finales of the Mozart piano concertos well. The second idea (meas. 23-50) is more lyric, but its brief statement leads back to the rondeau refrain, which just as quickly passes to a third idea (meas. 57-72). A fourth idea, which may be a quote from La Fayette's sailors (meas. 73-104), begins immediately.

The refrain returns, this time in b-flat minor, having started in f-sharp minor (meas. 105-108); the third idea follows (meas. 109-112); then the second idea (meas. 113-120); which is then followed by the accompaniment figure to the fourth idea, in the piano before, now in the

44 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 133.

orchestra (meas. 121-131); and finally, the first part of the fourth idea in A major, returns (meas. 132-142, from meas. 73). All is compression here; it is breathless.

Suddenly a melody not heard as yet, but very familiar to American audiences, the opening phrase of Stephen Foster's Old Folks at Home, in D-flat major and then in F major (meas. 147-172). The idea from measure 73 returns a third time and builds to a tremendous climax and modulation that leads back to the opening refrain (meas. 173-233).

From this point to the end of the movement is a brief flash of the ideas: (1) refrain (meas. 234-240); (2) the second idea (meas. 241-250); (3) the third idea (meas. 251-258); (4) the Stephen Foster phrase (meas. 259-268); and (5) an idea based upon the fourth tune (meas. 269-285). Number 5 could be seen as the coda or all five as a lengthy peroration on all the materials that have gone before, including the refrain which in that sense leads off rather than concludes. The form would be: AABACDACBDD'EEDA Coda: ABCED. However, these tunes flash by in such a brief span of time, that they hardly merit an alphabetical representation as given.

The ending probably did leave the audience a bit surprised, because the concerto simply trails off into nothing. It ends not with a crash or whimper; it just evaporates on a chromatically descending scale to F-sharp.

Poulenc felt the work to be one of his minor efforts,

but nevertheless, liked it very much:

I do not regret, however, the manner in which I conceived it, with that sort of musical slang of the finale.

This was in my fiftieth year, the last manifestation of a style that age, very naturally, made me abandon.

One will see, by the results, what will be the fate of this work. 45

In a letter to his old friend, the composer Henri Sauguet (b. 1901), right after the first performances, Poulenc wrote:

Boston a success, public positive, good press. Washington, a very great success, good press. New York a very modest success, acid press. . . . Thank God I have had an excellent article in the Musical America, which is the sacro-sanct journal of the concert societies of America. 46

Poulenc was not without a sense of humor. Despite the cool French press at the premiere of the concerto in the summer of 1950, he teased Claude Rostand about the duality in his personality that the critics seemed to harp on, as well as the fact that he did not know where he might turn next, and that could be worse!⁴⁷ All this was said and written before the completion of the Dialogues des Carmélites. In this stark work, the musical world's Puck, suddenly turned into a force to be reckoned with. By the time Poulenc was teasing Rostand (1953-1954), he knew the direction he was going!

45 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 133-134.

46 Idem, Correspondance, letter dated February 12, 1950, New York, pp. 191-192.

47 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 134.

This Concerto may be a concerto of melodies, but what melodies they are, and in that lies its merit. The modesty of the composer comes to the fore in that a large portion of the melodic material is carried by the orchestra, and the repetitions are not redundant due to the varying timbres of the multi-colored orchestration. Many times the piano part is merely uneven groupings of arpeggiated chords providing a swirl of sound around the melody lines. However, make no mistake, for a conductor, a pianist, or an orchestra that do not know this work, one rehearsal will be pushing the chances for success. It will survive, is receiving more and recent attention via recordings, and M. Poulenc need not worry about the fate of his work. He thought and called Old Folks at Home a "negro spiritual." The error does not matter near as much as this Frenchman's inclusion of the tune with the thought that America would enjoy something that belonged to it -- a very liberal, interesting fellow, this French gentleman.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 133; Francis Poulenc, Piano Concerto, Gabriel Tacchino, piano, Georges Prêtre conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Angel S-36426), side 2. M. Tacchino performs the Aubade on side 1 of this record.

CHAPTER IX

1926-1962: THE CHAMBER MUSIC WITH PIANO

In Chapter III, the early Sonata for Two Clarinets (1918), the Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon (1922), and the Sonata for Horn, Trumpet, and Trombone (1922), were discussed because of the solo piano transcriptions that Poulenc made of them in 1925. In this chapter the works that involved the piano will be discussed. As a point of fact, this indeed, completes the chamber music of Poulenc. The early sonatas are the only ones that do not originally use the piano in their scoring. The chamber works are ten in number, and begin with the Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon.

The Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon was completed between February and April, 1926, in Cannes.¹ Dedicated to Manuel de Falla, it was first performed on May 2, 1926 at a concert that also included the first performances of the Chansons gaillardes, with Pierre Bernac, and the Napoli: Suite pour piano, with Marcelle Meyer.²

1 Francis Poulenc, Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, c1926, 1954), pp. 3-34. Title given as in the edition consulted.

2 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 32.

The first movement, presto, begins with a lent introduction that contains a dotted figure in its 16 measures that will be used later in the movement (pp. 3-15). The introduction could be called heraldic with the solid, stately chords in the piano, then the dotted motive and written out ornament first in the bassoon, then the oboe, and finally the piano. The presto is launched at measure 17. The composer said that the first movement followed the plan of a Haydn Allegro.³ He may well have looked to Haydn for inspiration, but the result is pure Poulenc. The movement is not monothematic; it does not follow the Classic use of contrasting tonalities; nor is there anything like a development section or the use of the thematic development technique. The clarity, crispness, and joyous, energetic qualities may remind of Haydn. In fact, except for some delicious "wrong note" harmonies, Haydn might well have enjoyed this work, and he experimented so frequently, the harmonies might also have delighted him. But the results are Poulenc, not Haydn.

The first part ends with a perfect cadence in A major (meas. 102). The term first theme group could be used because the theme is composed of several ideas: (1) an energetic, mostly diatonic, staccato idea (meas. 17-38), (2) a sequential, lyric, legato melody shared first by

³ Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 121.

oboe, then piano (meas. 33-47); and (3) an idea closely related to the first. The remainder of this section (meas. 62-102) contains a return to the opening presto idea, and closes with the third idea -- all being slightly varied, abbreviated, and relinked out of their original order.

The middle section contains three distinct melodies and a slow part. An abrupt modulation to f minor gives the oboe a lyric melody; the bassoon follows; and then, the two join. A transition based upon the lyric portion of the first theme group (meas. 134-147), simply changes the mode to the major for a chorale-like melody like that often found as a second theme in the works of Brahms, e.g., the Piano Concerto No. 1 in d minor, Op. 15, first movement. Example 42 shows the beginnings of this chorale-like melody (meas. 147-160). A perfect cadence in F major introduces a change

Example 42. Poulenc, Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, first movement, meas. 147-152

The musical score for Example 42 is presented in four staves. The top two staves are for the Oboe and Bassoon, both in treble clef. The bottom two staves are for the Piano, with the right hand in treble clef and the left hand in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (F major). The time signature is 3/4. The score begins with a circled '11' above the first staff. The Oboe part starts with a melodic line marked 'mf'. The Bassoon part follows with a similar line marked 'f'. The Piano part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines, marked 'p' and 'mf'. The tempo is indicated as 'meno rallentir' and the mood as 'très chanté'. The score concludes with a perfect cadence in F major.

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of tempo and a new melodic line of rhapsodic quality, that is shared in turn by all three of the instruments (meas. 160-176).

The retransition begins (meas. 184), incorporating the accompaniment figures from the preceding slow section for the piano, while the winds use the heraldic motives from the introduction. The opening returns (meas. 191), and the concluding part uses material from the first, but rearranged, abbreviated, and totally in keeping with the twentieth-century aesthetic: if you have said it once, either do not say it again or abbreviate, rearrange, condense, e.g., the first movement of the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra (1943).

Thus: meas. 192-195 equal meas. 48-51 and 95-98,
 meas. 195-212 equal meas. 17-34 and 62-65,

which abruptly joins material in the piano from measures 134-145 (meas. 211-219). The chorale-like melody returns (meas. 219) and leads to the coda (meas. 227-238), which is also built upon the opening presto idea. Even here, in this early work, the later techniques of Poulenc are already in definite operation.

The second movement, an Andante con moto in B-flat major, is a Mozart-like andante that previews the slow movement of the Concerto pour deux pianos (1932) (pp. 16-21). If the work of 1932 is reminiscent of K. 466, then this Andante recalls K. 332 in the same key, the second movement of the Piano Sonata in F major, which incidently, this movement of Poulenc ends in f minor despite the B-flat opening.

All of the materials seem to flow into one another from the outset. The opening 4 measures for solo piano (Example 43) also serve (meas. 15-17) to modulate through D-flat major, C major, to dominant preparation for b minor (meas. 23-24), where the tonality becomes B major instead.

Example 43. Poulenc, Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, second movement, meas. 1-4

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Measures 1-2 return a last time (meas. 52-55) in F major/f minor. From that point on there are variants on the materials and figures that have gone before, even the appoggiaturas in the oboe (meas. 62-63) that have appeared in the piano part previously (meas. 22 and 52-55).

The Rondo, marked très vif, a 6/8 in D-flat major, is another gallop (pp. 22-34). Poulenc said that the plan for this movement was from the scherzo of the Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2 in g minor, Op. 22.⁴ There is a likeness here, but such a salad in this work -- Haydn, Mozart, Saint-

4 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 121.

Saëns, and Poulenc. They are all classicists, however, in one way or another.

The refrain has several ideas, not all of which return each time: (1) measures 1-7, (2) measures 8-13, (3) measures 13-19, and (4) the close, measures 19-29, with (1) returning for 6 measures (30-35). However, measure 35 is a 9/8 instead of the 6/8 heard previously (Example 44).

Example 44. Poulenc, Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, third movement, meas. 1-7

The musical score for Example 44 consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the tempo and mood marked 'Très vif J. 133-144'. The piano part is marked 'f gai' and the oboe/bassoon part is marked 'léger'. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a series of chords.

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The first couplet (meas. 36-75) begins with a long, legato line (meas. 36-45). The second idea is a chromatic, descending line as opposed to the diatonic descending line of the second (2) idea of the refrain (meas. 46-52). A rhapsodic idea combines with the rhythm of the opening refrain idea (1), and the chromatic second idea from this

couplet to prepare for the return of the refrain (meas. 52-75). When the refrain does return, however, it is only the first idea (1, meas. 76-83).

The second couplet begins and this could be seen as the first and perhaps, closest development section Poulenc ever wrote. He goes farther afield tonally in this couplet -- even the first couplet was in D-flat; the material comes from rhythmic changes of material from the first movement; the rhapsodic moment from the middle of the first movement (meas. 160-176), this time in f-sharp minor, is changed; plus, the ending material of the middle part of the first movement is also used. At measure 120, there is a dotted-quarter idea that will play a role later. This cyclic use of materials will occur in other works.

The refrain returns (meas. 143), this time giving the first 9 measures of the opening (1 and beginning of 2), omitting measures 10-11, and taking up again at measures 12-24 (rest of 2 and part of 3, meas. 143-164). The dotted-quarter idea from the second couplet, appears briefly for 2 measures (165-166, from 120-125 before). Next come 5 measures from the first couplet (meas. 52-56), and at measure 171 of the finale, the chorale-like theme from the first movement, this time in D-flat major, starts a drive to the coda (from meas. 147-160 of the first movement).

In the coda the dotted-quarter idea is incorporated again with the material (meas. 187-192). The meter has changed to 2/4 for the closing page, with the material

being based on a variant of the very opening of this movement. This mixture of thematic ideas seems to be a hallmark of Poulenc. It is amazing how his themes and material go together in so many ways, the closing couplet being like a peroration of the entire composition. It also tends to discredit the "improvised" idea of his music. It may sound improvised, but for all this material to interchange, there had to be much thought and planning behind it.

Poulenc loved this Trio, which he felt sounded clearly and with equality of the instruments. He stated that Ravel had always told him to use the method of basing his movements on the forms of preexisting models.⁵ Henri Hell said, "the very heart of Poulenc is in this adroit little work written now over thirty years ago (now fifty)."⁶ There is no reason to feel that these gentlemen are wrong. The work is a delight from the first to the last!

A Conundrum

The next chamber work was a real mystery. It is the Première Bagatelle en ré mineur pour violon et piano, completed at Cannes in April, 1932.⁷ The mystery being that Henri Hell did not mention the work at all. Jean Roy did not mention the work, nor did he cite it in his list of the

5 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 121.

6 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 33.

7 Francis Poulenc, Première Bagatelle en ré mineur pour violon et piano (Paris: Salabert, c1932), pp. 1-7.

the complete works of Poulenc at the conclusion of his biography.⁸ Allen Hughes cited the work in his catalogue of works, but gave no source and the date of 1931.⁹ The publisher, Salabert, simply listed it under violin and piano with no date, no indication that it might have had another source other than just a separate duo, and the title Premier, indicating that there were either more than one or others contemplated for the future by the composer. The truth of the matter is that this Bagatelle is yet another transcription for violin and piano from Part IV of Le Bal Masqué, which bears the same title.¹⁰ If the date of completion in the score is correct, then this transcription was probably, written even before the premiere of the original work, which occurred on April 20, 1932 and not 1931.¹¹

Like the other three transcriptions from Le Bal Masqué, this is also exact, simply reduced to two instruments. In the original version, the violin is conspicuous in its lead position among the other instruments. This probably gave Poulenc the idea for the transcription, since the piano was the lead in Parts II and VI, which he used. It strikes as

8 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964), pp. 165-173.

9 Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., Bruce Bohle, editor), p. 1709.

10 Francis Poulenc, "Bagatelle," in Le Bal Masqué, Part IV, Piano and Vocal Score (Paris: Salabert, c1932), pp. 24-28.

11 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 43.

a very old view of music, i.e., get as much mileage from a good idea as one can, or if the idea is good, then hang originality and use it to best advantage, no matter how many times or ways. The Bagatelle is marked presto, in 4/4, and continues as such throughout the work. Listening to the original work will give the exact materials of the transcription. After hearing the complete cantata, however, this short excerpt may leave the listener wanting to hear the remainder, especially Max Jacob's poetry, which is used in three of the six parts of the original. Except for the final song, Poulenc restricted his transcriptions to those instrumental portions of the cantata.

A Long Gestation Period

The Sextuor pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson et cor is another mystery from the standpoint of positive dating. The score gives the dates 1932-1939 under the composer's name on the first page, with the additional information of a new version dated August, 1939.¹² All of Poulenc's biographers list the 1932 date and either 1939 or 1940 as the date of the new version.¹³ However, in a letter dated March 5, 1931, Poulenc, writing to soprano, Suzanne Peignot, one of his favored interpreters of the

¹² Francis Poulenc, Sextuor pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson et cor (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, c1945), pp. 1-68. Dedicated to Georges Salles.

¹³ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 59; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 42 and 167; Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," p. 1709.

early songs, gives her the program for a Festival Poulenc in Paris on June 1, 1931.¹⁴ On March 31, 1931, in another letter to the composer Henri Sauguet, Poulenc tells how hard he is working; that he will give on June 1, 1931, the aforementioned concert, and again, gives the program, which also includes the Sextuor.¹⁵ The subject does not come up again in the Correspondance. However, Poulenc's own memory seemed to be also inaccurate, for when questioned by Claude Rostand about the Sextuor, he replied with 1934!¹⁶ However, Poulenc went on to say that he was happy with the "1939" revised version. He was now indulgent, since he had re-adjusted the proportions, achieved a better equilibrium between the instruments, and gotten a very clear sound.¹⁷ The copyright date on the score is 1945. Poulenc must have been indeed, unhappy with the first results, if indeed, it was ever performed; and the Second World War prevented the final version from getting into print for a few more years.

Cast in three movements, the first is marked Allegro vivace: Très vite et emporté (very lively and passionate, pp. 1-31). The first 5 measures of introduction establish A major. The first theme, very rhythmic and driving (meas. 6-60), appears on A (meas. 6 and 23), on E (meas. 37), and

¹⁴ Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), p. 84.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁶ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 121.

¹⁷ Ibid.

on A again (meas. 53). The four repeated a-naturals in the flute and oboe (meas. 8) will have much significance in the last section of this movement and in the second idea of the last movement. Naturally with six instruments, there can be a great exchange of ideas back and forth as well as repetitions on different or on the same pitches, using different members of the ensemble. However, generally speaking, the piano provides accompaniment figures during this exchange among the winds during the first 60 measures. The piano does become more prominent from measure 60.

At measure 61, Presser très peu (only a little faster), the piano introduces the beginning of the second idea, and the repeated pitches from measure 8 (meas. 72) begin playing a decided sec role as they are exchanged among the winds. There are three basic ideas here: (1) lyric, but with rhythmic vitality (meas. 64), (2) very dry, rhythmic emphasis (meas. 72), and (3) an idea derived from (1) (meas. 86), with a meter change to 2/4 (meas. 78).

The momentum continues to measure 111 where, abruptly, a bassoon solo (librement) leads into a subitement, presque le double plus lent sans trainer (suddenly, nearly twice as slow but without dragging), a middle section of great lyric beauty. The opening idea is given to the piano (meas. 120) with the interval of the diminished seventh (in spelling only, the sound is a major sixth), given prominence (Example 44, p. 222). The oboe takes up the idea (meas. 127), and

the flute provides the consequent phrase (meas. 131). A

Example 44. Poulenc, Sextuor, first movement, meas. 120-122 (piano)

Sublime-ment. presque le double plus lent sans trainer

mf *ligèrement rubato*

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second idea begins in the horn (meas. 143). While this horn idea makes its way, measure 151 sees the return of the repeated notes from measure 8 in slow tempo. The horn begins an expansion of the piano melody (meas. 120) at measures 152-153. This reaches a climax (meas. 158), subsides, and the piano begins the retransition (with repeated notes from meas. 8) back to the opening tempo and ideas (meas. 166-183).

The opening returns (meas. 184) with the winds on *d*-natural now, while the piano remains the same as in the original opening (meas. 6). The winds return to their original pitches (meas. 190). In the return:

meas. 184-204 equal meas. 2-26,
meas. 205-212 equal meas. 41-48,
meas. 213-216 equal meas. 51-54,

with variants in figures and different instruments playing

other than they did previously. A 5 measure transition leads to the coda, which is derived from the second idea (meas. 72). Those repeated notes (meas. 8) return (meas. 222) and increase in prominence until measure 250. The closing 3 measures are derived from the opening introduction to the movement.

The second movement, entitled Divertissement: Andantino, begins in D-flat major and ends in a-flat minor (pp. 32-46). This is another cantilena movement. The middle section is much longer than the two outer sections. The oboe presents the opening theme whose phrase structure is: 4 + 4 + 3 measures. The first 2 measures return, break off, and lead to a codetta (meas. 14-18).

The middle section, le double plus vite (twice as fast), begins with an idea in the horn. This idea and its consequences lead to a reiteration in the piano (meas. 31), which again breaks off with a new idea (meas. 37). There is no key signature, but the triads in the right hand of the piano are reminiscent of the Debussy Prélude (Book II), entitled General Levine "eccentric", except these Poulenc chords slide chromatically and do not "escape" the key in the same way as in the Debussy. This is only a brief contrast (meas. 37-42), and the horn theme returns with the oboe, closing the section on a variant of the flute idea from the middle section of the first movement (meas. 132). This oboe lead (meas. 54) moves to the retransition and

the modulation back to the opening theme of the movement (meas. 65-76).

The opening theme is now shared with several instruments (meas. 77). The consequent phrase is varied to lead directly into the coda (meas. 86-92). There are graceful turns in thirty-second-notes, a note value not prominent in this movement (meas. 86-88). The ending is serene, triple piano.

The Finale: Prestissimo, 2/2, in C major, is again Poulenc's individual conception of the rondo (pp. 47-68). The refrain, of which the first 6 measures serve as introduction but do not play a role, except rhythmically, whenever the refrain returns, begins at measure 7. It is a snappy, jazzy, syncopated idea that will remind, perhaps, of Stravinsky. Part of the refrain is repeated in B major by the horn and the bassoon (meas. 19-20). A rising line in the horn, that will return later in the movement, serves as a transition (meas. 21-33) to a very melodic first couplet (meas. 34-69).

The melodic line of the first couplet is heard first in A-flat major, with its consequent phrase, then in D major (meas. 50), followed by the same rising line in the horn (meas. 62) that served at the transition (meas. 30), to lead back to the return of the refrain, this time in G major (meas. 73). This return is signaled by 3½ measures from the introductory rhythm (meas. 69-72).

