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The University of Washington Schools of Music and Drama and Public Performing Arts

P R E S E N T

# Dialogues of the Carmelites

Z99  
1981  
11-20



BY FRANCIS POULENC

along in a deft mixture of tender melodic spurts, hypnotic use of ostinato and lustrous writing for winds. The orchestration is spare but forceful, often on a par with Stravinsky in sonority. Poulenc loved the voice and French theatrical and musical traditions. His vocal writing takes its cue from Monteverdi, Mussorgsky and Debussy. It is based on speech patterns, contrasting lyrical arioso (Blanche) with strict declamation (Mme de Croissy).

ACT I

- 10,336 [ Scene I —The Library of the Marquis de la Force
- Scene II —The Parlor of the Carmelite Convent
- 10,337 [ Scene III—The Workroom of the Convent
- Scene IV—The Infirmary

ACT II

- 10,338 [ Scene I —The Chapel
- Interlude I
- Scene II —The Chapter Room
- Interlude II
- Scene III—The Parlor
- Scene IV—The Sacristy

ACT III

- 10,339 [ Scene I —The Chapel
- Interlude I
- Scene II —The Library of the Marquis de la Force
- Interlude II
- Scene III—The Conciergerie
- Interlude III
- Scene IV—Place de la Révolution

CAST

Marquis de la Force.....Brian Kerns  
 Blanche.....Janeanne Houston ✓  
 The Chevalier.....Jeff Francis  
 Madame de Croissy.....Geraldine Sorrentino  
 Madame Lidoine.....Marjorie Sackett  
 Mother Marie of the Incarnation.....Kathryn Bishop  
 Sister Constance.....Connie Corrick  
 Mother Jeanne.....Sara Hedgpeth  
 Sister Mathilde.....Marcia Bellamy  
 Father Confessor.....John Hagen  
 First Commissioner.....Paul Anderson  
 Second Commissioner.....John Sackman  
 Thierry.....David Morris  
 Jailer.....David Morris  
 Officer.....David Morris  
 M. Javelinot.....John Sackman  
 Mother Gerald.....Regina Hill  
 Sister Claire.....Kay Shirey  
 Sister Antoine.....Laurie Haney  
 Sister Catherine.....Maurity Verburg  
 Sister Felicity.....Pam Mc Keon  
 Sister Gertrude.....Beth Eaton  
 Sister Alice.....Sheila Burke  
 Sister Valentine.....Bernadette Allred  
 Sister Anne of the Cross.....Mari Nelson  
 Sister Martha.....Ann Wopat  
 Sister St. Charles.....Anne Bergsma

University Opera Orchestra Personnel

<u>Violin I</u>	<u>Cello</u>	<u>Bass Clarinet</u>	
**Benita Lenz	*Andrea Arksey	Marvin Western	
Delphine Frazier	Lyn Fulkerson	<u>Bassoon</u>	
Christine Olason	Meg Brennand	*Francine Floyd	
Beth Chandler	Jane Hawkins	Eleanor Froelich	
Patricia Chinn	Dave Beck	Paul Rafanelli	
Anthony Bondi	Paige Stockley	<u>Contra-bassoon</u>	<u>Timpani</u>
Danielle Franklin	<u>Bass</u>	Paul Rafanelli	David Dunbar
Carol Willis	*Virginia Ring	<u>Horn</u>	<u>Percussion</u>
<u>Violin II</u>	Brian Clark	*Chuck Karschney	Robin Jansen
*Barbara Rood	<u>Flute</u>	Suzanne Johnson	Matthew Beckmeyer
Sandy Wightman	*Susan Hallstead	Jon Picker	<u>Harp</u>
Kim Brown	Anne Halpern	Roger Bolstad	*Deette Puckett
Stephen Hegg	<u>Piccolo</u>	<u>Trumpet</u>	Naomi Kato
Kjellrun Hauge	Doug Hjelm	*Warren Johnson	<u>Piano</u>
Jamie Keyes	<u>Oboe</u>	Dawn Stremel	Rose Mauro
Nicholas Yokan	*Tad Margelli	Roger Tanner	<u>Librarian</u>
Janet Fogle	Susan Swanson	<u>Trombone</u>	Rose Mauro
<u>Viola</u>	<u>English Horn</u>	*Rosemary Kiertzner	
*Michael Watson	Ailene Munger	Greg Powers	
Kelly Shanafelt	<u>Clarinet</u>	Aaron Keyt	
Ann Schnaidt	*Jere Knutsen	<u>Tuba</u>	
Julie Patchamatla	Edwin Rodriguez	Ed Phillips	
William Goodwin	Mary Kantor		
Greg McKee			