The next transition is based upon the repeated note idea from the first movement (meas. 8) and leads to the next couplet, which has a melodic line with the emphasis, in spelling as well as sound, of the interval of a major sixth (meas. 92) of the first movement (meas. 120). This idea appears first in A major/a minor, mostly in the piano (meas. 92-124), then in c-sharp minor, combined with the rising line in the horn (meas. 131), and finally in a grandiose presentation (meas. 148) in G major, to return to the refrain in its home key of C major (meas. 164). A rhythmic figure in the piano, which has only 1 measure in the introduction, is now expanded to 6 measures before the entrance of the refrain (meas. 158-163).

Instead of continuing, the refrain idea breaks off after 4 measures, to return to the melody from the first couplet (meas. 167). This in turn gives way to a very rhythmic version of the transition to the second couplet (meas. 174-199). Toward the end of this (meas. 190), the crushes (acciaccaturas) from the introduction of the movement also return, expanded in length, and the repeated notes from the first movement (meas. 8) also return (meas. 186-189).

The coda, subito très lent (suddenly very slow), (meas. 200-225) begins with a downward arpeggio which was the consequent idea from the second couplet. The melodic idea following (meas. 203) is from the middle section of the

first movement. The end is the repetitious rather than the static conclusion used at the end of the Aubade, not, however, one of Poulenc's inspired moments.

As Roy mentions, there is not the concise quality of the Trio here. But Poulenc is at ease here, the carefree Parisian, with no uneasiness, in fact almost too casual.¹⁸ The refrain of the finale does have the same dance hall quality to it as was found in the Rondeau from Les Biches, the finale of Le Bal Masqué, and will be found in certain portions of the Sinfonietta of 1947 as well as the Piano Concerto of 1949, where in both instances Poulenc said that he was dressing too young for his age.¹⁹

The Violin Sonata

The summer of the Franco-German Armistice (1940), after being demobilized, Poulenc spent the remainder of the summer at Brive-la-Gaillarde with his cousin and friends.²⁰ While there he sketched three new works: Babar, Les Animaux modèles, and the Sonata for Violoncelle and Piano. Poulenc did not return to Babar until 1944-1945, and the Violoncello Sonata until 1948. However, by the premiere of Les Animaux modèles in August, 1942, he was composing another chamber

¹⁸ Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 42 and 93.

¹⁹ Harry Neville, jacket notes to Poulenc, Sinfonietta, Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de Paris (Angel S-36519).

²⁰ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 61.

work, the Sonate pour violon et piano. The works share the common fact of being composed or started during wartime.

In point of fact, this was the third violin sonata for Poulenc. In 1919, the composer wrote a sonata for Helene Jourdan-Morhange. It was prepared in such haste that only the violin part was written out for the performance. The composer destroyed the manuscript.²¹

The second sonata dated from 1924 and was written for Jelly d'Aranyi to whom Ravel's Tzigane is dedicated. The composer said of this work: "I twisted its neck before delivering it to the public."²²

The third sonata, although not so numbered, was written at the request of Ginette Neveu, the French violinist who died tragically in a plane crash. Poulenc did not like the violin, but because of his great admiration for Mlle Neveu, who fingered and annotated the violin part, and because he had always wanted to dedicate a work to the memory of Federico Garcia Lorca (1899-1936), he agreed to the composition.²³ These are Poulenc's exact words:

Having always wished to dedicate a work to the memory of Lorca, and taking inspiration from one of his celebrated verses, La guitare fait pleurer les songes (it is beautiful even in translation), I began by composing a sort of vaguely Spanish Andante cantilena.

Then I imagined, as a finale, a Presto tragico whose vital rhythmic impulse would be suddenly broken by a slow and tragic coda. A passionate first movement was

21 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 204-205.

22 Ibid., p. 205.

23 Ibid., p. 120.

to establish the climate. All that, in spite of Ginette Neveu's technical innovations and interpretative genius, came to nothing much.

Since, I have recast the finale. It is more convincing, but I repeat that the whole remains artificial. 24

According to the score, the work was begun at Noizay during the summer of 1942 and completed at Paques in 1943, with Mlle Neveu giving the first performance on June 21, 1943.²⁵ And despite his protestations, Poulenc admitted that in the summer of 1943, presumably after the first performance of the Violin Sonata, he set out to compose a Violin Concerto for Ginette Neveu, but later abandoned the project. Mlle Neveu died in a plane crash in 1949.²⁶

Although first performed in 1943, the corrected edition dates from 1949 (p. 1). The first movement is an Allegro con fuoco, 4/4, in d minor (pp. 1-15). The movement divides itself into three sections by tempo and ideas. The first section has several distinct melodic ideas and as is true of so much of Poulenc, the first section is the longest, with a shorter middle section, and a very short concluding section.

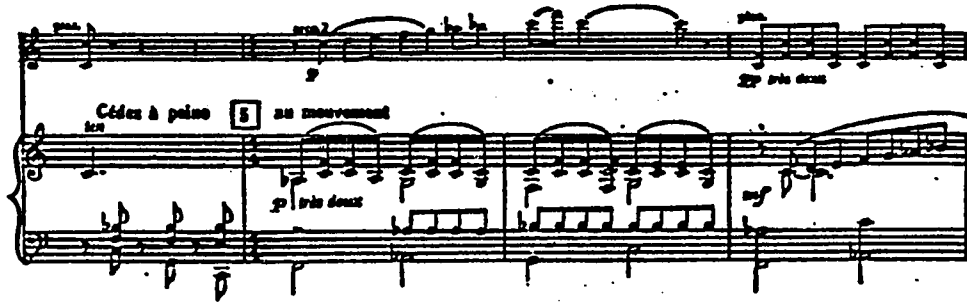
The first section (A) has an introduction (meas. 1-2), followed by the first theme (meas. 3-16) in the violin, a modulation to a minor, and a presentation of theme one again in both instruments (meas. 17-29). The second idea

24 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 120-121.

25 Francis Poulenc, Sonate pour violon et piano (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1944), pp. 1-34; Hell Francis Poulenc, p. 65.

26 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 103-104.

(meas. 30-40), moving from G major to f minor, is followed by a rather direct quote from Peter Chaikovsky's Eugene Onégin, "Tatiana's Letter Scene," (Example 45).²⁷ This in Example 45. Poulenc, *Sonate pour violon et piano*, first movement, meas. 40-43



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turn leads to melodic material (meas. 49-60) which is passed through several tonal areas and finally goes to A-flat major, \flat , for an expansion of the idea suggested at measure 30, first in the piano (meas. 61) and then in the violin (meas. 67), in g minor. In addition to the Chaikovsky already mentioned, there are two suggestions of Rimsky-Korsakov's Schéhérazade (1903), at measure 73 and again at measure 82.

The middle section (B) changes tempo to le double plus lent (twice as slow), with a recitative effect modulating to f minor and a lyric idea (meas. 104). The meter

27. Peter Chaikovsky, "Tatiana's Letter Scene," in Eugene Onégin, Piano-Vocal Score (New York: G. Schirmer, c1957), pp. 86-106. The idea used in the Poulenc is first present on p. 89 and the composer's name is spelled Tschaikowsky.

has become 12/8, and the previous dotted eighth and sixteenth, now becomes a quarter to an eighth; but the melody is obviously derived from the preceding material, a trait of the composer. This soaring line reaches a climax (meas. 126), and the section ends (meas. 129).

Tempo 1 returns (meas. 130) as the third and concluding section, which is an abbreviation of the materials heard before. Measures 133-134 are from measures 17-20. The first theme returns in the piano (meas. 136) in a minor. Measure 143 is taken from measure 61, with the piano dominating now. The coda (meas. 151-160) drives to the conclusion on a picardy third. The last movement is almost all new, but measure 132 gives a hint of the opening piano material of that movement.

The second movement, Intermezzo, marked très lent et calme (commencer très sensiblement plus lent qu'au Numéro 1, beginning very sensibly slower until number 1, pp. 16-22). At number 1, the new marking is modéré sans lenteur. The opening 4/8 also becomes 4/4 at this point (meas. 9). The movement is prefaced with the quote from Lorca: "La guitare fait pleurer les songes," which Poulenc thought beautiful even in the French translation.²⁸

The piano takes the melody. There is no key signature, but the mode varies between the major and the minor of the

28 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 120.

key of D. Measures 20-38 incorporate the dotted rhythm from the first movement, and include a rather continuous sixteenth-note pattern for this entire movement. The result is a bit hypnotic. The violin begins a double-note passage (meas. 39) that reaches a climax (meas. 49), slows, but does not return to the opening material. There is a sense of continuous, through-composed movement here. Any listener familiar with the musical My Fair Lady, may be distracted by the opening. However, this unusual movement should not suffer from extraneous associations, especially since it predates My Fair Lady by over fifteen years.

The last movement, presto tragico, is practically new in the 1949 version (pp. 23-24). Poulenc had a definite idea in mind for the end of this movement to be a lament for Lorca, but if that idea also involved key, then this is one of the most consistent uses of a key in any of his works. The idea that opens the movement is derived from the first movement, first idea. Poulenc appears to be rethinking and reworking materials all the way through the composition. It is an unusually well connected work and could be performed without pause in terms of the ideas following so logically one after another.

The opening idea is first stated in the violin (meas. 1-26). The transition (meas. 15-20) changes keys and gives the idea to the piano (meas. 21-26). This is freely inverted (meas. 27-37), modulates again to become very

brilliant and leads to a rather Spanish sounding idea, at least in its rhythmic aspects. This idea (meas. 38) is given several times in the course of the movement and always sequentially, the first time being heard three times (meas. 38-42).

The texture changes; the meter goes to 6/4; and the tempo accelerates (très sensiblement plus vite que le tempo initial mais souple, meas. 45). This third idea continues with a soaring line of its own; but toward the end of the section begins to hint at the Spanish idea again in augmentation, in the piano (meas. 70-75), and this time sequentially up. The rhythmic idea returns in its first state in E-flat major (meas. 76), is sequenced again three times, and linked with connecting material for 6 measures (meas. 83-88), which modulates for a return of the Spanish idea once again, fortissimo, in B-flat major. The sequence pattern is only twice this time (meas. 89-91), and then returns to the texture and the material from the 6/4 middle section (meas. 92-105).

The tension increases; the volume is triple forte with double stops in the violin part (meas. 115), with much Alberti-like bass in the piano, as is true of much of the last movement. Abruptly, the tempo becomes le double plus lent, and 5 measures lead to a coda of dirge-like quality. The material is subtly repeated in two measure phrases at different pitch levels (meas. 121-129). The piano

shares the material but also alters the accompaniment in several ways: (1) the block chords from the close of the second movement (meas. 121-124), (2) the arpeggiated figures from measure 61 of the first movement (meas. 125-128), (3) a combination of the block chords with added written out ornaments suggesting Spanish music in general, but perhaps, specifically, Spanish guitar music (meas. 129-130), and (4) the upward sweep of the arpeggios from measures 49-51 of the second movement.

Although the score says Autumn 1942, a letter from Poulenc to André Schaeffner, dated December 1942 said:

I have taken up and achieved a rough draft for a Sonate pour piano et violon. I am going to commence the realization. It is not bad, in any case very different from the everlasting line of violin melodies of the French sonates of the 19th century. How beautiful are those of Brahms! I knew them badly. One can not obtain a good equality of sound between these two instruments if opposed: the piano and the violin if one treats them equally, on an equal basis. The prima donna violin over piano arpeggios, makes me vomit. 29

In general, Poulenc was very negative toward this work. He felt the entire work was artificial. Interestingly, Hell did not think very much of the work in his biography of Poulenc, but in the notes for a 1973 recording of the work by no less a personage than Yehudi Menuhin, M. Hell backtracks and says:

One may ask oneself in listening to this work, if Poulenc was not too hard on it. It lacks neither

29 Poulenc, Correspondance, pp. 127-128.

charm nor passion and many of the violinistic details are interesting in themselves. 30

Perhaps, even biographers have to cater to the composer's views, if they write their books while their subject is still living. However, M. Hell's last points are well taken. The first impressions are best forgotten. The sonata is an emotionally moving work and for a man who did not like the instrument, very rhapsodic at times.

The Violoncello Sonata

At the time Poulenc wrote the Sonate pour violon et piano, there was lying in his desk drawer a forgotten, but outlined Sonate pour violoncelle et piano. This work was begun during the summer of 1940 at Brive-la-Gaillarde, hence the kinship of some of its themes with the ballet Les Animaux modèles. The great French cellist, Pierre Fournier, evidenced an interest in the work, and Poulenc took it up again, and finished it at Noizay between April and October, 1948, with the first performance being given by the composer and Fournier in Paris, May 18, 1949.³¹ It was dedicated to Marthe Bosredon at whose home the work was outlined and to Pierre Fournier. Fournier and Poulenc often played the work in concert and in 1953, Poulenc corrected it for a new edition.

30 Henri Hell, jacket notes for The Sonatas of Francis Poulenc (EMI EMSP 553).

31 Francis Poulenc, Sonate pour violoncelle et piano (Paris: Heugel, c1949), pp. 1-44; Idem, Entretiens, p. 124.

The opening Allegro: Tempo di marcia, sans traîner, is notable for the constant exchanges of material back and forth between the two instruments, at rather regular intervals of measures (pp. 1-13). A 2/4 in e minor, the movement is in three major sections. The opening 4 measures are almost introductory but do serve the same purpose at various other points in the movement. The first idea (meas. 5-19) is connected with 4 measures from the introduction and repeated a step lower. This is followed by connecting material (meas. 32-40), again the introduction, now in D-flat major, a partial restatement (meas. 40-50) leading to a new idea of a chromatic nature in 4 measure phrases, exchanged back and forth, with its consequent phrases (meas. 51-106), and finally to a dominant preparation for the slower middle section.

The middle section, beginning in D-flat major, is marked très sensiblement plus calme, presser (meas. 130), and finally, plus allant (meas. 150). There are four melodic ideas: (1) very lyric, mostly in the piano (meas. 116-130); (2) lyric, this time in the violoncello in D-flat major and then C-flat major (enharmonically B, meas. 130-140); (3) an idea that is much more rhythmic and shared more with both instruments, of longer duration, a very playful idea that contrasts with the slow lyric ideas on each side and has a kinship with the opening idea of the movement (meas. 149-177); a transition (meas. 178-190) that

modulates and leads to the last idea; (4) a lyric 6/8 (meas. 191-207), first in E-flat major, moving to F major (meas. 197), and finally to C major for the modulation back to E major and the return of section one. This retransition has a line with the second idea of this section in it (meas. 130).

Tempo 1 returns (meas. 208), and the first 23 measures are repeated with only varying new figures and counterpoint in the cello (meas. 208-230). Measures 230-234 are measures 43-47; measures 236-243 are measures 51-58 down a semi-tone, and some of the piano writing is down an octave (meas. 242). The remainder of the movement comes from measures 80 ff. (meas. 244-252), from the chromatic idea at measure 51 (meas. 236-239), and the closing measures (254-261), are from the third idea in the middle section (meas. 150) and the opening introductory measures. This is a very rich movement melodically, and again, the material works so well separately and in various combinations.

The second movement, a Cavatine: très calme in F-sharp major, reveals a kinship to the ballet Les Animaux modèles and an harmonic debt to Ravel (pp. 14-20).³² The first 9 measures serves as an introduction and will also play a role at the conclusion of the movement (Example 46, p. 237). Measure 130 from the first movement, should be

³² Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 181.

compared for the origins of the cello's cantilena that follows (meas. 10). All the melodies of this movement

Example 46. Poulenc, *Sonate pour violoncelle et piano*, second movement, meas. 1-5

Très calme $\text{♩} = 56$

sourdine

p très doux

pp

mettre beaucoup de pédale (dans un halo sonore)

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are derived from the intervals of the opening chorale. The first idea is shared by both instruments (meas. 10-21), in different tonal areas. The texture thickens (meas. 21) with the cello in sextuplet thirty-second-notes against the melody in the piano. This is reversed giving the passage a very passionate and rhapsodic character. Measures 38-51 make a melodic retransition back to the opening chorale, this time in F major and forte. There is much evidence of the raised fourth degree of the scale in this movement (Lydian mode). The return in F major is no exception, with b-naturals (meas. 54-59). The cello figure at measures 54 and 56 will return in the finale. The chorale is abbreviated through an enharmonic modulation to arrive at the

dominant of F-sharp major for the return in the tonic (meas. 69). The coda is on materials from before with a long F-sharp pedal (meas. 72-77). The end comes on a very gentle, high harmonic in the cello. Poulenc thought that this movement was the heart of the sonate.³³

Unlike most of his extended works of chamber music, or works in other genre for that matter, Poulenc composed four movements for this sonate. The third, Ballabile: très animé et gai, a 2/4 in E major, is truly a scherzo-trio-scherzo (pp. 21-29). It is very playful with two very obvious influences in evidence: (1) Chabrier, with the humor and the title,³⁴ and (2) one of those "little corners" of Prokofiev.³⁵ This movement is very rhythmic and light, perhaps, in reality, a scherzando. It begins in E major, touches E-flat major/minor (meas. 1-38), and modulates, but without change of tempo, to the trio in D-flat major. The transition to the trio anticipates the texture of the trio (meas. 39-45).

The melody of the trio is very reminiscent of the opening of the Ravel String Quartet in F (meas. 46-86). The idea is given in F-sharp major (meas. 64), and the retransition back to the scherzo begins (meas. 76) with

33 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 74.

34 Francis Poulenc, Emmanuel Chabrier (Paris: La Palatine, 1961), p. 122.

35 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 164.

descending sixths in the piano in A-flat major (g-sharp enharmonically); the cello repeats the figure, and without ritard returns to the scherzo (meas. 87). Measures 87-105 equal measures 1-29. The remainder of the movement (meas. 107-118) is derived from the trio, this time in the home key of E major. Never ritarding, the movement evaporates on a low E in the piano and a pizzicato E major chord on the cello. Danceable indeed, it is irrepressible!

The finale is divided by tempos as well as ideas. It is marked Largo, très librement: Presto subito: Largo, most of which is in 4/4, with the keys being a minor (Aeolian mode), e minor, although much E major, and ending in A major (pp. 30-44). Both the opening and close of this movement evoke Les Animaux modèles (see the first and last dances).

Measures 1-10 are an introduction with chords in both instruments, but with the piano part being so written as to anticipate the beat by the full chords and then jump to the lower octaves on the beat rather than the reverse, which is more customary. This introduction serves as dominant preparation for the presto (meas. 11).

The piano begins the presto with the same figure of alternating eighths in single notes that opened the first movement. Although the meter signature is mostly 4/4, with some changes to 3/4, the predominating subdivision of the beat is that of the triplet. This presto divides

itself into huge sections: the first having two ideas (meas. 11-33 and 34-53, respectively), the second (meas. 53-114) also has two ideas (meas. 53-84 and 84-111, respectively), followed by a transition into the next and third section (meas. 115-195) which is mostly even quarters, with lines derived from what has gone before but now in 3/4. The fourth and final section begins with the return of the first idea of the presto (meas. 196), then the second (meas. 208), and the third section texture and ideas (meas. 221-247), to be followed by the opening largo (meas. 248-252). This last fast section, the fourth of the presto, is like a peroration of previously heard material in the movement.

This last movement is reminiscent of the finale of the Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2 in g minor, Op. 22, with the triplet figures and also the dotted eighths and sixteenths. As in the Saint-Saëns, there is a touch of the tarentella. Poulenc must have been fond of that Saint-Saëns concerto. Ideas from the first movement are in the second movement of Poulenc's Concerto pour deux pianos, the scherzo of the Saint-Saëns (2nd movement) was the pattern of the finale of Poulenc's Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, and now, reminders of the finale of the Saint-Saëns work in the Violoncelle Sonate.

This beautiful work certainly, should be in the cellist's repertoire. One interesting interpretative note: Zara Nelsova omits 1 measure in the finale (meas. 70).

Pierre Fournier, indeed, plays the measure as written. At this writing, the record companies and the performers have not responded to inquiries concerning this strange occurrence.³⁶ It could be editorial on the part of the record companies. There is absolutely no reason for Mme Nelsova to omit the measure. She plays the sonate beautifully throughout.

A Violoncello Transcription

1948 could almost be considered Poulenc's violoncello year. In October, 1948, he completed a transcription (at least the piano part) of one of his earlier songs for violoncello and piano. The cello transcription was made by the French cellist, Maurice Gendron, of the eighth and last song of Poulenc's cycle Chansons gaillardes (1926), written to anonymous seventeenth-century texts. The song is entitled Sérénade and so is the transcription, which is also dedicated to Maurice Gendron.³⁷ Poulenc states in the score, that the playing of this transcription is not authorized unless Maurice Gendron's name also appears on the program.

Like the song, the transcription is a binary, in a

36. Francis Poulenc, "Sonate pour violoncelle et piano," in Four Cello Sonatas, Zara Nelsova, 'cello, Grant Johannesen, piano (Golden Crest CRS 40899), side 4; Idem, Op. cit., in Sonatas of Francis Poulenc, Pierre Fournier, 'cello, Jacques Février, piano (EMI EMSP 553), side 2 and 3, band 1.