\*\*denotes concertmistress

\*denotes principal

DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES

The Story

France 1789. Revolution threatens. In his library the Marquis de la Force talks worriedly with his son, the Chevalier, about Blanche, his nervous and impressionable daughter, who is unable to overcome her fear of life. She suddenly appears, frightened by hostile crowds that surrounded her carriage. After retiring, Blanche returns, terrified by a servant's shadow, and announces her intention of becoming a nun.

Several weeks later, at the Carmelite convent at Compiègne, Blanche comes for an interview with the prioress, Mme de Croissy, a woman debilitated by fatal illness. Gently but firmly the prioress makes it clear to Blanche that the convent is a house of prayer, not a refuge in which heroism is facilitated: it will test her weaknesses, not her strengths.

While doing their chores in the convent workroom, Blanche and Constance, a lively novice, discuss death. Constance believes she will die young and that Blanche will die with her. Blanche responds angrily, accusing Constance of evil thoughts.

In the convent infirmary, the prioress lies on her deathbed. Her struggle to appear calm slowly fails as the anxiety of her condition overtakes her: years of meditating on death have not made the actuality less frightening. Mother Marie accepts charge of Blanche from the prioress, who advises firmness, judgment and character--qualities she says Blanche lacks. When Blanche comes, the prioress tells the girl of her special concern for her as the newest member of their order. Saying farewell, she offers her own death to avert the dangers facing Blanche. A physician comes and goes. The prioress grows delirious, relating a fitful vision of their convent desecrated. In a last attempt to confess her fear of death, she falls back lifeless. Blanche kneels sobbing.

In the chapel, where the prioress lies in state, Blanche and Constance intone a Requiem. When Constance leaves, Blanche attempts a prayer but flees in fear. She is stopped by Mother Marie, who gently rebukes but reassures her.

Constance explains to Blanche that the prioress died another person's death, that her death was too ugly and hard for her. Someone else, she says, will be surprised to find death so easy.

In the chapter room, the ceremony of obedience to the new prioress is coming to an end. Mme. Lidoine, who has been appointed, addresses the sisters, counseling patience and humility, warning of the temptation of easy martyrdom. Mother Marie leads the prayer.

The Chevalier visits Blanche before escaping abroad, asking that she return and stand by their father, now alone. Blanche brusquely refuses, explaining that her highest duty is to the convent that has changed her life. Later, Blanche regrets her outburst, but Mother Marie reassures her that the motive behind her pride will give her the strength.

Autumn 1792. The Chaplain, banned by the revolutionaries from his clerical duties, performs a last mass in the sacristy: the sisters sing an "Ave Verum Corpus." Mme. Lidoine replies that martyrs are chosen only by God's will. An angry revolutionary mob storms the convent, and a Commissioner reads a decree evicting and dissolving the order. Shaken by the shouts of the crowd, Blanche drops and breaks her figure of the Christ child.

In the new prioress' absence, Mother Marie again suggests the Carmelites take a vow of martyrdom. A secret vote reveals one dissenter. Though the sisters suspect Blanche, Constance confesses and reverses her decision, taking the vow with Blanche, who then runs off.

Working as a servant in the Marquis' ruined library, Blanche is sought out by Mother Marie in civilian dress. The older woman urges her to return to the order, but Blanche insists on staying where she will be safer, revealing that her father has been guillotined.

DIRECTION AND DESIGN STAFF

Conductor.....	Stanley Chapple
Stage Director.....	Robert DeSimone
Set Designer.....	Robert Dahlstrom
Costume Designer.....	James Crider
Lighting Designer.....	Richard Devin
Musical Preparation and Accompanist.....	Glenda Williams
Chorus Director.....	Dennis Coleman
Stage Manager.....	Dennis Coleman
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Nancy Hautala
Technical Director.....	Alfred Nelson
Property Master.....	Alex Danilchik
Master Electrician.....	Steve Deibert
Board Operator.....	Steve Deibert
General Manager of Production.....	Richard Devin