37. Francis Poulenc, Sérénade pour violoncelle et piano (Paris: Heugel, c1950), pp. 1-3.

minor, tempo de Sicilienne. The second strophe is in g minor, but the work does conclude in a minor. The transcriber follows the song faithfully, even to the vocal slides at the end, which naturally work well for the string instrument. The text of the song is simply:

If sad wipe the tears,
If sly hold the arm,
But better to hold the love's hand,
La, la, la! 38

It will be remembered that at the first performance of these songs, the interpreter was Pierre Bernac, May 2, 1926, with whom the name of Poulenc was to become and had become by the time of this transcription, virtually inseparable.

The Flute Sonata

From 1948, until he returned to chamber music in 1956, Poulenc was occupied with tours of the United States with Pierre Bernac, compositions like the Piano Concerto, songs, works for the piano, and especially the opera, Dialogues des Carmélites. When he returned to chamber music, it was with the Sonata for Flute and Piano, dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the American patron of the arts.

The Sonata was begun at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes, December, 1956, and completed March, 1957.³⁹ The flute part has been revised by Jean-Pierre Rampal, who with the

38 Francis Poulenc, "Sérénade," in Chansons gaillardes (Paris: Heugel, c1926), pp. 22-24.

39 Francis Poulenc, Sonata for Flute and Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1958), pp. 1-23. Title as given in the edition consulted.

composer, gave the first performance on June 18, 1957, at the Strasbourg Festival. The second movement was encored and the critics were unanimous in their praise.⁴⁰

Beautiful melodies, moving from one to another, are characteristic of the first movement, Allegro malinconico, in e minor (pp. 1-9). All three movements of this sonata are basically ternary, with certain Poulenc traits. The opening of this first movement contains a germ motive that will reoccur in the last movement -- four thirty-seconds outlining a triad or rocking back and forth on two pitches. The opening idea is presented in 8 measures and immediately repeated with variants twice and abbreviated (Example 47).

Example 47. Poulenc, Sonata for Flute and Piano, first movement, meas. 1-7

FLUTE

PIANO

p dolce

molto leggero da piano (Les doubles croches très sautées)

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⁴⁰ Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 86; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 93-94.

Thus: measures 9-12 equal 1-4 and measures 18-25 equal 1-7. The germ motive of thirty-seconds is used to modulate to F major (meas. 26-33). The contrasting area moves to f minor and is as detached as the first part was legato (meas. 34-40). It is made up of arpeggiated figures and scales. The first idea returns in f minor (meas. 40), moves quickly to e-flat minor (meas. 44), which in turn moves up a semitone to become the dominant of a minor for a full statement of the theme (meas. 52-60). Measures 61-73 are a transition to the middle section of the movement, and modulate again to F major, speed up (un peu plus vite), and are for the most part in 3/4 as opposed to the opening 2/4.

The middle section (meas. 73-98) is made up of a melodic idea of a dotted eighth and two thirty-seconds or an eighth and four thirty-seconds, the first of which is tied. The keys are F major, D-flat major, b-flat minor, A major, C major, and finally E major, the dominant of a minor. The first idea returns, tempo 1 (meas. 98), at first in a minor for 3 measures and then makes the necessary change back to e minor as it continues. Measures 102-116 equal 4-18. The remainder of the movement (meas. 122-136) comes from the middle section (meas. 122-126). The piano accompaniment figures (meas. 127-131), the long thirty-second runs connected with the idea at measure 4 (meas. 129-130), and the germ motive of thirty-second (meas. 131-136) are from the opening section of the movement.

It is very unusual for Poulenc to have two minor keys in adjoining movements, however, the second movement, Cantilena: assez lent, is in b-flat minor (pp. 10-13). As the title implies, the movement abounds in long, legato lines. The theme is presented twice at the outset (Example 48), with slight modifications on the repeat (meas. 1-14). A

Example 48. Poulenc, Sonata for Flute and Piano, second movement, meas. 1-7

Assez lent J. 22

Douxment désigné de pédale

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transition, which modulates to a minor (meas. 15-18), starts the theme again, but this time it is imitated 1 measure away in the piano (meas. 19-21). This same short imitation occurred in the Mélancolie for piano from 1940 and will occur again in the Oboe Sonata of 1962.

At measure 26, the rhythms from the middle section of the first movement return, at a much slower speed. Another

point of brief imitation occurs (meas. 31-32). There is a brief dialogue between the two instruments (meas. 35-48), which rises to a climatic fortissimo and subito pianissimo begins the return of the opening (meas. 49-55). Only the first measure of the theme is given and from here (meas. 56) to the close, it is altered in order to bring the movement to a close in b-flat minor (meas. 65).

The finale is a presto giocoso in A major (pp. 14-23). The construction is again closely akin to the jig-saw puzzle, where the refrain idea is not always given complete. The complete idea (meas. 1-20) starts to repeat at measure 20 but: measures 20-33 equal 1-4; and measures 23-27 equal 9-12 transposed down a semi-tone to modulate to e minor, which becomes instead E major. Measures 28-35 equal 13-20 in E major, and measures 35-48 equal 1-4 in E major. This is a very energetic, rhythmic, even syncopated idea and very chordal.

Measures 39-54 are a contrasting melodic idea given first by the flute (meas. 39-42) and immediately by the piano (meas. 42-45) in a minor. Measures 45-48 move to E-flat major for the piano to continue the idea once again, but this is cut short a measure, with more rhythmic interjections utilizing the germ motive from the first movement. This entire passage (meas. 39-54) has been a modulation from E major to A-flat major.

The opening idea now repeats in A-flat major, but only the first 8 measures. Measures 55-62 equal 1-8 transposed, and measures 63-68 equal 39-43 transposed down a semi-tone, but quickly become c minor rather than a minor. Measures 69-70 equal 51-52, the rhythmic end of the modulatory idea.

The next large section (meas. 70-118) is in its own unique way developmental. First, the germ motive from the first movement is done in c minor and b-flat minor (meas. 70-78 and 78-82, respectively). At measure 87, a rising sequence, taken from the first idea of the last movement, leads to an expectation of the return of the first idea (meas. 87-92), but instead, a beautiful, lyric melody in G major/minor enters and is quickly recognized as modulatory (meas. 93-99). Measures 100-103 are based on the pattern first found in measures 51-54; measures 104-111 combine the germ motive from the first movement, its inversion, and the alternating pattern in the piano from measure 71. This modulates to c minor which ultimately comes to a pause on a C major triad, the dominant of F major (meas. 112-118), the opening key of the next large section.

The theme is presented in F major (meas. 119-128), in A major (meas. 129-132), in C major (meas. 133-142), and in A-flat major (meas. 143-148). Measures 149-166 are a return of the transitional material from measures 104-111, transposed down a third and ending abruptly (meas. 165) with a grand pause (meas. 166).

Measure 167 begins the subito piu lento, which is a recitative-like area based primarily upon the material from the middle section of the first movement. Tempo presto returns (meas. 175) in e minor. Measures 175-191 are based upon material from measures 70-87. The e minor becomes E major, the dominant of the tonic A major. The refrain-like idea returns (meas. 192). Thus:

meas. 192-211 equal 1-20,
 meas. 211-218 equal 42-45 and 93,
 meas. 219-220 equal 104-105,
 meas. 221-226 equal 129-134, slightly varied,
 meas. 227-229 equal 167-168,

the recitative, and the concluding measures (230-236), include the inversion of the germ motive from the first movement and the diatonic runs from the opening idea of the last movement.

Taken altogether, this is a very homogeneous sonata. Jean Roy said that the sentiment expressed, appears here in a pure state, in a state of extreme refinement. Henri Hell goes even farther:

. . . let us not be afraid to say it -- this Sonata is a masterpiece from first note to last, a masterpiece which conceals many of the keys to Poulenc's music. Everything -- timbre, harmony and rhythm is submissive to the exclusive domination of the melody. 41

Whatever the arguments may be, this is a very accesible, beautiful work that wears well and which the flute repertoire welcomes with open arms.

41 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 94; Henri Hell, jacket notes for the Sonatas of Francis Poulenc (EMI EMSP 553).

A Remembrance

From the same year as the Flute Sonata (1957), comes the Elegie for Horn and Piano, dedicated to the memory of Denis Brain (1921-1957), the great English performer, who died so tragically at a young age in an automobile accident.⁴² The work is in one continuous movement with an introduction that in itself is an ABA'BC. The first 8 measures are for solo horn, playing all twelve of the chromatic semi-tones without repeat of a pitch and with a semblance of a melody (Example 49). This is marked Example 49. Poulenc, Elegie for Horn and Piano, meas. 1-8

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'COR EN FA' and the bottom staff is labeled 'PIANO'. Above the top staff, the tempo marking 'Très calme J. 14' is written. The music consists of a chromatic scale for the horn and a piano accompaniment. Below the piano staff, there is a circled '1' followed by the tempo marking 'Agitato molto J. 123', indicating the start of the B section of the piece.

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très calme. The following B, for both instruments, is marked agitato molto. It is very rhythmic and outlines

42 Francis Poulenc, Elegie for Horn and Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1958), pp. 1-9.

triads (meas. 9-17). The slow tempo returns with the piano giving the twelve chromatic tones in a succession of single pitches (meas. 18-24), and the agitato again follows (meas. 25-32). The C of the introduction is a melodic transition connecting with the Elegie proper (meas. 33-47).

The first idea of the Elegie, in g minor, is a long line in the horn with a gently undulating piano accompaniment (meas. 48-93). The melodic material is restated a step lower (meas. 79) and then abbreviated for the beginning of the middle section, which starts with a miniature of the rhythmic figure in the agitato parts of the introduction (meas. 94).

The middle section (meas. 94-146) does not change tempos and is characterized by more rhythmic vitality, although only slight, with the horn playing arpeggiated figures, and the piano a rocking accompaniment. There is a touch of melodic change (meas. 114), when the piano has the line for the moment.

The closing section (meas. 155-179) allows the horn its arpeggios in quarter-notes, and the piano provides the rather repetitive movement of the preceding sections. The repetitive quality here is not unlike that at the conclusion of other compositions of Poulenc. The closing measures (180-188), again allow the horn to sound all twelve chromatic semi-tones with no repeats of pitches, over a fortissimo double octave C in the piano (Example 50, p. 251).

The C major triad that closes the work, is clouded with a b-flat at the last moment. The concluding note of the horn is held four measures and one beat with the note that the exact duration must be observed.

Example 50. Poulenc, *Elegie* for Horn and Piano, meas. 180-188

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Hell describes the work as grave and poignant.⁴³ There is a deep feeling obviously here and a serene fervor of genuine sadness at the loss of a fellow artist. Considering all the various dedications of Poulenc, it would seem that he genuinely tried to show his admiration, respect, and regret at the loss of several artists and friends, not to mention gratitude to many that he loved and who helped him along the way. The last two works of chamber music are dedicated to Prokofiev and Honegger, respectively. Poulenc was a man of generous nature. He seems to be quite free of the petty thinking that rears its head in some artists.

⁴³ Henri Hell, jacket notes in the *Sonatas of Francis Poulenc* (EMI EMSP 553). The *Elegie* is played by Alan Civil, Horn and Jacques Février, piano, side 3, band 2.

The Oboe Sonata

The Sonata for Oboe and Piano was written at Brive-la-Gaillarde and Bagnols-en-Forêt during the summer of 1962, Poulenc's last summer. It was dedicated to the memory of Sergei Prokofiev and was published and performed posthumously. The first performance was given June 8, 1963, with Pierre Pierlot, oboe, and Jacques Février, piano.⁴⁴

The first movement, Élégie: Paisiblement, is a 3/4 in g minor (pp. 2-7). The introduction is 2 measures for oboe alone. The first theme is very serene and reminiscent of Bach (meas. 2-33). While there are cross relationships and sevenths, the line is generally diatonic. The oboe and piano answer in alternating measures, the opening 2 measures (meas. 15-16) in D major. A rising arpeggio figure found in measure 11 in the oboe part, plays an important role beginning at measure 22, with the piano giving short points of imitation at the distance of one beat in E-flat major (Example 51, p. 253). At measure 26, in A-flat major, the oboe and the left hand of the piano do the same thing again at the same distance.

The second idea is a gentle, rhythmic-melodic one on three pitches in several tonal areas. The dotted sixteenth

⁴⁴ Francis Poulenc, Sonata for Oboe and Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1963), pp. 2-22. Title given as in the edition consulted.

to a thirty-second gives the rhythm, and the rise from the tonic to mediant to subdominant and then tonic, subdominant to mediant, gives the melodic identity. Measure 44, based on measure 34, moves from d minor to D major and modulates to b-flat minor, where the first note becomes double-dotted and the two shorter notes, even thirty-seconds. Measures 48-73 combine these two figures in a retransition back to the first melodic idea in G major.

Example 51. Poulenc, Sonata for Oboe and Piano, first movement, meas. 22-25

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The, by now, usual condensation and abbreviation occurs: measures 72-77 equal 3-8; and measures 78-83 equal 30-31 transposed first in the piano, then repeated in the oboe, and a 2 measure extension based on this material in the piano. The closing measures (84-96) are based upon the second theme and the retransitional material. The piano part has larger note values and ceases all sixteenth- and eighth-note motion. The closing three notes in the piano (meas. 94-95), are three notes out of the four of the retransition motive, and they finally arpeggiate downward

to the tonic instead of being rather mordant-like or simply turning back on itself as before.

The second movement is a scherzo-trio-scherzo, so named by Poulenc for the first time (pp. 8-18). In B-flat major, marked très animé, the scherzo contains two principal ideas: (1) a bouncy little tune with running eighths in the piano (meas. 4-40); and (2) (meas. 41-90) contains touches of the first, i.e., the running eighth-note patten of the piano, now in the oboe (meas. 45-56), and the toccata-like figure of the opening 3 measures (meas. 69-71), as well as some transposition of the first idea down a fifth (meas. 72-75). The second idea appears in b-flat minor (meas. 41), d minor (meas. 57), c minor (meas. 65), g minor (meas. 76), and f minor (meas. 84). The closing idea of the scherzo (meas. 90-100), is a sequential patten of eighths in the oboe leading to a cadence, clouded to be sure, in B-flat.

The Trio, le double plus lent, in 4/4, is a lyric expression presented in D major (meas. 104), F-sharp major (meas. 112), and F major (meas. 124). The brief intervening material moves through C major and is in the piano (meas. 119-122). The trio closes (meas. 134), and an abbreviated version of the scherzo returns:

measures 135-139 equal 1-5; measures 140-143 equal 8-11 (last measure modified); measures 144-148 equal 14-18; measures 149-159 equal 21-30; and measures 159-164 equal 33-38 (last measure altered).

Measures 165-178 are the closing idea an octave higher to

begin with, some new harmonic touches, the sequence continued 1 measure longer than before, and a melodic inversion of the material (meas. 173-174, beats four and six inverted). Measures 179-181 equal 1-3 an octave lower and measures 182-187 are a modified ending from the first presentation of the scherzo. The first ending is extended 1 measure to make the ending in B-flat major (unclouded), emphatic. This is another Prokofiev "corner" as might be expected in a work dedicated to that composer.

The third movement, très calme, is a Déploration, which looks back several centuries to a kind of music composed in France on the death of a famous composer, e.g., Josquin des Prez's Déploration on the death of Ockeghem in 1497 (pp. 19-22).⁴⁵ The piano introduces an idea that will become the principal idea of the movement. As the oboe enters (meas. 6), the piano figure returns to the kind found in both the last movement of the Sonate pour violoncelle et piano, and in turn, its predecessor, the ballet, Les Animaux modèles. This passage (meas. 6-26) touches both a-flat minor and c minor.

Measures 27-49 form a middle section which returns to an elaboration of ideas from the first movement. The piano part returns to its continuous eighth-note pattern and the

45 Donald J. Grout, A History of Western Music, Revised edn. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 181. Déploration sur le trépas de Jean Ockeghem.

oboe figures come from both the second idea and the retransition ideas of the first movement. This section contains the dynamic high point of this movement (meas. 35 and 39). The closing measures of this section for piano solo, are derived from measures 34-35 of the first movement, then in d minor, now in b-flat minor. The sonata closes with the opening idea of the movement stated briefly (meas. 50-53) in f minor (the minor dominant of the previous b-flat minor), and then from measure 54 to the end (meas. 69), the piano returns to its continuous eighth-notes, now in a-flat minor, while the right hand plays around the three semitones of f-flat (e-natural), e-flat, and d-natural. The music decays into nothingness on an a-flat minor triad.

This is a magnificent sonata. This sonata and the Clarinet Sonata bring two facts poignantly to the fore: (1) that Poulenc did not live long enough to write his intended Bassoon Sonata;⁴⁶ and (2) that in this last year of his life, Poulenc gave a glimpse of the possible intensity that was to come in his music. This had already been seen in the Dialogues des Carmélites and La voix humaine. Those who only think of Poulenc as a musical "clown," should listen to these last two works for a maturity of technique, a beauty of melodic invention, a sublimity of thought, an intensity of expression, that aligns itself with only the great gifts. These last two works will live!

46 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 18.

The Clarinet Sonata

As the Oboe Sonata was dedicated to Prokofiev, the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano was dedicated to the memory of Arthur Honegger.⁴⁷ This work was also published and performed posthumously. The commission came from Benny Goodman, who with Leonard Bernstein, piano, performed it for the first time on April 10, 1963.⁴⁸

The first movement, Allegro tristamente, has a 7 measure introduction on a figure that will play a role later (pp. 3-11). Measures 9-18 are a continuation of the introductory material on a rising line. The main idea (meas. 18) is a dotted-eight-and-sixteenth figure; in fact, it is so persistent, it is amazing that Poulenc did not wear out its use; but he instinctively knew when to change. This material continues until measure 39, mostly in 4 measure phrases. Measures 40-44 consist of contrasting material that will reappear in this and the last movement, although more lively and rhythmic. There is an old children's mimic that comes to mind (meas. 40-41, Example 52, p. 258), and returns later. The dotted figure returns, and the material from the introduction concludes this section (meas. 56-66).

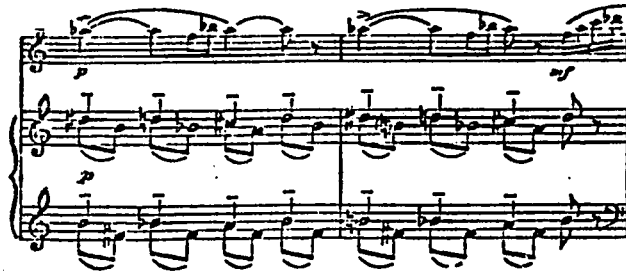
The middle section, très calme, has 10 measures that

47 Francis Poulenc, Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (London: J. & W. Chester, c1963), pp. 3-24.

48 Henri Hell, jacket notes for the Sonatas of Francis Poulenc (EMI EMSP 553).

that can also be seen as introductory to this section and is in two parts as is the introduction of this movement: (1) a piano figure repeated (meas. 67-77); and (2) a long legato line in the clarinet (meas. 71-75). The remainder of this section is on a double-dotted arpeggiated figure mostly in a minor (meas. 78-102). The closing measures (102-105), take up the piano figures that opened the section and modulate back to the tempo Allegro (meas. 106).

Example 52. Poulenc, Sonata for Clarinet (B-flat) and Piano, first movement, meas. 40-41



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Measures 106-110 equal 44-46, which is again repeated at measures 120-122. Material from the introduction appears (meas. 122) and continues to the end in the clarinet part, and the piano part now has the dotted eighths and sixteenths descending. The movement ends in B major.

The second movement, entitled Romanza, is marked très calme in g minor (pp. 12-15). Like the opening of the Oboe Sonata, the clarinet has the first 2 measures alone, followed by 8 measures of introductory material that reoccurs later. The principal idea is a long, legato line of great beauty, especially when the clarinetist can play the entire

8 measures with one breath (meas. 11-18, Example 53). The long vocal line of Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), and Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868), is brought to mind. Measures 19-24 present a contrasting

Example 53. Poulenc, Sonata for Clarinet (B-flat) and Piano, second movement "Romanza," meas. 9-18

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the clarinet part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment. The piano part has a descending line of quarter notes. The second system continues the melodic line and piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamics like *pp* and *p*, and the instruction *Effleurer (beaucoup de pédale)*. The key signature is B-flat major, and the time signature is 4/4.

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area that modulates to b minor, where the piano begins a lovely descending line of quarter-notes followed by the double-dotting of the middle section of the previous movement, but in the opposite direction now. Measures 25-30 are repeated a step lower for 6 more measures (31-36). Measures 37-46 contain 4 measures of an altered version of the first idea followed by 4 measures of the second, and 2 measures modulation to b-flat minor. The long initial theme is now given in 8 measures of b-flat minor, followed by the second idea in b-flat minor (meas. 47-58). A retransition of 4 measures, modulates back to g minor and gives

the first idea in the home key (meas. 59-62). Measures 63-69 equal 11-16 with measure 16 varied for the ending. Measures 71-76 incorporate the ideas of the introduction of the movement.

The concluding movement, Allegro con fuoco: très animé, 4/4, in C major, is a brilliant ending to a beautiful sonata (pp. 16-24). The very bright, jaunty atmosphere is reminiscent of the Overture to Ruslan and Ludmilla by Michael Glinka (1804-1857). This acrobatic display movement also has just a touch of the Rondeau from Les Biches and the finale of Le Bal Masqué.

The first idea (meas. 1-12) starts over but goes a third higher. Measures 13-14 bring back measures 40-41 of the first movement, and the entire section modulates to e-flat minor for a pattern that will be heard in several keys throughout the movement (meas. 18-21 and 22-25). Measures 26-29 equal 18-21 in a-flat minor, and measures 30-33, the consequent phrase, are like measures 22-25. The events come fast now as do the keys. The modulation continues for the beautiful, second lyric idea, which begins in b-flat minor, with long pedal points: B-flat (meas. 44-47), A-flat (meas. 48-49), F (meas. 50-51), and B-flat (meas. 52-55).

The piano takes up the idea for 4 measures (52-55 equal 44-47) and varies the last measure in order to get to g minor and give dominant preparation (meas. 56-58) for the theme to return, first in c minor (meas. 59-62), and then

start in C major (meas. 63-64). The retransition begins the modulation toward C major (meas. 69-79), but an augmented-sixth on A-flat moves to G, and the opening idea returns in the tonic, C major (meas. 80).

The last section, however, skips around and glues things together in a different manner than on the first presentation. Measures 80-83 equal 1-3 with 3 being abbreviated by a 2/4 measure, and measures 83-86 equal 18-22 and 26-29. At measure 90, measure 40 from the first movement returns again. In measures 91-92, the modulation material from the transition into the second idea gives way to the second idea in b-flat minor. So measures 93-98 are roughly equivalent to measure 52, following. The retransitional material returns and modulates back to C major again for a third appearance of the opening, only this time more complete. Measures 106-111 equal 1-6, followed by 4 measures based on measure 40 from the first movement (meas. 112-115), and a coda (meas. 116-128) that mixes the modes with a touch of c minor adding color to the basic C major tonality. With no slackening in tempo, and loud dynamics, both instruments drive to a brilliant conclusion, with measures 125-127 reminding the listener of the kind of C major chords Prokofiev liked to use, especially at the conclusion of his Third Piano Concerto in C, Op. 26 (1921).

On the whole, the chamber music is well balanced in its intrinsic value. While the last three sonatas for flute,

oboe, and clarinet, respectively, may by virtue of the composer's age, experience, maturity, technical craftsmanship, contain more refinement of expression, more intensity and sublimity of thought, the other works are of fine quality, especially the Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon and the Violoncello Sonata. The Sextuor, Bagatelle, Élégie, and Sérénade would take a back seat, while the Violin Sonata would come somewhere in between, although repeated auditions of this last mentioned work, find it to be one that wears extremely well and bears new facets of brilliance each time. The three early sonatas for winds will never enter the pianist's repertoire and must be judged on their merits as wind music. There was a String Quartet (1946), but upon hearing part of it tried out, Poulenc threw it down a Paris sewer. However, thanks to the encouragement and practicality of Georges Auric whom Poulenc fortunately phoned immediately, the composer incorporated some of the better ideas into the Sinfonietta of 1947.⁴⁹

Before a summation of Poulenc's pianistic art, there must be a brief excursion into those works for voice and chamber orchestra, including piano, and a look at the treatment of the piano accompaniment in the mélodies. The former repertoire is brief but the latter is huge, therefore demanding a separate study and outside the scope of this study.

49 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 125.

CHAPTER X

1917-1962: THE PIANO IN THE VOCAL CHAMBER

WORKS AND IN THE MÉLODIES

Francis Poulenc wrote no less than 146 songs. They are extremely varied in character, ranging from the craziest buffoonery to the most sincere lyricism, from obvious sensuousness to poignant gravity; but they never fail to bear the mark of his personality.

In addition to the songs, Poulenc also wrote some vocal works that require an instrumental accompaniment, a chamber orchestra, which includes or can include the piano; and while the songs are certainly of interest, the huge output would require a separate study, and indeed, has received that study in the form of a new book by Pierre Bernac:

Francis Poulenc: The Man and His Songs. Therefore, these vocal chamber works, the Rapsodie nègre, Le Bal Masqué, and Chansons villageoises, will be discussed, and enough of the songs, two of the better cycles, to give a picture of the role the piano plays in Poulenc's vocal music. This will also cover the major poets Poulenc used in his vocal music.

Even as a child Poulenc was intensely attracted by poetry. He said, in a conversation with Claude Rostand:

I have never been able to do without poetry; at the

age of 10, I recited, with delicacy, Apparition of Mallarmé with the secret hope of becoming one day -- a great actor. 1

This affinity for poetry was even more specifically directed to the contemporary poets. It was this poetry which, from his earliest works, he undertook to set to music. Of his total output of songs, only twenty were not written to contemporary poems.² His three great sources of inspiration were: Guillaume Apollinaire (a Gallicised abbreviation of Wilhelm-Apollinaris de Kostrowitski, 1880-1918); Paul Éluard, a pseudonym for Eugene Grindel (1895-1952); and Max Jacob (1876-1944). Obscure as their poems often are, and regrettably hostile to translation, Poulenc was able to find in them a certain poetic climate, which communicated directly with his heart and his particular sensibility.

Poulenc said:

One has to set to music, not simply the lines of verses, but also what lies between the lines in the margin. 3

Of all the poets the composer used, Apollinaire and Éluard were set the most, with thirty-four settings each. For typically feminine songs, Poulenc set Louise de Vilmorin (b. 1906), setting thirteen of her poems.⁴

1 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), p. 69.

2 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1964), pp. 22 and 115.

3 Pierre Bernac, "The Songs of Francis Poulenc," in The NATS Bulletin, XXI (1965), 2.

4 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 115.

The work that launched the young composer was not a text by any of the poets mentioned. Having already tried composing in the form of *préludes* for the piano, Poulenc was browsing in a Paris bookstore and came across a book of verse entitled Les Poésies de Makoko Kangourou. The author of the poetry was supposedly a black from Liberia, and black art was the fashion of the day in Paris. However, the poems were a deliberate hoax. Unconcerned about their authenticity, Poulenc purposefully set the poem Honoloulou, the first lines of which are:

Honoloulou, poti lama!
 Honoloulou, Honoloulou,
 Kati moko, mosi bolou
 Ratakou sira, polama! 5

All the lines of poetry are utter nonsense and jibberish, but this too mattered not in the least to Poulenc.

The resulting work, Rapsodie nègre, was set for flute, clarinet, string quartet, piano, and baritone.⁶ It is in five movements, with the verses of the poem used as a vocal interlude for the third movement. The first performance was given on December 11, 1917, at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, at one of the concerts organized by Jane Bathori. The soloist, who was terrified by his part, refused to sing at the last moment, and Poulenc took his place.⁷

5 Henri Hell, Francis Poulenc, trans. by Edward Lockspeiser (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 7.

6 Francis Poulenc, Rapsodie nègre, Conductor's Score (London: J. & W. Chester, c1919), pp. 1-27.

7 Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 7-8; Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 26-28.

The work was so successful that Barthori organized another concert, including the Rapsodie nègre, to be performed the following month, January, 1918. The success of the repeat performance helped persuade Diaghilev that Poulenc should write a ballet for him, and led Stravinsky to introduce Poulenc to his first publishers, the firm of J. & W. Chester of London, who published his first compositions.⁸ Ravel had also been impressed with the young composer, but emphasized the equal necessity for serious study.⁹

As in all the vocal-chamber works, the piano plays a concertant role. This is not true, however, in the later Chansons villageoises, simply because the piano is only used if the Harp, the original scoring, is not available. Of the several influences on Poulenc's earliest works, the stronger here was that of Erik Satie. Satie's whimsy, wit, flair for satire and love of absurdity are all reflected here. Henri Hell call the work a roaring success because of its youthful charm, musical instrumentation, and the streak of humor.¹⁰ David Ewen said the work anticipated the Dada movement.¹¹

8 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 192; Idem, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Wendel (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), letter from Poulenc to Viñes dated September 26, 1917, pp. 13-14, letter to Viñes dated October 14, 1917. The January 15, 1918 program is given on p. 16.

9 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 26-27.

10 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 8.

11 David Ewen, Composers Since 1900, compiled and edited by David Ewen (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1969), p. 425.

The tongue-in-cheek quality was to continue both in the early works and appear in various later works also.

The first two song cycles, Le Bestiaire, ou le cortège d'Orphée and Cocardes, to the poetry of Apollinaire and Cocteau, respectively, call for an accompaniment of instruments, but do not include the piano. They both date from 1919. The next work of vocal chamber music was Le Bal Masqué of 1932. This secular cantata is scored for 1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 bassoon, 1 cornet, 1 violin, 1 violoncello, percussion (for one person), piano, and baritone (or mezzo soprano). The poetry is by Max Jacob from collection entitled Laboratoire Central. Chapter IV of this study dealt with the transcriptions from this cantata and provides much background for the work.

In the score, the composer said the following:

The vocal part should be interpreted with a mixture of violence and charm.

In no case, should the singer emphasize the ironic qualities of the poems. The indications "with tenderness", "amoroso" etc. should be taken in their literal sense. 12.

Again the piano plays a concertant role; in fact, there are times when the piano is everything of importance.

The work is divided into six parts, with the first being a Préambule et air de Bravoure (pp. 1-13). The opening instrumental preamble sets the atmosphere of the work. It is very fast, light, articulated, and there is

12 Francis Poulenc, Le Bal Masqué, Piano-Vocal score (Paris: Salabert, c1932), pp. 1-46.

a distinct touch of the music hall and the same kind of delightful irreverence of things academic, that is found in some of the early works and even as late as the finale of the 1949 Piano Concerto. Poulenc even considered the work a recreation.¹³ The voice enters (p. 5, rehearsal number 10) with Madame la Dauphine. The essential humor is of a certain time and place, and much of the colloquial communicativeness would be lost in any attempt to translate the voluntarily absurd text from the French.

Part II, Intermède, which Poulenc transcribed for solo piano, is purely instrumental (pp. 14-18). Rehearsal number 26 contains some material in the bass of the piano that will be heard in Part IV. The opening and closing Parts are in C major, with the other Parts being in d minor, f minor, d minor, and g minor, respectively.

Parts III and V are vocal, Malvina, and La dame aveugle (pp. 19-23, and 29-33, respectively). The first is a description of a departed lady, and the last of a blind lady whose eyes have many other capabilities and senses. Most of the vocal part is declamation, with much patter and movement in the accompaniment. Once in a while there will be a sweeping, romantic turn of line such as number 37, p. 23, where piano and voice run parallel, in D-flat major, with the closing lines of Part III, "Oh Malvina, oh phantom, May God guard you."

¹³ Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 141.

Part IV, Bagatelle, another instrumental part, was also transcribed for violin and piano (pp. 24-28). This d minor presto, features the violin as the solo instrument, and would thus lend itself well to a transcription for just the two instruments that Poulenc chose. It is filled with many double-stops and rapid figures, with the piano providing mostly chordal accompaniment. However, the other instruments get in, very much like tutti sections, as the violin becomes the accompanying instrument (number 39, p. 25). The pace never slackens.

The finale, Part VI, Caprice, has a long instrumental opening, with a dance hall idea and a slower section, a tango, before the voice enters with a march (pp. 34-46). Poulenc was especially fond of this part of the Cantata, and transcribed it for both piano solo and for two pianos in 1952. All is good humor here, with the instruments, led by the piano, giving out a very memorable tune with a rhythm that is difficult to resist.

Poulenc was particularly fond of this work, despite the extravagance of the subject matter. The composer was the pianist at the first performance on April 20, 1932. The instrumental portions of the work are far more accessible to the non-French listener, than the portions with the surrealist poetry. Why Poulenc chose the title The Masked Ball is unknown, although he did have the poet's permission. Perhaps, the language is the mask.

The third and last cycle for baritone and chamber orchestra, the Chansons villageoises (Village Songs) was completed at Noizay in October, 1942. The instrumentation is: 1 piccolo, 1 Flute, 1 oboe, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 1 trumpet in C, tympani, percussion (triangle, cymbals, glockenspiel, xylophone, celesta, drum, rattle, and whip), string quartet, and harp (or piano).¹⁴ Since the piano is an alternate choice here, and since the composer did, indeed, make the version for voice and piano, this makes a good cycle to peruse for the piano's role.

The poems of this cycle of six songs are by Maurice Fombeure (b. 1906); are amusing imitations of the texts of old French folk-songs, gracefully turned and shot through with a good deal of peasant humor. They are not replicas of folk-songs, nor for that matter are Poulenc's settings: they are recreations of a primitive peasant spirit in music, in the same way the Seven Songs of Falla were Poulenc's own idea of Spanish folk-music.

Though folk-songs of a kind, they are true examples of the *mélodie* as opposed to the *chanson* with verses and chorus. Appropriately, the music is only loosely tied to the text. Poulenc admits having been influenced here by the particular

¹⁴ Francis Poulenc, Chansons villageoises, Piano-Vocal Score (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1976), pp. 1-24. The new English translation is by Winifred Radford who assisted Pierre Bernac with his Interpretation of French Song.

cast of vocal phrase used by Maurice Chevalier. The cycle was first performed at a concert of La Pleiade in Paris on June 28, 1943.¹⁵

The first song, Chanson du clair tamis (Song of the Clear Sieve), marked très gai et très vite, is a 2/2 in E-flat major (pp. 1-3). It is syllabic, with repeated rhythmic figures and repeated notes. The piano is often parallel with the voice (meas. 5), but often continues a consequent phrase by itself as the voice sings repeated pitches (meas. 6). One characteristic of this song is found in many of Poulenc's songs: the phrase structure is often the repetition of two-measure motives; and the piano tends to relate and follow the vocal line closely, or it may have a counter melody to the voice (meas. 5-6 and 7-8, respectively). The text in part is: "The master has died, by a lady's eyes, but tomorrow is May day and the sadness of today can be forgotten." Much of the time the bass is a long stretch of running eighth-notes and marked very dry.

The second song, Les gars qui vont à la fête (The lads who go to the fair), marked follement animé et gai (crazily animated and gay), is a 4/4 in F major (pp. 4-7). Again this is a fast, light, very dry, sort of patter song, cast in an AA'BC. The piano part provides harmonic support and not any pictorial imagery, except at the portions where

15 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 65.

the lads are being entertained at the fair by fiddlers, fife and drum (meas. 18-22), and then, the piano does slight imitations of the instruments mentioned.

C'est le joli printemps (It is Happy Springtime), number three, marked très calme, is a 3/4 in D-flat major but with suggestions of e-flat minor toward the end (pp. 8-10). This slower song is simplicity itself, diatonic, with many directions for the singer to follow, and cast in an AB-CA'A (coda). There is a gentle tune in the piano against the faster eighth-notes in the voice part. The lads are courting in the month of May in this song. The C section has the piano paralleling the voice in a very singing, legato line in both parts. Unlike the other songs, numbers three and four were written in Paris in December, 1942.¹⁶

Number four, Le mendiant (The Beggar), marked lent mais allant malgré tout, is a 4/4 in e minor, the longest song of the cycle (pp. 11-16). The piano has to achieve several orchestral effects, e.g., pizzicato (meas. 16). The piano markings are very exact here. There is much sans pédale, sec, and then just as suddenly, very legato. The entire song is a lament for the voice, while the piano provides the contrast. It is a difficult piano part with full four note chords and many running sixteenth-notes. There is much verbal, although not always musical, repetition.

¹⁶ Francis Poulenc, "C'est le joli printemps and Le mendiant," in Chansons villageoises, pp. 10 and 16.

Number five, Chanson de la fille frivole (Song of the Frivolous Girl), marked prestissimo possible, is a 4/4 in B-flat major (pp. 17-20). This song is an etude for the piano, with constantly running sixteenths and staccato eighths. It is very reminiscent of Poulenc's piano pieces, e.g., the Presto in B-flat, and the Toccata from Trois pièces. The song is basically strophic with some modifications in the voice part. There are no ritards and the race continues until the end (Example 54).

Example 54. Poulenc, Chansons villageoises "Chanson de la fille frivole," meas. 1-2

311 Prestissimo possible $\text{♩} = 168$
f *staid the last so free and ea - sy* Let the night be warm or bree - zy.
 CHANT
 Ah dit la fil - le fri - vo - le Quo le vent y vire, y vo - le
 PIANO
f

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The last song in the cycle, Le retour du sergent (The Return of the Sergeant), marked mouvement de marche enlevée, is a 4/4 in a minor (pp. 21-24). It is dry, with repetitions in text and music, without ritard, with many references to the first song in the accompaniment, which helps hold the cycle together as many of Poulenc's first and last songs do. The piano part switches abruptly from short clipped chords to suddenly, very legato (meas. 5-6). The text: "with swollen feet and sniffling nose," keeps

returning on different pitch levels, but with the same rhythm for the words and the short, detached piano chords underneath. One humorous aside, in the translation, the lady uses the translation, "And a promise of extra screw," that may startle many American singers who do not realize the British term, meaning extra pay. However, the song is a very serious one concerning a gentleman who has paid a great price for the safety of his country and is now returning home. The simplicity of these songs can be very deceiving. They are extremely difficult and complex. Pierre Bernac says "beneath their debonair exterior they conceal a scholarly and delicate artistry."¹⁷

The seven songs forming the cycle Calligrammes were written in July, 1948. These were conceived as a farewell to Apollinaire, from whom Poulenc was beginning to feel that he had extracted all the inspiration this cherished poet could yield. The poems of Calligrammes had been known to Poulenc much earlier during his military service, when he used to read them. In recollection of those early days, he dedicated each of the seven songs to one of the friends of his youth. The main technical interest of this cycle is in the subtlety of the piano accompaniments.¹⁸

The following is merely a cursory touching on the main

¹⁷ Pierre Bernac, The Interpretation of French Song (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 277.

¹⁸ Francis Poulenc, Calligrammes, pour chant et piano (Paris: Heugel, c1948), pp. 1-24.

features of each of the songs. Number one, L'Espionne (The Spy) in F-sharp major, is bathed in pedal, with the piano paralleling the voice in a consistent rhythmic pattern. The piano writing is beautiful with many triadic-melodic outlines and an interesting enharmonic change now and then, forming an ABA. The second song, Mutation (Change) in E-flat major, is a presto with some intricate finger work in the bass for the pianist. Number three, Vers le sud (Towards the South) in E major/minor, is a good example of the composer's love of modal changes. It is nocturne-like, with a single note melody again bathed in pedal. Number four, Il pleut (It is Raining), is a technical tour de force for the pianist. It is toccata-like, in b-flat minor, and a sober text that compares the sound of rain to the voices of dead women. Number five, La grâce exilée (The Exiled Grace), is very lyric with the piano contribution being not to detract from the lovely line in the vocal part. The piano is very supportive here, but does not intrude. Number six, Aussi bien que les cigales (As well as the Cicada), has much crisp, dry piano writing that is very melodic. There are many loud climatic points to this very rhapsodic, rather pompous song. Poulenc instructs that there be a very long wait before starting the last song, number seven, Voyage. A syncopated rhythmic pattern is established and maintained. The piano parallels the voice in many places, and a lovely piano postlude, gives a Schumannesque feel to the cycle.

This cycle is a work of Poulenc's maturity. It is spontaneous, always at the service of the poetic sensitivities, and infused with a profound lyricism. The last, Voyage, is remarkable for its sensitive modulations, leading, as the composer has eloquently put it, "from feeling to silence through the experience of melancholy and love."¹⁹ It brings this last Apollinaire cycle to a close on a serious and remote note.

An Éluard Cycle

Shortly before the completion of the Dialogues des Carmélites, Poulenc turned to the poems of Paul Éluard for a last cycle. The composer had long wished to set some of the poems from the collection entitled Voir, which Éluard had dedicated to several remarkable contemporary painters. The plan was discussed shortly before Éluard's death in 1952. Poulenc had wanted his friend to write a poem in praise of Matisse, to be used for the final song, so that the cycle might end in a joyous, sunlight mood; but this plan came to nothing, since Éluard did not share Poulenc's admiration for Matisse.²⁰

The cycle, Le Travail du peintre, was completed in August, 1956, and contains seven songs.²¹ Seven great

¹⁹ Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 119.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 123. Roy was quoting in both instances from Poulenc's Journal de mes mélodies.

²¹ Francis Poulenc, Le Travail du peintre, pour chant et piano (Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1957), pp. 1-23.

contemporary painters: Picasso, Chagall, Braque, Juan Gris, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Jacques Villon, inspired Éluard to seven poems in which he tried to synthesize their work, and Poulenc in his turn, tried to depict them musically. In these big songs, Poulenc gives his best. They are at once of an intensity, a complexity, and an economy which reveal perfect mastery.²²

Number one, Pablo Picasso relates the proud, aloof, strong side of the painter. The piano has consistent eighth-notes in the accompaniment and much C pedal point. Number two, Marc Chagall, is an F-sharp major, prestissimo, that tries to project the surrealism of his characters and animals. It is a waltz movement with a scherzo-like quality. Number three, Georges Braque, is in the very unlikely key of d-flat minor, which projects the subtle measured evocation of Braque's canvases. It is very slow, clear, with lots of colors and rhythmic subtleties, i.e., groups of two spread over three beats of a 6/8. Number 4, Juan Gris, is in the more familiar c-sharp minor, depicting the melancholy of the painter. Poulenc instructs the use of a "halo of pedal," with a consistent rhythmic figure in the piano to a very gentle melody. Number 5, Paul Klee, in b-flat minor, in in complete contrast. Here, there is harsh violence,

²² Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 124; Hell, Francis Poulenc, pp. 84-85.

portraying the vivacity of Klee. The piano writing is difficult, but with precise instructions from Poulenc on how it is to be executed. Number six, Joan Miró, in D major, opens brilliantly. The form is a very clear ABA' with a strong melody line in the piano accompaniment and a crystal-line postlude for piano alone. Perhaps this, indeed, projects the éclat of Miró. The last of the cycle, number seven, Jacques Villon, in B-flat major, has an accompaniment much like the opening song (Picasso). Again like the first song, there is a duet-like approach between the voice and the piano (see the first and last of Chansons villageoises).

Poulenc was always equal to his ambitions in this cycle. Here the composer did not want the listener to "see" but not through obvious allusions. He contents himself with touches of color in the piano accompaniment and simply allows the voice to be the single verity. The piano is more important than ever in this cycle, and seems to be the element that is able to unite and inspire all the facets of Poulenc's cultural, poetic, and artistic nature.²³ When Poulenc teamed with Bernac in 1935, the amount of piano music began to decline, and the number of songs began to increase. This became even more evident in the 1950s. However, the piano writing in the songs seems to become more intense, demanding, even rhapsodic at times. It is as if

23 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 123-124.

the pianist in Poulenc simply had to express itself. He may have said harsh things about some of his piano music, but writing for the instrument remained with him until the very end, if not in solo music or concertos, in songs, and the magnificent burst of chamber music during the last few years of his life.

The critic, Jean-Joel Barbier, has well defined the situation of Poulenc as a composer of songs:

In fact, there are two types of composers. Those, like Faure, by whom a song is the source of a musical novelty, and those, like Debussy, for whom a song is the source of a poetic event. But a song or a collection of Poulenc is always a poetic event before it is a musical novelty. It is this which gives value and the unique color to his music. His poetic intelligence is equal to his musical gifts. 24

In 1945, Francis Poulenc wrote in his Journal: "If one placed on my tomb: 'Here lies Francis Poulenc, the musician of Apollinaire and Éluard', it seems to me that this would be my more beautiful title of fame."²⁵

Fortunately Poulenc was an articulate man and the comments he made on his life, his work, his aesthetic views, his philosophy, and on the arts in general, help the writer in a just summation of his work. These areas will be the topics for the final chapter of this study.

24 Roy, Francis Poulenc, p. 113. Quoted from Disques, No. 105, 1959.

25 Ibid., p. 120. Quoted from Poulenc's Journal de mes mélodies.

CHAPTER XI

THE PIANISTIC ART, AESTHETIC VIEWS, AND AN ESTIMATION OF FRANCIS POULENC

Francis Poulenc was a complex personality. He was not two men, but a double-man with each side coming to the fore singly or at once. This is not to be construed in the psychological sense of schizophrenia, where one aspect of the personality is unaware of the other. Poulenc was very much aware of this duality, and the combat that could result when both sides appeared suddenly at one time. Those who have written about him have also been aware of the sudden appearance of both these facets of his personality. In the preface of the Entretiens, Claude Rostand made the following observations:

There are two Poulencs. . . . There is the Poulenc a little impudent -- which some take for a 'little master.'

And then there is the other upon which one does not always place as much accent as it would be convenient, the Poulenc serious, austere to see, of the polyphonic vocal works and of certain song cycles.

One will find a thousand reasons for not underestimating the first at the profit of the second. The two are perfectly in equilibrium. 1

Stephane Audel in Moi et mes amis further observed that "the gaiety! with the melancholy, it was fundamental to Poulenc's

1 Francis Poulenc, Entretiens avec Claude Rostand (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), pp. III-V.

character."² William Austin said: "Poulenc lived in fear, in fear of everything and of nothingness, of liberty and of constraint."³ Austin later quoted Rostand as saying:

But behind this spontaneity, this easy and ironic cutting up, was hidden much inner turmoil. . . . He was basically an anxious man, in life as in his vocation. 4

While it may be true that the exact cause of this "fear" may not be known, there may be some reasonable explanations rather than just using a term and dropping the matter. First, Poulenc was not of the so called Avant-garde. Later in his life he acknowledged this, but perhaps in his early life, the absence of this aspect in his work, preyed on his mind. He grew to know that the new at any price, was not as precious as circling ones own domain, and with each circling, making the known, the familiar, the common place uniquely your own. However, he did live in a time that praised the new, the original, almost the "gimmick," as a high value. In a letter to André Schaeffner in 1942, Poulenc seemed to come to grips with the matter, although of course, the writing does not necessarily terminate the problem in the mind of the composer:

2 Francis Poulenc, Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel (Paris: La Palatine, 1963), p. 10.

3 William W. Austin, Music in the Twentieth Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 517.

4 Ibid., p. 519. This quote from Claude Rostand comes from an article in Le Figaro Littéraire, February 9, 1963, shortly after Poulenc's death, January 30, 1963. Much of that article is translated at the end of this study.

I know very well that I am not of those musicians who have innovated harmonically as Igor -- Ravel or Debussy -- but I think that there is a place for the new music that contents itself with the conventions of others. Was not this the case of Mozart -- Schubert? Besides, time will strengthen the personality of my harmonic style. Has not one believed for a long time that Ravel -- little master -- was an epigone of Debussy and nothing more? In stating all this to you in perturbation and pain, I am responding to certain censorious implications often made of me. I am acquainted, besides, with your way of thinking on this subject and that is why 'our entrusting' holds me so at heart. 5

Secondly, just from the standpoint of musical education, Poulenc could well have felt inferior, uncomfortable, or have had fear. He was, after all, surrounded with colleagues, even those for whom he had little respect or very little in common, who were the result of long years at the conservatoire, under the private tutelage of a master composer, or a combination of both -- in just the "accepted" road for a composer or musician to follow. Such was not the case with Poulenc. With the exception of his years of piano study with Vifies just prior to the First World War, and then his three years during the winter seasons of 1921-1924, with Charles Koechlin, Poulenc was virtually autodidactic (The earlier experiences with Professor Muccioli in solfege, an organist friend in harmony, and piano teachers, while helpful, hardly count in importance to the conservatoire or private study with a recognized composer.).

5 Francis Poulenc, Correspondance 1915-1963, edited by Hélène de Windel (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), letter from Poulenc to André Schaeffner dated December, 1942, pp. 127-128.

Allen Hughes said:

Throughout his career, Poulenc probably composed more from instinct and aural experience than any major composer of this century. . . . In short, Poulenc was about as pure an auto-didact as one could find among composers of serious music. 6

Perhaps this should not have been a factor in Poulenc's thinking or psychological make-up, but imagine if he were still alive today, with all the emphasis on degrees, education, etc. Even with a successful composing career behind him, how many schools today would have given him a degree on the basis of work done? The trend is to make the person "go through the mill", no matter what his qualifications or experience. That little piece of paper may not mean anything to many people, but it certainly does to many of those who may not have it. There is no way to enter into the composer's psyche; however, this aspect of his background could certainly add to his feelings, perhaps, of insecurity, or even of inferiority.

Fortunately, Poulenc was healthy enough as a creative spirit and person, that he both recognized and continued to acknowledge whatever short-comings he had, and remained true to the abilities that he had been given, which were considerable, despite the Poulenc of the bad days. He was a very precise man; he explained himself clearly and honestly; he remained a conservative, but did not rest immobile, either

6 Allen Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians (10th edn., Bruce Bohle, editor), pp. 1706 and 1708.

as a prisoner of his habits, of his routines, nor more so of his successes.⁷ During an interview for Contrepoints in 1946, Poulenc said:

My rule (canon), it is instinct.
I do not have conventions, and I pride myself of it.
I do not have any system of composing (system being equivalent to me to "gimmicks").
Inspiration is a thing so mysterious, that it is better not to explain it. 8

He may never have tried to explain inspiration, but Poulenc was certainly articulate on both specific genres of his own works and on his aesthetic views.

In his third conversation with Claude Rostand, Poulenc spoke directly to the subject of his piano music, giving a picture of his own views on the subject as well as discussing certain qualities necessary to present this music as it was intended. Poulenc rarely played his solo piano music in public, although he did play the concertos.⁹ However, it is worth quoting part of that conversation to hear what Poulenc said concerning this area of composition:

I think very sincerely that my piano music is not as good as the virtuosos claim, nor as bad as certain of your colleagues (critics) have written. The truth is between the two. What is strange, is that when the piano becomes the accompaniment for the mélodies, then I invent.

My pianistic writing is equally different with orchestra or with instruments.

It is piano alone that escapes me. There I am the victim of false appearances.

7 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. IV.

8 Jean Roy, Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1964), p. 104.

9 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 27.

It is with my piano music that I suffer the most fraudulent interpretations, especially since I myself have set a very precise instrumental conception.

The major technical errors disfiguring my piano music, even to the point of making it unrecognizable, are these: rubato, stinginess with the pedal, and too clear articulation of certain arrangements of chords or arpeggios, that should, on the contrary, be played hazily.

Let me explain, I loathe rubato in anything of mine. Once a tempo has been established, it should not be changed at any price until I so indicate. Rubato makes me furious. I prefer all the false notes in the world.

As to the use of the pedals, this is the great secret of my piano music and often its true drama. One can never use enough pedal. Understand me? Never enough! Sometimes when I hear certain pianists interpret me, I want to yell at them, 'Put the butter in the sauce! Why play as though you were on a diet!' . . .

In a fast movement, I have had to count on the pedal to realize, virtually, the harmony of a passage that would be impossible to write at that tempo. One should keep the chords and arpeggios in the background the greater part of the time to let the theme come through.

The German school of piano playing is, of course, the most contrary to my aesthetic as it is contrary to that of Debussy and to Ravel (the genial Gieseeking being excepted, of course).

The Russian school of piano, to the contrary agrees perfectly with me. No one plays me as well as Horowitz and as Rubinstein. . . .

If pianists would have confidence in my metronome markings, very carefully established, many of these misfortunes would be avoided. 10

There is the piano style in a nutshell: nearly always a melodic line that takes precedence over the background; the use of the pedal to provide the complete harmonic picture; the avoidance of rubato except where indicated; and the relying on the metronome markings for the speed of that unchanging tempo. This is not to say that there are not

exceptions, even to these rules. There were piano compositions that were of an experimental, somewhat foreign nature. These gropings can be found in the Promenades and to a certain extent in the Impromptus (1920-1921). However, the composer was quick to find his own language and remain with it, after these exceptions. They are interesting, however.

Poulenc's greatest gift and asset to his style, was that of melody -- beautiful, memorable, lyric, accessible melody. His harmonies are essentially diatonic with a liberal sprinkling of delicious "wrong" notes. In the piano music, the phrase structure is usually regular. The texture is almost entirely homophonic, with the exception of the works cited above, which contain some linear elements, and those that use very short imitative fragments of no more than a few beats and usually found at the octave, such as the "Ariette" in Feuillets d'Album (1933), the Mélancolie (1940), or the first movement of the Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1962). But there are no fugues, canons, or even points of imitation long enough to qualify for the term fugato.

The harmonic rhythm is essentially on the slow side and even appears at times to become static, such as the conclusions of the Aubade (1929) and the Sextuor (1931-1939). Poulenc's rhythms cannot be compared to a rhythmic master such as Brahms or Stravinsky; however, the various elements that enter into his music, i.e., the dance hall,

pseudo-jazz, folk-tunes, the various dance types (tango, samba, charleston), give his rhythm a verve, an élan, and in combination with his melodies, a joie de vivre that sometimes preclude the immobility of the listener.

From a formal standpoint, there are no sonata forms in any of the works involving the piano in Poulenc. In fact, Allen Hughes stated that Poulenc wrote no sonata forms.¹¹ The proof of that statement would lie in a complete survey of Poulenc's works and not just the domain of the keyboard. Poulenc did prefer, at least in the piano works, a ternary form with the final section being condensed, abbreviated, and the materials moved around in a fashion not too far removed from that of the jig-saw puzzle principle, hence the reference to the Mozartean conception of the first movements of his piano concertos. Often times, the middle section will be signaled by a change in the basic tempo. However, in general, Poulenc moves from one melody to another, achieving tension by his rather constant delight in modulation and presenting the materials on different pitch levels, often touching various tonal areas, but for so brief a time, that it is difficult to actually say that he is in such-and-such a key, but rather within a given key area.

When Poulenc used the rondo form, it was again in his

¹¹ Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," International Cyclopedia, p. 1707.

own way, with the refrain often being made up of several ideas, not all of which would return, or when even parts of the refrain did return, they did so in varying keys. Again the comparison with Mozart, this time in the finales of his piano concertos, particularly the combination of the concerto-sonata-rondo form where parts of the refrain would appear in the contrasting episodes (couplets) as transitions, or even in developmental material, e.g., the finale of the Piano Concerto No. 21 in C, K. 467. In Poulenc this conception of the rondo is especially true in the finales of the Trio and the Sextuor. However, even if the movement or composition were not entitled, rondo, the composer had a penchant for repetition of melodic ideas in parts or as a small germ motive that had melodic and/or rhythmic significance, e.g., the Sonata for Flute and Piano, first movement, and the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, first movement.

Another form of recurrence that appealed to Poulenc was the use of cyclic material. Nearly all of the multi-movement chamber works have this feature. In the concertos, such as the Organ Concerto, the repetitions are the result of an organic growth from one section to another, a thematic transformation. In the Concerto pour deux pianos, the repetition is both figural and thematic, i.e., the many uses of triplets in the first and last movements as well as the thematic derivations in the last movement from the second.

The infamous instance is the "barracks noise" in the first and last movements of the Concert champêtre. In the solo piano works of length, the only cyclic uses are in Les soirées de Nazelles and the Thème varié, which also combine with the variation principle.

Both Jean Roy and Claude Rostand made observations on the resulting style of Poulenc. Jean Roy said:

But until Poulenc gave himself to Satie and Chabrier, until his melodies recall the lesson of the best of Debussy, until he takes from Stravinsky that which has excellence for him and for assimilation for a French musician, until he studies Monteverdi and Vittoria, until he meditates the lesson of Matisse or applies himself to render exactly, to their just tone and purity of their lines, the poems of Apollinaire and Éluard, until he discovers his affinities with Moussorgsky or he renders homage to Mozart, he is not a theoretician grasping for new formulas which he uses, but a stylist. Poulenc searches for the accord between his thought and his form, between a sentiment and its unique expression. The modernity is not in the vocabulary: it resides in the spirit, in the choice of subjects, and in the use of the appropriate style for those subjects. The works of Poulenc are always perfectly suited (to the subject). 12

Claude Rostand, in retrospect, viewed this style as being in many periods or manners with the following result:

One can without too much trouble distinguish many manners, many periods in the work of Poulenc: the wild (fauve), between 1918-1920; a period where the technique establishes itself, between 1920-1930; a new period where Poulenc rejected completely all aggressive uselessness, all excess of simplicity or the same of awkwardness for more or less affectiveness, between 1930-1937; to end up finally, toward 1937, at the last period 'characterized by a complete mastery of the means of expression in the domains of the greatest diversity'. One ought to equally note that these

12 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 80-81.

successive periods connect harmoniously. Never has Poulenc had to disown himself.

To know the fidelity of the first source. Each of the parts of this crazily gifted musician augment his domain. Poulenc is very much less preoccupied with vocabulary as with style. For him, the new, this was the truth. I believe that there is nothing of greater importance to meditate on this subject than this lesson he gave his works: fidelity. 13

Nor was Poulenc entirely happy, with the results of all his endeavors:

It is not by modesty, believe me well, my dear Claude, that I condemned certain of my piano pieces, but by lucidity. I deem that clearness is one indispensable quality in an artist. It is our most certain means of progress. . . .

. . . I do not blush to be the composer of Mouvements perpétuels or of Bestiaire, to the contrary, because these two works are exactly, very representative of the Poulenc of 1920. But I do not wish them (the public) to think of me in such works as the Poèmes de Ronsard, Les soirées de Nazelles, etc., misled into ways which were not mine.

The best interpretations are, alas! often those of my minor music. That a Rubinstein renders Napoli listenable, that Marcelle Meyer, who plays my music as I would like to be able to play it, transfigures my Intermezzo in A-flat; that Horowitz finally one evening, at Pleyel's gave me the illusion that I suddenly held a place by Debussy, may be, but I would wish that they equally, in the domain of the conductors, cared more for my Suites from Biches and from Animaux modèles, or my Sinfonietta, or Stabat or Sécheresses. 14

In this last quote there is the slightest bit of evidence that Poulenc may have said a few of the harsh things he did about the piano music, because some of his orchestral music was being ignored at the time. Perhaps, he would be

13 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 81-82.

14 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 73-74 (first paragraph) and pp. 207-208 (the remainder). As with all interviews, there is a certain amount of overlapping of material, but usually spread apart as in a work of this length.

a happier composer today with the current representation of those very orchestral works in the record catalogues on both sides of the Atlantic. Interesting, how parents enjoy the equal treatment of all their "children".

This style, to which Poulenc referred as "such a salad," is a combination of many sources, all of which the composer gratefully acknowledges. In both Moi et mes amis and the Entretiens, Poulenc gives these sources of this style and his preferred musicians. There is naturally, some duplication. From the Entretiens, Poulenc said:

The influence of Satie, upon me, was considerable, as much spiritual as musical.

The influence of Satie upon my music has been profound and immediate.

Debussy, without a doubt, is who awakened music in me, but it is Stravinsky who served as guide.

There is little Debussyism in my music, but there was a continual presence of the Great Igor. For me, it was Pulcinella, Mavra, Apollon, Le Baiser de la fée.

Harmonically, I owe also to Ravel, above all in Les Animaux modèles. I owe also enormously to Satie, but more again aesthetically than musically. Chabrier is my grandfather, and Moussorgsky remains my master in the domain of melody. 15

From Moi et mes amis, the composers that exerted influence:

Without hesitation, Chabrier, Satie, Ravel, and Stravinsky.

It is not Sacre du Printemps that has influenced me. I have been influenced more by the European works, such as Pulcinella, Le Baiser de la fée, Jeu de cartes, Mavra.

I adore Debussy, for whom I have always a cult, but the sound of the music of Stravinsky has been something of the new to me, that, often, I ask myself and say to myself: Ah, well, if Stravinsky had not existed, what

15 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 46, 47, 180, and 181, respectively.

music would I have written. I consider myself a spiritual son of Stravinsky. 16

In each of these works cited, Poulenc was also asked the musicians that he preferred or liked. In the Entretiens he was asked to name six favored contemporary musicians. He said:

Six! There is first Debussy, of course, then Stravinsky, and Satie, then the admirable Falla . . . Ravel and Bartok. But how sad I am to leave outside the door my dear Prokofiev. 17

In Moi et mes amis, the composer was asked the same question, only not restricted to contemporary musicians, and finally Audel asked him, if he were condemned to exile, to name five composers whose works he would take with him. Poulenc responded, respectively:

I am crazily eclectic. I love to different degrees of course, but with the same sincerity, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Weber (the dear Weber), Verdi, Moussorgsky, Debussy, Ravel, Bartok, etc. 18

Before all Mozart, then Schubert, Chopin, Debussy, and Stravinsky. 19

The composition of the style is also intimately linked with the philosophical view of the art, of which Poulenc was again such an eloquent speaker. When asked about the future of music and the progress of art, if

16 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, pp. 76, 189, and 188, respectively.

17 Idem, Entretiens, p. 181.

18 Idem, Moi et mes amis, p. 75.

19 Ibid., p. 76.

indeed, such has been the case, Poulenc gave such a beautiful answer, that it too, must, in all fairness for a complete picture, be quoted in its entirety:

My dear Claude, does progress truly exist in Art? I believe not. Let us speak of evolution, if you wish, and reserve the word 'progress' for all the material side of the question.

That our 'winds' may be more agile than at the time of Beethoven, that our chromatic tympani may be more tuned than those of Wagner, that is evident. But I do not think that Ravel or Strauss orchestrates better than Mozart or Weber. It is another thing, that is all.

There are great epochs in painting, in architecture, in music. Often one current migrating from one country to another. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, France has not had to complain from the musical point of view, and it is, however, without doubt thanks to Gounod, Bizet, Chabrier, Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Faure, Roussel, that we do not figure as poor relatives in the history of music.

We have had the opportunity to have a great innovator, Debussy, while Russia had the same, Stravinsky, and central Europe, Schoenberg. Each has opened the ways that others have followed. Thus a musician also as powerfully original as Bartok has sometimes prowled (rôde) at the side of Debussy (I am thinking especially of the entrance of the Celesta in the first movement of the Music for Strings and Percussion and in the middle of the Andante of the Sonata for Two Pianos), sometimes touched the dodecaphony of the Viennese.

. . . The play of influences has always been frankly international. The influence of the Italians on Bach and Mozart, the influence of Liszt on the Russian Five, of Moussorgsky on Debussy, of Debussy on Falla, etc.

What is curious in our time, to state a fact in music as well as painting, are the most opposing tendencies side by side. It is amusing to think that Paul Klee and Bonnard painted in the same era, and that today a Sauguet and a Boulez experiment parallely in totally opposed idioms. . . . (He paused to express his fondness for Sauguet's music.) It is just because of this extreme diversity that our time pleases me: because I can salute the opposite of Sauguet, and of Françaix, Marcel Mihalovici, as the best musician of the foreign school of Paris. Each year Mihalovici, convinces us more of his authenticity and of his gifts served by a masterly technique.

I have chosen a scheme of musicians very dissimilar in order to prove that the spirit of Satie prolongs itself in Sauguet; that the lesson of Stravinsky of the Rake's Progress has been well understood by Françaix; and that Bartok has engendered a powerful musician in the person of Mihalovici. 20

The total effect is strikingly honest; and it was that word that Arthur Honegger used when, upon receiving from Poulenc a copy of the Entretiens avec Claude Rostand, wrote Poulenc a long letter, after a longer silence, stating that he realized that their differences were, in fact, their great fraternal bond upon admitting those differences, and that "we are two honest men."²¹

Poulenc came to this honesty by dint of hard work and discipline. He was a man of enormous culture, and while not an intellectual, was credited with infallible taste. Stéphane Audel comments on the works of art, the rare editions, recordings, and scores, as reflecting the eclectic nature of the man.²² Perhaps a scholarly paper is not the place to mention astrological characteristics; however, Francis Poulenc was born a Capricorn, and true to his birth sign, he was, indeed, a man of order and organization. Audel wrote several times in his preface, of the orderly arrangement of everything in Poulenc's home, Noizay, of the precise schedule Poulenc maintained each day for work, for

20 Poulenc, Entretiens, pp. 192-195.

21 Idem, Correspondance, letter from Honegger to Poulenc dated May 10, 1954, pp. 221-222.

22 Poulenc, Moi et mes amis, p. 10.

socializing, and for listening to a variety of composer's works on his sound system, while following the scores.²³

The composer explained these habits to another interviewer:

I do not have a method of precise work, because I believe each work necessitates a different mode of expression. But I have the hours of work well-defined.

I am not a man of the evening, but a man of the morning. I am perfectly able to place myself at my work table or my piano at five o'clock in the morning. . . . The evening, to the contrary, my senses become spoiled.

In fact, facility is not my fort, and how much I envy Milhaud or Hindemith to be able to write a symphony in a hotel room. It is true that I am not able to do without a piano. I depend on the least expected.

And one will see that I am not uniquely the light composer (besides for me, this word has nothing of the pejorative).²⁴

Poulenc would thus work, "with his back to the window," until the noon lunch hour, and then in just as orderly a manner, want and be ready for socializing and people. Amusingly, Audel described Poulenc in his tweeds or flannel as "the perfect gentleman farmer."²⁵ This conjures up the picture of both Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) and the tweedy, rough look of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958).

He apparently took great pride in his flower gardens, was praised for his floral arranging abilities, and was delighted to tour his estate with guests. He never forgot friends, always informing them of his projects, and he regarded his correspondence as a joyous obligation.²⁶ The

23 Poulenc, *Moi et mes amis*, p. 11.

24 Idem, *Entretiens*, pp. 168, 165, and 105, respectively.

25 Poulenc, *Moi et mes amis*, pp. 11-12.

26 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

The country gave him the solitude and the quiet he needed for his composing. And these qualities are the only ones of importance to him. The lack of distraction, not the Touraine providing inspiration for his work, was the key.²⁷

The picture would be sadly incomplete without mention of Poulenc's seemingly insatiable curiosity, which went hand in hand with his auto-didactic qualities. If he conceived a particular orchestral sonority, he went to the score containing that sound and studied it carefully to see how that sound was achieved. If, as in the last years of the thirties, he wanted to write choral music, he made a thorough study of the motets of Monteverdi, having heard many of them performed by Nadia Boulanger's choir. Or as in writing the Dialogues des Carmélites, he studied both Moussorgsky and again Monteverdi, especially a soprano aria from Ballo delle ingrato, which he thought a model of intensity, where the composer tried "at any price to make the words understood."²⁸

His curiosity, further led him into knowing an incredible amount of music both as a performer and as a listener.

27 Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 89. Hell says this after just quoting a glowing tribute to Poulenc by Colette in which she mentions that the wines he grew, drank, and the soil, being a part of him.

28 Hughes, "Francis Poulenc," in International Cyclopedia, p. 1708; Hell, Francis Poulenc, p. 48; Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 212.

He kept completely in touch with contemporary happenings in music. He knew the German and French song repertoire from augmenting his income in concerts with many artists, but especially Pierre Bernac, as accompanist. Here, he rather quietly created a new role for a composer, not as a teacher, conductor, or even solo concert artist in his own piano works or those of others, but as a professional accompanist earning a living:

It is also in accompanying him (Bernac) in Schubert, Schumann, Faure, Debussy, Ravel, that I have learned my craft of song (composition). 29

He enjoyed playing so much that he voluntarily rehearsed Prokofiev's piano concertos with the composer before Prokofiev came to the United States on tour to play them. He did the same thing in 1932 for Arthur Rubinstein, in Falla's presence, for the Nights in the Gardens of Spain.³⁰

This all encompassing knowledge and curiosity may have been responsible for his honest, but rather straightforward opinions of many musicians and their music:

Certainly nothing is less near to me than the German spirit, but I am able to admire that which I do not love, and the same as that I detest. 31

He admired the Viennese dodecophonists but, "I am less at ease with them than with others."³² And of the other

29 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 93.

30 Idem, Moi et mes amis, pp. 158 and 116, respectively.

31 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 128.

32 Ibid., p. 182.

German composers, he said:

Often heavy, but I admire him. (Wagner)

I adore Richard Strauss.

It is a genius that leaves me totally indifferent. It is too heavy and too long. (Brahms)

It is for me an incessant discovery. (Beethoven Quartets) 33

Of the French composers, he said that he respected Roussel, but that he was "allergic to Faure' and that this has always been true."³⁴

When Francis Poulenc died, January 30, 1963, many musicians and critics were taken aback at the outpouring of sentiment and grief especially from the French nation over a composer who had been considered by many as the "petit maître," which Rostand referred to as only one facet of his personality. But it was not just the French. Many musical figures from other countries spoke out, in particular those with a background of French training, the Americans of the generation of Aaron Copland (b. 1900), Virgil Thomson (b. 1896), and Roger Sessions (b. 1896), for instance.³⁵

One of the treasures of Jean Roy's biography is the section called "Francis Poulenc en Blanc et Noir."³⁶ In this section M. Roy excerpts or gives in full, critical opinion of Francis Poulenc from 1924 until after his death

33 Poulenc, Entretiens, p. 185.

34 Ibid., p. 186.

35 Edward Tatnall Canby, jacket notes for Poulenc, Aubade, Sonata for Oboe and Piano, and Sonata for Flute and Piano (Nonesuch H-71033).

36 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 147-161.

in 1963. In perusing that section, it would come as no surprise the esteem in which Poulenc was held in the eyes of so many for so many years. A few extracts would well serve to illustrate this sentiment:

. . . Les Biches is a portrait of Francis Poulenc. . . .
The eye of Poulenc sings melody.

Francis Poulenc is the same as music. I do not know of music more direct, more simply expressive, and which goes right to the goal with such surety.

. . . Poulenc is a born musician. Even in his mediocre productions, one finds charming passages, fresh and spontaneous.

. . . The most precious gift which enriches a musician is the gift of melody. Poulenc has known, in work after work to try equally the virtue of form.

One attributes to Picasso this utterance: 'I do not look, I find'. In the same way, Poulenc does not look, but finds. . . . so many accomplished works where the musician, without ceasing to be himself, expresses himself without all influence -- with a fullness, a simplicity and a richness which give evidence of the most personal mastery. 37

All these opinions were expressed while Poulenc lived. The flood tide came after his death from old friends, from professionals, Pierre Bernac, and even music critics who had not always been kind in life. A full quote from only one of

37 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 149-151, 155, and 156, respectively. They are: Jean Cocteau (Le Coq et L'Arlequin, 1924); Darius Milhaud (Études, 1924); Henri Prunieres (La Revue musicale, March, 1933); André Schaeffner (Contre-points, January, 1946); and Henri Hell (Francis Poulenc, 1958), respectively. But see David Drew: "Poulenc is the most frank, if not the most reticent of composers. When he has nothing to say, he says it." Quoted by Robert T. Jones, jacket notes for The Piano Music of Francis Poulenc, Gabriel Tacchino, piano (Angel S-36602). See the end of this study for more translations of reviews and eulogies of Poulenc.

them will suffice. From Clarendon comes:

What should I say of him, who if one has had knowledge of him, should not have mourned him? Poulenc was hostile of excessive judgments, and he knew himself very well in order to accept disproportionate praises of his talent. Nevertheless, he failed to admit to himself two facts: first, that he was a born musician; then, that he never ceased to elevate himself on two levels, the spiritual and the artistic. This ascent was very perceptible, in his thought, as in his work. Far from the Mouvements perpétuels of his youth -- and going beyond to the summit of his spouting invention of the 1920s -- his last works were written from a pen so firm, they emanate from a soul at that point taken with the ideal. The one is nothing without the other -- that one will not know, from their subject, to allude to the facility of a 'petit-maître' or the simple grace of an artist at the height of his powers. The Dialogues des Carmélites, La voix humaine, the Sonate pour flûte et piano, and, above all, the Stabat Mater -- his masterpiece to my mind -- are of importance in the balance of contemporary music. Prodigious melodist, extremely sensitive to poetry, and most proper as a person, today, to express it in music, his passing with a disconcerting acuteness from smiles to tears, Poulenc left us more than one-hundred-fifty compositions where the spirit and humor alternate with sadness or melancholy. He was our Schubert of the present. 38

Several impressions immediately present themselves:

- (1) a very watchful France had followed his entire career;
- (2) they (critics and musicians alike) had seen more growth than the composer saw or was willing to admit;
- (3) this appraisal was written January 31, 1963, before the Oboe or the Clarinet Sonatas, or the Répons des Ténèbres, had been heard;
- (4) the interesting mixture of both vocal and instrumental achievement in an age of such specialization in one or the other, but seldom recognition in both;
- (5) the

38 Roy, Francis Poulenc, pp. 157-158. This eulogy appeared in Le Figaro, January 31, 1963.

Romantic terms used to describe the composer's dealings with the ideal -- the Faustian ideal of the unobtainable; and lastly (6), how very sad that Poulenc was mentioned with his beloved Schubert the day after his death. To have made a contribution that would lead to such a comparison after a span of sixty-four years, would surely have pleased le maître, Francis Poulenc.

Nature seems to supply composers in profusion; thereby, virtually insuring that from that abundance a few great masters will emerge. Every time, each generation, every era, can make a claim to its quota of durable composers among the many transient talents. The difficulty seems to be to separate the durable ones from the mass. If history is our judge in the matter, then she shows that we often single out a minor composer, instead of neglecting an important one. While being sensitive to the possibility of encroaching on precarious ground, it must be said that there is a growing conviction that the name of Francis Poulenc will appear on concert programs a century from now. He is still capable of bringing great joy, great beauty, great élan into a world that still needs these qualities. Francis Poulenc highly prized humility as a character trait. If, indeed, the origins of the word humility, are the Greek word for earth, chthon; then, Francis Poulenc truly succeeded.

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- . Chansons villageoises, pour chant et piano et chant et orchestre sur des poésies de Maurice Fombeure. Piano-Vocal score. (English version by Winifred Radford.) Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1976. 24 p. Original composition dates from 1942. The new copyright is for Ms. Radford's new translation.
- . Concert champêtre, pour clavecin (ou piano) et orchestre. Two piano score by the composer. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1929. 68 p. Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- . Concert Champêtre for Harpsichord and Orchestra. Aimee van de Wiele, harpsichord, Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire (Paris). Angel S-35993. Jacket notes from notes by Claude Rostand. Side one contains the Concerto in d minor for Two Pianos and Orchestra, with the composer and Jacques Février, pianos.
- . Concerto en sol mineur, pour orgue, orchestre à cordes et timbales. Study score. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1939. 47 p.
- . Concerto in g minor for Organ, Strings, and Tympani. Maurice Durufle, organ, Georges Prêtre conducting the French National Radio-Television Orchestra. Angel S-35953. Jacket notes by Henri Hell. Side one contains the Gloria in G major for Soprano, Chorus, and Orchestra. Rosanna Carteri, soprano. Recorded under the supervision of the composer.

- Poulenc, Francis. Concerto pour piano et orchestre. Two piano score. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1950. 55 p.
- . Concerto en ré mineur pour deux pianos et orchestre. Two piano score. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1933. 53 p.
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- . Concerto in d minor for Two Pianos and Orchestra. Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, pianos, Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic. Columbia MS 6392. Jacket notes by Edward Downes.
- . Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra. Arthur Whittmore and Jack Lowe, pianos, Pierre Dervaux conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Angel/Seraphim S-60214. Jacket notes by Alfred Frankenstein.
- . Correspondance 1915-1963. Edited by Hélène de Wendel, with a preface by Darius Milhaud. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967. 275 p.
- . Dialogues des Carmélites. An opera in three acts and twelve scenes from a play by Georges Bernanos. Pierre Dervaux conducting the Orchestre et Choeurs du Théâtre National de l'Opéra de Paris, with Denise Duval, soprano, Régine Crespin, soprano, Rita Gorr, mezzo soprano, et al. (English version by Joseph Machlis.) Angel CL 3585. Libretto, 29 p., with note by Henri Hell.
- . Elegie for Horn and Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1958. 9 p.
- . Élégie (en accords alternés) pour deux pianos. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1960. 11 p.
- . L'Embarquement pour Cythère (Valse-Musette) pour deux pianos. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1952. 11 p.
- . Entretiens avec Claude Rostand. Paris: René Julliard, 1954. 219 p.
Eighteen conversations taken between October, 1953, and April, 1954.
- . Feuillets d'Album, pour piano. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1933. 9 p.
Contains: Ariette, Rêve, and Gigue.
- . Finacailles pour rire, pour soprano et piano. Six mélodies on poems by Louise de Vilmorin. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1940. 19 p.

- Poulenc, Francis. La Fraîcheur et le Feu, pour chant et piano. Seven mélodies on the poems of Paul Éluard. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1951. 15 p.
- . "Française," in Album of Six Pieces for Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1940. (Pages 12-13.) This piece is now only available in this album. It is after Claude Gervaise of the sixteenth century.
- . A French Program. Artur Rubinstein, piano. RCA LSC-2751. Jacket notes by Gérard Bäuer, translated by Louis Biancolli. Contains the Poulenc: Mouvements perpétuels, the Intermezzo in A-flat, and the Intermezzo No. 2 in D-flat.
- . Gloria en sol majeur, pour Soprano solo, Choeur mixte et Orchestre. Piano-vocal score. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1960. 57 p.
- . L'Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant, pour recitant et piano. Text by Jean de Brunhoff. London: J. & W. Chester, c1949. 31 p.
- . The Story of Babar. Mildred Natwick, narrator, Grant Johannesen, piano. (English translation by Nelly Rieu.) Golden Crest Records CRS-4133. Side two contains Satie's Sports and Diversions.
- . The Story of Babar (The Little Elephant). Peter Ustinov, narrator, Georges Prêtre conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra. Orchestrated by Jean Françaix. Angel S-36357. Notes anonymous.
- . Humoresque, pour piano. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1936. 4 p. Originally published by R. Deiss.
- . Five Impromptus for Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1922. 14 p. Revised edition, 1939.
- . Improvisations, pour le piano, le premier recueil des six. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1933. 23 p.
- . Improvisations, pour le piano, le deuxième recueil des six. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1934 and 1945. 22 p. Both collections originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

- Poulenc, Francis. Treizième Improvisation en la mineur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1958. 4 p.
- . Quatorzième Improvisation en ré b majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1958. 3 p.
- . Quinzième Improvisation en ut mineur (Hommage à Edith Piaf). Paris: Editions Salabert, c1960. 5 p.
- . Intermède en ré mineur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1932. 5 p.
This is Part II of Le Bal Masqué, transcribed for solo piano, although there is no indication on the score.
- . Premier Intermezzo en ut majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1934. 4 p.
- . Deuxième Intermezzo en ré b majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1934, 4 p.
- . Intermezzo en la b majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1947. 7 p.
- . Twelve Improvisations. Elly Kassman, piano. Lyrichord LL 61. Jacket notes anonymous.
Ms. Kassman plays the first twelve. Side 1 contains the Six Moments Musicaux by Rakhmaninov.
- . Grant Johannesen Plays Poulenc. Grant Johannesen, piano. Golden Crest CR-4042. Jacket notes by Jon Morton.
The sides are mislabeled. Side 1: Les Animaux modèles: A suite from the ballet by Mr. Johannesen, Villageoises, petites pièces enfantines. Side 2: Humoresque, Improvisations (Nos. 7-12), Suite Française, and the Valse in C.
- . Tel jour telle nuit, pour chant et piano. Nine mélodies on poems of Paul Eluard. Paris: Durand et Cie, 1937. 23 p.
- . Journal de mes mélodies (Diary of My Songs). Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1964. Not available for this study.
Poulenc left the manuscript to Pierre Bernac. It was published in a limited edition and is now out of print.

Poulenc, Francis. Litanies à la Vierge Noire, pour choeurs d'enfants a 3 parties et orgue. Jacques Jouineau directing the Maitrise d'Enfants et Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, Henriette Roget, organ. Pathé DTX 247. Jacket notes in French by Emile Vuillermoz.

----- . Les Mamelles de Tirésias. Opéra-Bouffe in two acts and a prologue on a poem by Guillaume Apollinaire. André Cluytens conducting the Orchestra and Chorus of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique (Paris), with Denise Duval, soprano, Jean Giraudeau, tenor, et al. Angel/Seraphim Mono 60029. Jacket notes anonymous. Originally released in May, 1954, as Angel 35090. The work is published by Heugel et Cie, Paris.

----- . Messe en sol majeur, pour choeur mixte a cappella. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1937. 24 p. Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

----- . Mass in G. Elmer Iseler conducting the Festival Singers of Toronto. Angel/Seraphim S-60085. Jacket notes by Giles Bryant. Also contains two Motets: Hodie Christus natus est, and Quem vidistis pastores.

----- . Mélancolie en ré b majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1945. 9 p.

----- . Méodies. Bernard Kruyson, baritone, Jean-Charles Richard, piano. Musical Heritage Society MHS 1776. Jacket notes by Pierre Bernac, translated from the French by David Mason Greene. Contains: Le Bestiaire, Les Banalités, Le Pont, C, Tel jour telle nuit, La Fraîcheur et le feu, Main Dominée par le coeur, C'est ainsi que tu es, Reine des mouettes, and Montparnasse.

----- . Métamorphoses, pour chant et piano. Three mélodies on poems by Louise de Vilmorin. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1944. 9 p.

----- . Moi et mes amis: Confidences recueillies par Stéphane Audel. Paris-Genève: La Palatine, 1963. 202 p.

----- . Montparnasse, pour chant et piano. Two mélodies on poems by Guillaume Apollinaire. Paris: Editions Max Eschig, c1945. 7 p.

----- . Four Motets for a Time of Penitence, for mixed choir a cappella. Georges Prêtre conducting the Choeurs René Duclos. Angel S-36121. Jacket notes by

Maurice Tassart.

Side 1 contains the Stabat Mater with Régine Crespin, soprano with the same forces, plus the Paris Orchestra.

Poulenc, Francis. Trois Mouvements perpétuels, pour piano.
London: J. & W. Chester, c1919. 8 p. Revised in 1962.

----- . La Musique de Chambre. Jacques Février, piano, Yehudi Menuhin, violin, Pierre Fournier, violoncello, Michel Debost, flute, Maurice Bourgue, oboe, Michel Portal, clarinet, Alan Civil, horn, Gabriel Tacchino, piano, Amaury Wallez, bassoon, Maurice Gabai, clarinet, John Wilbraham, trumpet, John Iveson, trombone, and the Wind Quintet of Paris. The entire recording is under the artistic control of Jacques Février. EMI 2 C 165-12519/22. Brochure notes in French by Henri Hell. This complete recording of 4 records also includes all the two piano works on sides 7 and 8.

----- . Napoli: Suite pour le piano. Paris: Éditions Salabert, c1926. 19 p.
Contains: Barcarolle, Nocturne, and Caprice italien. Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

----- . Nocturnes, pour piano. Complete. Paris: Heugel et Cie, c1932, 1934, 1936, and 1939. 24 p.

----- . Three Novelettes for Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1930 and 1960. 12 p.

----- . Pastourelle, pour piano. One of ten pieces by as many composers for the ballet L'Eventail de Jeanne. Paris: Heugel et Cie, c1929. 4 p.

----- . Piano Music of Francis Poulenc. Gabriel Tacchino, piano. Angel S-36602. Jacket notes by Robert T. Jones. Contains: Suite Française, Three Novelettes, Mouvements perpétuels, Three Nocturnes, Presto, Pastourelle, Toccata, and Valse.

----- . Trois Pièces, pour piano. New edition, 1953. Paris: Heugel et Cie, c1931. 15 p.

----- . Pièce Brève sur le nom d'Albert Roussel, pour piano. Paris: Alphonse Leduc, c1929. 4 p.

----- . Francis Poulenc pianiste et accompagnateur. Francis Poulenc, piano, Suzanne Peignot, soprano, Claire Croiza, mezzo-soprano, and Lucienne Tragin, soprano. EMI 2 C 047-12538. Jacket notes in French by Henri Hell.

- Poulenc, Francis. Poulenc Plays Poulenc and Satie. Francis Poulenc, piano. Odyssey Y 33792. Jacket notes anonymous. Record mislabeled. The Nocturne is in C major, not D major. This is part of the Composer as Performer Series. Previously released as Columbia ML 4399.
- . Presto en si b majeur, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1975. 4 p. Originally published by R. Deiss, c1934.
- . Promenades for Piano. Complete. London: J. & W. Chester, c1951. 23 p. Originally copyrighted in 1923.
- . Rapsodie nègre, pour flûte, clarinette, quatuor à cordes, piano et une voix. Conductor's Score. London: J. & W. Chester, c1919. 27 p.
- . A Recital by Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc. Pierre Bernac, baritone, Francis Poulenc, piano. The Legendary Performances. Odyssey 32 26 0009. Jacket notes anonymous. Contains: Banalités, Chansons villageoises, Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire, Tu vois le feu du soir, Main dominée par le coeur, Calligrammes, and songs by Ravel, Debussy, Chabrier, and Satie.
- . Sérénade, pour violoncelle et piano par Maurice Gendron, d'après la huitième Chansons gaillardes (1926). Paris: Heugel et cie, c1950. 3 p.
- . Sextuor, pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson et cor. Revised version: August, 1939. Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, c1945. 68 p.
- . Sextuor. Francis Poulenc, piano and the Philadelphia Woodwind Ensemble. Columbia Special Products AMS 6213. Jacket notes anonymous.
- . Sextet for Piano and Winds. Jacques Février, piano and the Paris Wind Quintet. Angel S-36261. Jacket notes by Michel-R. Hofmann. Side 2 contains: Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, and the Sonata for Flute and Piano.
- . Sinfonietta (1947). Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de Paris. Angel S-36519. Jacket notes by Harry Neville. Also contains: Music for Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel, Two Marches, and an Intermezzo, and Suite Française.

- Poulenc, Francis. Les soirées de Nazelles, Suite pour piano. Paris: Durand et Cie, c1937. 31 p.
- . Sonata for Clarinet and Piano. Fifth edition, revised. London: J. & W. Chester, c1963. 24 p.
- . Sonata for Clarinet and Piano. James Campbell, clarinet and John York, piano. Crystal Records/Recital Series/S331. Jacket notes anonymous, c1975.
- . Sonata for Clarinet and Piano. David Weber, clarinet and Harriet Wingreen, piano. Lyrichord LLST 7193. Jacket notes anonymous.
Also contains the Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1962) with Harry Shulman, oboe.
- . Sonata for Flute and Piano. The flute part has been revised by Jean-Pierre Rampal. London: J. & W. Chester, c1958. 23 p.
- . Sonata for Flute and Piano. Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute and Robert Veyron-Lacroix, piano. Odyssey Y 33905. Jacket notes by Bobby Finn.
- . Sonates pour Instruments a vent. Reduction pour piano a deux hands par l'auteur. London: J. & W. Chester, c1925. 32 p.
Contains the piano transcriptions of the Sonate pour deux clarinettes (1918), the Sonate pour clarinette et basson (1922), and the Sonate pour cor, trompette et trombone (1922). The writer gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the publisher in furnishing a photocopy of this long, out-of-print work.
- . Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon. The members of the Melos Ensemble of London, Gervase de peyer, clarinet, and William Waterhouse, bassoon. Angel S-36586. Jacket notes by Robert T. Jones.
Also contains the Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon.
- . Sonata for Oboe and Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1963. 22 p.
- . Sonate for Piano, Four Hands or Two Pianos. Revised edition, 1939. London: J. & W. Chester, c1919. 1^o p.
- . Sonata 1918 (Revised 1939). Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, Duo-Pianists. London CS 6434. Jacket notes by Ray Minshull.

- Poulenc, Francis. Sonate pour deux pianos. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1954. 39 p.
- . Sonata for Two Pianos. Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, pianos. London CS 6583. Jacket notes by David Dixon.
Side one is Bartok: Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion.
- . Sonate pour violon et piano. Corrected edition 1949. The violin part fingered and annotated by Ginette Neveu. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1944. 34 p.
- . Sonata for Violin and Piano: In memory of Garcia Lorca. Louis Kaufman, violin and Helene Pignari, piano. Orion ORS 7292. Jacket notes by Annette Kaufman.
- . Sonata for Violin and Piano. Josef Suk, violin and Jan Panenka, piano. Supraphon SUA ST 50879.
The date of the sonata on this recording is given as 1919. The notes, anonymous, are given in four languages.
- . Sonate pour violoncelle et piano. New corrected edition 1953. Paris: Heugel et Cie, c1949. 44 p.
- . Sonata for Violoncello and Piano. Zara Nelsova, violoncello and Grant Johannesen, piano. Golden Crest Records CRS 40899. Jacket notes by Grant Johannesen.
Also contains sonatas by Chopin, Franck, and Rakhmaninov.
- . Sonatas. Complete. Jacques Février, piano, Yehudi Menuhin, violin, Pierre Fournier, violoncello, Alan Civil, horn, John Wilbraham, trumpet, John Iveson, trombone, Michel Debost, flute, Michel Portal, clarinet, Maurice Gabai, clarinet, Maurice Bourgue, oboe, and Amaury Wallez, bassoon. EMI EMSP 553 2 OC 187-14072-3.
Jacket notes by Henri Hell.
- . Songs of Poulenc. Rose Dercourt, soprano and Francis Poulenc, piano. Turnabout TV 4489. No jacket notes.
Contains Cinq poèmes de Paul Éluard, Huit Chansons polonaises, Le Travail du peintre, Air romantique, Nuage, La Grenouilliere, and Avant le cinema.
- . Suite for Piano. London: J. & W. Chester, c1926. 12 p.

- Poulenc, Francis. Suite Française, pour piano, d'après Claude Gervaise (16 siècle). Paris: Durand et Cie, c1935. 15 p.
- . Thème varié, pour piano. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1952. 16 p.
- . Le Travail du peintre, pour chant et piano. Seven melodies on poems by Paul Éluard. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1957. 23 p.
- . Trio pour piano, hautbois, et basson. Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, c1926 and 1954. 34 p.
- . Valse, pour piano. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1920. 4 p.
- . "Valse," in Album des 6. Paris: Éditions Max Eschig, c1920. (Pages 8-10.)
Contains: Prélude by Auric, Romance sans paroles by Durey, Sarabande by Honegger, Mazurka by Milhaud, and Pastorale by Tailleferre.
- . Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1933. 5 p.
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- . Villageoises, petites pièces enfantines, pour piano. Paris: Editions Salabert, c1933. 11 p.
Contains: Valse Tyrolienne, Staccato, Rustique, Polka, Petite Ronde, and Coda.
- . La Voix humaine. Lyric Tragedy in One Act on a text by Jean Cocteau. Denise Duval, soprano, Georges Prêtre conducting the Orchestre de Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique. RCA Soria Series LSS-2385. Essays by Janet Flanner and Henri Hell.
The recording was made under the personal supervision of the composer. Text of the play published by Editions Stock, Paris, c1930. Opera published by Ricordi, and the English version is by Joseph Machlis.
- Ravel, Maurice. The Complete Piano Music of Ravel. Robert Casadesus, piano, with Gaby Casadesus, piano for the four hand music. Legendary Performances Series Odyssey 32 36 003. Jacket notes anonymous.
- Rorem, Ned. The Paris and New York Diaries of Ned Rorem. New York: Avon Books (Discus Edition), 1970. 431 p.
Paris Diary is c1966 and New York Diary is c1967.
- . "Poulenc -- a Memoir," in Tempo, LXIV (1963), 28-30.

- Rostand, Claude. "Visages de Poulenc," in Revue musical de la Suisse romande, II (April, 1963), 9; German translation as "Der heitere und der ernste Poulenc," in Melos, XXX (1963), 125. Not available for this study, but quoted in part by Jean Roy.
- Roy, Jean. Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre. From the collection Musiciens de tous les Temps, directed by Jean Roire. Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1964. 190 p.
- Salzman, Eric. Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction. Second edition. Prentice-Hall History of Music Series, H. Wiley Hitchcock, editor. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974. 242 p. First edition, 1967.
- Satie, Erik: Parade, a ballet réaliste. Antal Dorati conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. Mercury SR-90435. Jacket notes by Felix Aprahamian. Also contains Milahud's Le Boeuf sur le Toit, Auric's Ouverture, and Françaix's Concertino for Piano and Orchestra.
- . The Irreverent Inspirations of Erik Satie. Aldo Ciccolini, piano and conductor, Nicolai Gedda, tenor, Mady Mesplé, soprano, Gabriel Bacquier, baritone, Yan Pascal, violin, and members of the Lamoureux Concerts Orchestra. Angel S-36713. Jacket notes by James Ringo. Contains Le Piège de Méduse, Les Pantins dansent, Tendrement, Ludions, Trois Poèmes d'Amour, Choses vues à droite et à gauche (sans lunettes), Quatre petites Mélodies, and Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel.
- . Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol. 1. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36482. Jacket notes anonymous. Contains Trois Gymnopédies, Heures séculaires et instantanées, Trois Valses distinguées du précieux dégoûté, Trois Avant-dernières pensées, Trois Gnessiennes, Trois Morceaux en forme de poire, Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois, and Trois Nocturnes.
- . Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol. 2. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36459. Jacket notes by Marcel Marnat. Contains La Belle Excentrique, Descriptions automatiques, Véritables Préludes flasques (pour un chien), Vieux Sequins et vieilles cuirasses, En Habit de cheval, Sports et Divertissements, Chapitres tournés en tous sens, and Aperçus désagréables.

- Satie, Erik. Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol 3. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36485. Jacket notes by François Lesure.
 Contains Embryons desséchés, Trois Sarabandes, Préludes flasques (pour un chien), Réverie de l'enfance de pantagruel, Les Pantins dansent, Passacaille, Le Piège de Méduse, Menus propos enfantins, Enfantillages pittoresques, Peccadilles importunes, Pièces Froides, and Prélude en tapisserie.
- Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol. 4. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36714. Jacket notes by James Ringo.
 Contains Gnossiennes, Nos. 4, 5, and 6, Nouvelles pièces froides, Première pensée et sonneries de la Rose-Croix, Deux rêveries nocturnes, Petite ouverture à danser, Quatre Préludes, and Le Fils des étoiles.
- Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol. 5. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36774. Jacket notes by James Ringo.
 Contains Jack in the Box, Six pièces de la période 1906-1913, Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel, Musiques intimes et secrètes, Carnet d'esquisses et de croquis, Premier menuet, and Nocturnes No. 4 and 5.
- Piano Music of Erik Satie, Vol. 6. Aldo Ciccolini, piano. Angel S-36811. Jacket notes by James Ringo.
 Contains Trois petites pièces montées, Ogives, Danses gothiques, Sonatine bureaucratique, Poudre d'or (Valse), Pages mystiques, and Douze petits chorals.
- Schaeffner, André. "Francis Poulenc, musicien français," in Contrepoints, I (1946), 50. Not available for this study, but quoted in Jean Roy biography.
- Schumann, Robert. Complete Works for the Piano, Vols. 1 and 2. Clara Schumann Edition. Scarsdale, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d.
 Contains the Papillons, Op. 2, Carnaval, Op. 9, and Études symphoniques, Op. 13.
- On Music and Musicians. Translated from the German by Paul Rosenfeld and edited by Konrad Wolff. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1946. 274 p.
- Trickey, Samuel M. "Les Six." Ph.D. dissertation. North Texas State University, 1955. 330 p. (Xerographic Copy. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.)

- Tschaikowsky, Peter I. Eugene Onégin. On a libretto from Pushkin. Piano-Vocal score. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., c1957. 276 p.
"Tatiana's Letter Scene," pp. 86-106. The quote in the Poulenc Sonate pour violon et piano is first given on page 89; then, it appears several times subsequently.
- Watanabe, Ruth. Introduction to Music Research. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967. 237 p.
- Werner, W. Kent. "The Harmonic Style of Francis Poulenc."
Ph.D. dissertation. Iowa University, 1966. 216 p.
(Xerographic copy. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.)
- Yates, Peter. Twentieth-Century Music: Its Evolution from the End of the Harmonic Era into the Present Era of Sound. New York: Random House (Pantheon Books), 1967.
Material on Poulenc can be found on pages 101-102.

APPENDIX 1

Chronological List of the Piano Music
of Francis Poulenc

This list excludes the *mélodies*, but does include those vocal chamber works that include the piano.

- 1916 *Préludes*, pour piano (unpublished).
- 1917 *Rapsodie nègre*, pour piano, flûte, clarinette, quatuor à cordes et une voix. Revised and corrected by the composer in 1933. Prelude, Ronde, Honoloulou: Intermède Vocal, Pastorale, Final. (J. & W. Chester). First performed December 11, 1917.
- 1918 *Trois Pastorales*, pour piano (unpublished, except for the first, which, refined, appears in the *Trois Pièces*, published in 1928, by Heugel et Cie).
- Sonate pour deux clarinettes* (Spring, Boulogne-sur-Seine). Revised in 1945. Presto, Andante, Vif. See 1925 for piano transcription. (J. & W. Chester).
- Sonate pour piano à quatre mains* (ou deux pianos) (June, Boulogne-sur-Seine). Revised in 1939. *Prélude*, *Rustique*, *Final*. (J. & W. Chester).
- Trois Mouvements perpétuels* (December, Paris). Revised in 1962. *Assez modéré*, *Très modéré*, *Alerte*. Orchestrated by Poulenc for flute, oboe (English horn), clarinet, bassoon, French horn, violin, viola, violoncello, and string bass. Also transcribed for violin and piano by Jascha Heifetz. (J. & W. Chester publishes all the versions.).
- 1919 *Valse en ut majeur* (July, Pont-sur-Seine). Later became one of six pieces in *L'Album des 6* (1920). (Éditions Max Eschig).
- 1920 *Suite en ut majeur* (March, Paris). Presto, Andante, Vif. (J. & W. Chester).
- 1920-1921 *Cinq Impromptus* (Paris). Revised in June, 1939. 1. *Très agité*; 2. *Allegro vivace*; 3. *Très modéré*; 4. *Violent*; and 5. *Andante*. Nos. 1, 2, and 4 in C major; Nos. 3 and 5 in G major and c minor, respectively. (J. & W. Chester).

- 1921 Dix Promenades (Summer, Touraine). Revised and corrected in August, 1952. 1. A Pied: Nonchalant; 2. En Auto: Très agité; 3. A Cheval: Modéré; 4. En Bateau: Agité; 5. En Avion: Lent; 6. En Autobus: Trépidant; 7. En Voiture: Très lent; 8. En Chemin de Fer: Vif; 9. A Bicyclette: Vite; and 10. En Dilligence: Lent. (J. & W. Chester).
- 1922 Sonate pour clarinette (si b) et basson (September, Touraine). Revised in 1945. Allegro, Romance, Finale. See 1925. (J. & W. Chester).
- Sonate pour cor, trompette et trombone (August-October, Houlgate--Touraine P. G. C.). Allegro moderato, Andante, Rondeau. See 1925. (J. & W. Chester).
- 1922-1925 Napoli: Suite pour piano (September, Nazelles). Barcarolle, Nocturne, Caprice italien. (Editions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. First performed May 2, 1926 by Marcelle Meyer, piano.
- 1923 Les Biches (Ballet). Four dances transcribed by the composer for piano: Ouverture, Rondeau, Adagietto, and Andantino. (Heugel).
First performance: January 6, 1924, Monte Carlo.
- 1925 Piano Transcriptions by Poulenc of the three Wind Sonates from 1918 and 1922. (J. & W. Chester).
- 1926 Trio pour piano, hautbois et basson (February-April, Cannes). Lent: Presto, Andante, Rondo. (Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen).
First performance: May 2, 1926. Napoli and the new Chansons gaillardes also on the same program. The chansons sung by Pierre Bernac.
- 1927 Pastourelle, for a ballet in one act, L'Eventail de Jeanne. Originally for orchestra. Number 8 of 10 compositions by as many composers:
 (1) Fanfare: Maurice Ravel
 (2) Marche: Pierre-Octave Ferroud
 (3) Valse: Jacques Ibert
 (4) Canarie: Roland-Manuel
 (5) Bourrée: Marcel Delannoy
 (6) Sarabande: Albert Roussel
 (7) Polka: Darius Milhaud
 (8) Pastourelle: Francis Poulenc
 (9) Rondeau: Georges Auric
 (10) Kermesse-Valse: Florent Schmitt (All Heugel)
 First performance: June 16, 1927.

1927 Novelette No. 1 in C major (October, Nazelles). (J. & W. Chester). See also 1928 and 1959.

1927-1928 Concert champêtre pour clavecin (ou piano) et orchestre (April, 1927 to August, 1928). Allegro molto, Andante, Presto. (Éditions Salabert). Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. First performance, May 3, 1929, with Wanda Landowska and Pierre Monteux.

1928 Novelette No. 2 in b-flat minor (Amboise, Touraine). (J. & W. Chester). See also 1927 and 1959.

Trois Pièces pour piano. New edition in 1953 in the present order. The Hymne and Toccata were originally reversed. Pastorale (1918-1928), Hymne (1928), and Toccata (1928). See 1918. (Heugel).

1929~~a~~ Pièce Brève sur le nom d'Albert Roussel (March, Noizay). (Alphonse Leduc).

Aubade: Concerto chorégraphique pour piano et dix-huit instruments (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 French horns, 1 trumpet, 3 tympani, 2 violas, 2 violoncellos, and 2 string basses) (May-June, Paris-Fontainebleau). In eight movements, played without pause: Toccata; Récitatif: Larghetto; Rondeau: Allegro; Presto; Récitatif: Larghetto; Andante; Allegro feroce; and Conclusion: Adagio. (Éditions Salabert).

Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. First performance June 18, 1929; first public performance January 31, 1930.

Premier Nocturne en ut majeur. See also 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938. Published together as a cycle of 8. (Heugel).

1932 Première Bagatelle en ré mineur pour violon et piano (April, Cannes). A transcription of Part IV of Le Bal Masqué. (Éditions Salabert). Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

Le Bal Masqué: Cantate profane pour baryton (ou mezzo) et orchestre de chambre (oboe, clarinet, bassoon, cornet, violin, violoncello, percussion, and piano) sur des poèmes de Max Jacob (February, Noizay to April 10, Cannes). In six parts played without pause: Prélude et Air de Bravoure; Inter-mède; Malvina; Bagatelle; La dame aveugle; and Final. (Éditions Salabert).

Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. First performance April 20, 1932.

1932 Intermède en ré mineur pour piano (Cannes). A transcription of Part II of Le Bal Masqué. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

Caprice en ut majeur d'après le Finale du Bal Masqué pour piano (May, Paris). A transcription of Part VI of Le Bal Masqué. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

Concerto en ré mineur pour deux pianos et orchestre (Summer, Le Tremblay). Allegro ma non troppo, Larghetto, Allegro molto. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. First performance, September 5, 1932 with Poulenc and Jacques Février, pianos.

Valse-Improvisation sur le nom de Bach (October 8, Noizay). (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle and first appeared in an edition of the magazine Le Revue Musicale.

Improvisations: Premier recueil des six (December, Noizay). 1. Presto ritmico in b minor; 2. Assez animé in A-flat major; 3. Presto très sec in b minor; 4. Presto con fuoco in A-flat major; 5. Modéré mais sans lenteur in a minor; and 6. A toute vitesse in B-flat major. (Éditions Salabert). See 1934, 1941, 1959.
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

1932-1939 Sextuor pour piano, flûte, hautbois, clarinette, basson et cor. New version, August, 1939. Allegro vivace, Divertissement, Finale: Prestissimo. (Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen).
There is some evidence that this work may have been begun in 1931. See Chapter IX.

1933 Villageoises, petites pièces enfantines pour piano (February, Monmartre). Taken from music originally composed for Jean Giraudoux's play, Intermezzo.
1. Valse Tyrolienne: Gai in D major; 2. Staccato: Pas vite in g minor; 3. Rustique: Vif et gai in B-flat major; 4. Polka: Sans hâte in E-flat major; 5. Petite Ronde: Assez animé-très rythmé in D major; and 6. Coda: Tempo 1: Presto subito in D major. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

Feuillets d'Album. Ariette, Rêve, Gigue. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

- 1933 Septième Improvisation en ut majeur (November, Noizay). Nos. 6-12 published in one collection, but each written at a different time and not in chronological order. See 1932, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Deuxième Nocturne en la majeur: Bal de jeunes filles (December 24, Paris). See 1929, 1934, 1935, and 1938. (Heugel).
Published as a collection of eight.
- 1934 Neuvième Improvisation en ré majeur (January, Noizay). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Troisième Nocturne en fa majeur: Les cloches de Malines (Malines). See 1929, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938. (Heugel).
- Quatrième Nocturne en ut mineur: Bal fantôme (March, Rome). Carries an inscription by Julien Green. See 1929, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938. (Heugel).
- Premier Intermezzo en ut majeur (March, Paris). See 1934 and 1943. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Cinquième Nocturne en ré mineur: Phalènes. See 1929, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938. (Heugel).
- Huitième Improvisation en la mineur (May, Noizay). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Sixième Nocturne en sol majeur (May, Noizay). See 1929, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938. (Heugel).
- Presto in B-flat major (July, Le Tremblay). Also transcribed for violin and piano by Jascha Heifetz. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Deuxième Intermezzo en ré b majeur (August, Kerbas-tic). See 1934 and 1943. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Dixième Improvisation (Eloge des Gammes) en fa majeur (September, Paris). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.

- 1934 Badinage en sol majeur. (Éditions Salabert). Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- 1935 Humoresque en sol majeur. (Éditions Salabert). Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle. The date 1935 is given here against the date 1934 in Jean Roy's biography. It was written for the pianist Walter Giesecking and carries a copyright date of 1936, which would mean two years between composition and publication. That is unusually long for Poulenc except when a war intervenes.
- Septième Nocturne en mi b majeur (August). See 1929, 1933, 1934, and 1938. (Heugel).
- Suite Française, pour piano d'après Claude Gervaise (16 siècle) (October, Noizay). Originally written as incidental music for Edouard Bourdet's play La Reine Margot. Poulenc went to a collection of dances by the sixteenth-century composer, Claude Gervaise: Livre de Danceries. First the composer orchestrated the work for 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, percussion, and harpsichord (or harp, or piano). 1. Bransle de Bourgogne: Gai mais sans hâte in C; 2. Pavane: Grave et mélancolique in d minor; 3. Petite marche militaire: Mouvement de pas redoublé in g minor; 4. Complainte: Calme et mélancolique in g minor; 5. Bransle de Champagne: Modéré, mais sans lenteur in g minor; 6. Sicilienne: Très doucement in C; and 7. Carillon: Très animé-très gai in C. (Éditions Durand et Cie).
- 1936 Les soirées de Nazelles: Suite pour le piano (Outlined and begun in 1930, finished October 1, Noizay). Prélude: Extrêmement animé et décidé; Cadenza: Largo; Eight Variations: 1. Le comble de la distinction: Vif et gai; 2. Le coeur sur la main: modéré; 3. La désinvolture et la discrétion: Presto; 4. La suite dans les idées: Très large et pompeux; 5. Le charme enjôleur: Très allant; 6. Le contentement de soi: Très vite et très sec; 7. Le goût du malheur: Lent et mélancolique; and 8. L'alerte vieillesse: Très rapide et bien sec; Cadenza: Très large et très librement; and Final: Follement vite, mais très précis. (Éditions Durand et Cie).
- 1937 Bourrée, au Pavillon d'Auvergne from a l'Exposition (May 7, Noizay). One of eight pieces by eight French composers for the Paris Exhibition of 1937.
 (1) La Seine, un Matin: Georges Auric
 (2) Diner sur l'eau: Marcel Delannoy

- 1937 (3) L'espiègle du village de Lilliput: J. Ibert
 (4) Le tour de l'Exposition: Darius Milhaud
 (5) Bourrée, au Pavillon d'Auvergne: F. Poulenc
 (6) Nuit Coloniale sur les bords de la Seine: H. Sauguet
 (7) La retardée: Florent Schmitt
 (8) Au Pavillon d'Alsace: Germaine Tailleferre (Éditions Salabert).
 Originally published by R. Deiss.
- 1938 Concerto en sol mineur pour orgue, orchestre à cordes, et timbales (April, Noizay-August, Anost). In seven sections played without pause: Andante, Allegro giocoso, subito Andante moderato, Tempo Allegro, molto agitato, Très calme: Lent, Tempo de l'Allegro initial, and Tempo Introduction: Largo. (Éditions Salabert).
 Originally published by R. Deiss.
- Huitième Nocturne (pour servir de Coda au Cycle) en ut majeur (December, Noizay). See 1929, 1933, 1934, and 1935. (Heugel).
- 1939 Française d'après Claude Gervaise (16 siècle). This was a single return to the composer from whom Poulenc used dances for the Suite Française. It is only available now in an Album of Six Pieces for the Piano. The publishers have a c1940, but there is evidence that it was really written in 1939. The Second World War probably prevented its publication. (J. & W. Chester).
 Like several of Poulenc's piano works, this work does not appear on any list of his compositions.
- 1940 Mélancolie en ré b majeur (June, Talence-August, Brive-la-Gaillarde). (Éditions Max Eschig).
- 1940-1941 Les Animaux modèles: Ballet in one act after the Fables of La Fontaine (August, 1940, Brive-la-Gaillarde-September, 1941, Noizay for the piano version; orchestrated, October, 1941-June, 1942, Noizay-Paris). Grant Johannesen has also made a suite of this ballet for solo piano. Poulenc uses all eight parts for the piano version: 1. Le petit jour: Très calme; 2. L'Ours et les deux Compagnons: Très animé; 3. La Cigale et la Fourmi: Très allant; 4. Le Lion amoureux: Passionnement animé; 5. L'Homme entre deux âges et ses deux Maîtresses: Prestissimo; 6. La Mort et le Bucheron: Très lent; 7. Les deux coqs: Très modéré; and 8. Le repas de midi: Très doux, calme et heureux. (Éditions Max Eschig).

- 1940-1945 L'Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant, pour récitant et piano. Text by Jean de Brunhoff. Begun as a series of improvisations at Brive-la-Gaillarde during the summer of 1940. Orchestrated version by Jean Françaix. (J. & W. Chester).
- 1940-1948 Sonate pour violoncelle et piano (April-October, Noizay, 1948). A corrected edition 1953. Also begun the summer of 1940 at Brive-la-Gaillarde. Allegro: Tempo de Marcia, Cavatine, Ballabile, Finale: Largo-Presto-Largo. (Heugel).
First performance May 18, 1949.
- 1941 Onzième Improvisation en sol mineur (June, Paris). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- Douzième Improvisation en mi b majeur (Hommage à Schubert) (November, Paris). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Éditions Salabert).
Originally published by Rouart-Lerolle.
- 1942 Chansons villageoises, for voice, flute, oboe, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 1 trumpet, tympani, triangle, tambour, whip, rattle, cymbals, celesta, glockenspiel, xylophone, string quartet, and harp (or piano) (October, Noizay). Six chansons on poems by Maurice Fombeure. (Editions Max Eschig).
- 1942-1943 Sonate pour violon et piano (Summer, 1942, Noizay-1943, Paques). Corrected edition 1949. Fingered and annotated by Ginette Neveu. Allegro con fuoco, Intermezzo, Presto tragico. (Editions Max Eschig).
First performance June 21, 1943.
- 1943 Intermezzo en la b majeur (March, Paris). See 1934. (Editions Max Eschig).
- 1948 Sérénade, pour violoncelle et piano (October, Paris). A transcription by Maurice Gendron of number eight of Chansons gaillardes (Sérénade), written in 1926 to anonymous seventeenth-century texts. (Heugel).
- 1949 Concerto pour piano et orchestre (May-October, Noizay). Allegretto comodo, Andante con moto, Rondeau à la française: Presto giocoso. (Editions Salabert).
First performance January 6, 1950 in Boston, Mass.

- 1951 L'Embarquement pour Cythère: Valse-Musette, pour deux pianos (July, Paris). From the film score Le Voyage en Amérique. (Editions Max Eschig).

Thème varié en la b majeur (February-September, Noizay). Theme and 11 variations. Thème: Très calme et sans hâte; Variation I: Joyeuse: Allegro molto; Variation II: Noble: Lent; Variation III: Pastorale: Allegretto (à 1 temps); Variation IV: Sarcastique: Allegro molto, très violent; Variation V: Mélancolique: Très calme; Variation VI: Ironique: Allegretto; Variation VII: Élégiacque: Excessivement lent; Variation VIII: Volubile: Presto; Variation IX: Fantasque: Allegro molto; Variation X: Sybilline: Bien lent; Variation XI: Finale: Allegro molto; Coda: Molto agitato. (Editions Max Eschig).

- 1952 Capriccio en ut majeur, d'après le finale du Bal Masqué, pour deux pianos (September, Noizay). See 1932. (Editions Salabert).

- 1952-1953 Sonate pour deux pianos (Autumn, 1952, Marseille-Spring, 1953, Noizay). Prologue: Extrêmement lent et calme; Allegro molto; Andante lyrico; and Epilogue: Allegro giocoso. (Editions Max Eschig).

- 1956-1957 Sonata for Flute and Piano (December-March, Hotel Majestic, Cannes). Allegro malinconico, Cantilena, Presto. (J. & W. Chester). Jean-Pierre Rampal has since revised the flute part. First performance June 18, 1957.

- 1957 Elegie for Horn and Piano. (J. & W. Chester).

- 1958 Treizième Improvisation en la mineur (March, Hotel Majestic, Cannes). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. (Editions Salabert).

Quatorzième Improvisation en ré b majeur (March, Hotel Majestic, Cannes). See 1932, 1933, 1934, 1941, 1958, and 1959. Dedicated to Poulenc's first biographer, Henri Hell. (Editions Salabert).

- 1959 Novelette No. 3 in e minor on a theme of Manuel de Falla (El Amor Brujo) (June, Brive-la-Gaillarde). Written for the Centenary Album of his first publisher in England. (J. & W. Chester).

Quinzième Improvisation en ut mineur, (Hommage à Edith Piaf) (Summer, Bagnols-en-Forêt). (Editions Salabert).

- 1959 *Élégie* (en accords alternés), pour deux pianos
(Summer, Bagnols-en-Forêt). (Éditions Max Eschig).
- 1962 Sonata for Oboe and Piano (Summer, Brive-la-
Gaillarde et Bagnols-en-Forêt). *Élégie*: Paisible-
ment; *Scherzo*: Très animé; *Déploration*: Très calme.
(J. & W. Chester).
First performance after the composer's death: June 8,
1963, Pierre Pierlot, oboe; Jacques Février, piano.

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano. Published posthu-
mously. Fifth edition, 1973, corrected by the
publishers with the assistance of Thea King and
Georgina Dobree. *Allegro tristamente*, *Romanza*,
Allegro con fuoco. (J. & W. Chester).
First performance, April 10, 1963, New York, with
Benny Goodman, clarinet, and Leonard Bernstein,
piano.

APPENDIX 2

REVIEWS AND EULOGIES

This appendix contains translations of reviews, eulogies, and one commentary of Poulenc as a man and as a composer by those individuals who were closely associated with his career, either as biographers, as in the case of the Jean Roy and Henri Hell quotes, as a friend and critic, Claude Rostand, as a professional colleague, as Pierre Bernac, or as simply critic, Marcel Schneider.

All of the following will be found in Jean Roy: Francis Poulenc: L'homme et son oeuvre. Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964. Except for the first, they come from the section entitled "Francis Poulenc en Blanc et Noir," pp. 147-161. The pagination will be cited with each item.

Jean Roy: page 40:

Without claim, happily strong, to the objectives which characterize the style neoclassicism, the 'classic' period of Poulenc says all with an elegance of reserve and a modesty of good quality. Now the musician goes farther in the confession of his proper nature. The ideal for him is to be natural. This implies, here and there, some confessions, some deviations of languages, of dashes of bad sentimental repressions -- the confessions of a thorough melancholy. This then, is the lot of those lucid and spiritual men who travel the world with a smile on the lips and a laugh ready to gush forth, because if they would pour out sadness, if they would consent to avow their solitude, then what a disaster this would be! . . . The reserve of Poulenc is not explained very easily. When an artist is thus exposed to painting himself, to confessing himself in spite of himself, in a word betraying himself, one understands that he surrounds himself with precautions. He dreads, nearly always, to say too much, and often as not, risks a mask. The work of Poulenc is a closed work. And, perfectly, a disguised confession concerning the importance of masks in this voluntarily, illusive style, and the same with the choice of subjects. In this regard one can hold Le Bal Masque as one of the most significant works of Francis Poulenc. The buffoonery makes it terrifying. It will be the same as in Les Mamelles de Tirésias, another essential work, and one which was particularly dear to its author. There it is one of the views of the expression of tragedy in the works of Francis Poulenc. Since tragedy turns up

again in the noble style, if one wishes, in the abstraction, but the daily tragedy is made, precisely, of this explosive mixture of the ridiculous and the atrocious.

Henri Hell (Francis Poulenc, Plon, 1958): pp. 155-156:

One attributes to Picasso this utterance: 'I do not look, I find.' In the same way, Poulenc does not look, but finds. He has found, in his fiftieth year, the personal language permitting him, without resembling another person, to express, by the interpreter of the sounds, that which he has to say. This likeness with self to which some do not arrive, only laboriously, after years of gropings, of searching, of vageries, more or less prolific, Poulenc has had the ability to capture it immediately. But he has not remained a prisoner of a formula. If he has known from his adolescence what will be the constancies of his style, and of his musical language, he has known, in guarding his spontaneity and with the surety of his craft of more and more awareness, to guide that style to its full blossoming -- without surprise, but in enriching, in giving it the profundity and the dignity which it requires in order to grow and to continue living. In any case, it is not without misuse that one will be able to speak of the different periods in the evolution of Poulenc -- if not for the convenience of analysis. But in this oeuvre, where nuances attach themselves to nuances, it is not forbidden to testify to the landmarks. It is necessary to note that the strayings of Poulenc did not last long: the Promenades for piano, the Poèmes de Ronsard for voice (1924-1925). The ballet of the Biches is his first important work. Fresh, impertinent, elegant, erotic, this score leaves little to presage the lyricism which will invade progressively, the work of the musician: with the meeting of the poetry of Éluard (Cinq Poèmes, 1935) and the awakening of the religious sentiment. With the Litanies of the Black Virgin of Rocamadour (1936), begin what one will be able to call the second manner of Poulenc: to the acidulated impertinence, to the aggressive pretense, to the linear plan of the early works, comes a series, in the genre of choral music and in the mélodies, a lyric sentiment, intense and contained, which depends on the harmonic language, where the more and more subtle refinement, never becomes affectation. With Les Animaux modèles, are born the works of maturity, Figure humaine, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, the Stabat Mater, the Dialogues des Carmélites; so many accomplished works, where the musician, without ceasing to be himself, expresses himself without any influence -- with a fullness, a simplicity and a richness which give evidence of a mastery of the most personal kind.

Claude Rostand (Le Figaro Littéraire, February 9, 1963):
pp. 158-160:

Coming late to religious music, Poulenc gave us from his first attempt, the Litanies a la Vierge noire de Rocamadour (1936), a unique signal: he created an eminently personal style of church music, a style which escaped from all the formulas, from all the clichés, from all the commonplace pieces of work which fed the practices of the genre since the outset of the nineteenth century. He continued to speak Poulenc, very peacefully, the same as addressing himself to God. His profound faith warranted it. This was, besides, the best way to make himself understood. And it is thus, that he will have been able to leave us some of the most important pages of religious music of our time: the Messe a cappella, the Quatre Motets pour un temps de penitence, that one is able to hear without risk between Lassus and Vittoria, works that one will be able to label as belonging to the 'romantic period' of Francis Poulenc, and which precede the composition of works characterized by what I will call his 'versaillese period,' the Stabat Mater notably. It will remain also to Poulenc to have, with the same naturalness, with the same inimitable personality, to so well wed poetry and music. After a Schumann and a Hugo Wölf, after a Moussorgsky and a Debussy, I do not know very many composers who had thus, in that way, with so much intelligence and sensitivity, set to music, the subtle music of a language, and practiced as perfectly with an invisible science, the art of which one designates by this tiresome word, prosody. In addition, it is to Poulenc that those will have to address themselves who have not at all well understood what the poetry of Max Jacob means, that of Jean Cocteau, Louise de Vilmorin, and above all, Guillaume Apollinaire and Paul Éluard: in these melodies, they will discover all the mysteries. It seems to me, that there is a Poulenc who has to stay also; this is the Poulenc 'wild,' the Poulenc in shirt sleeves, 'en casquette,' as he loved to say, this Poulenc ironic and bad boy about whom, however, the fairy's watched who called themselves Valentine, or Marie-Blanche, or Marie-Laure, or otherwise. This is the Poulenc of the Mouvements perpétuels, of Biches, of the Aubade, of the Concerto pour deux pianos, Les Animaux modèles, or Les Mamelles de Tirésias. That one, is a Poulenc that no person can imitate. That is the one that Ravel congratulated -- and envied -- to have known so well how to speak his own personal folklore.

Pierre Bernac (La Cité, 1963): p. 160.

M. Bernac in this article, quotes part of the poem that Paul Éluard inscribed to Poulenc on the occasion of the first performance of Tel jour telle nuit. The poem is given here in its entirety, followed by M. Bernac's text. The translation of the poem is by Edward Lockspeiser, from his translation of Henri Hell's Francis Poulenc, p. 53.

I hardly listened to myself Francis
Francis through you I now hear myself
On the whitest of roads
Through a vast landscape
Soaked in light
Night has now no roots
Shade is behind mirrors
Francis we dream of distance
Like a child with an endless game
In the starlit country
Giving in return youth.

. . . After one of our recitals in New York, the critic, Virgil Thomson wrote: 'Poulenc is incontestably the greatest composer of art songs in our time.' And this has been reaffirmed many times in the articles from the international press at the moment of his death. It is beyond a doubt that certain of his songs are authentic masterworks, and will be inscribed in the history of this musical form at the side of the masterworks of Schubert, and of Debussy.

Marcel Schneider (Profils, June, 1963): p. 161:

Poulenc leaves an oeuvre very balanced, half black and half white, as are dressed the armed heralds in the Siennese pictures. His inspiration, lively and sensual, as well as religious and mystic on the other part, is not a question of two men, but of one double-man, a sort of Janus, because this oeuvre noir et blanc -- as the suite of Debussy for two pianos -- reveals a perfect unity of tone, of style, of nature. As a true Catholic, Poulenc thought 'all was within the whole,' as the medieval Church taught it; that one was able to glorify God with charlestons and with sambas, and that in revenge, it failed to give to our earthly aspirations, the most sensual or the most frivolous, a before taste of eternity.

VITA

Jon Ray Nelson was born August 24, 1935, in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond E. Nelson. He graduated from Okmulgee High School in 1951 and received the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1955, and 1956, respectively. He attended the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart and in Munich, Germany (1958-1959), studied piano in New York (1959-1960), and did graduate work at the Universities of California (1963), Wisconsin (1965), and Oklahoma (1966 and 1967), before coming to the University of Washington in 1969. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Music at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma (1960-1978).