

ESTABLISHED 1941 • OUR 84TH SEASON

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY *of* UTICA

with generous support from
Elizabeth Lemieux and Marietta von Bernuth

presents

The Poulenc Trio

Irina Kaplan Lande, piano

Aleh Remezau, oboe

Bryan Young, bassoon



Sunday, 4 May 2025 • 2:30 PM
Munson Art Museum • Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium
310 Genesee Street, Utica NY 13502

PROGRAM

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

Lento—Presto
Andante con moto
Rondo. Très vif

Ellington Selections Duke Ellington
(arr. Jonathan Jenson) (1899-1974)

In a Sentimental Mood
The Mooche / Black and Tan Fantasy
I'm Beginning to See the Light

Explain Yourself! (2019) Viet Cuong
(b. 1990)

Commissioned for the Poulenc Trio by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition.

INTERMISSION

Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 “Gassenhauer” Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Tema con variazioni “Pria ch’io l’impegno”: Allegretto

Selected Songs Francis Poulenc
(arr. Dietrich Zöllner, Poulenc Trio) (1899-1963)

Les chemins d’amour
“C”
Toréador

Fantasia concertante sur “Semiramide” Gioachino Rossini
(arr. Triébert and Jancourt) (1792-1868)

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

PROGRAM NOTES

POULENC: Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

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

The Trio is one of Poulenc's most popular chamber works. It is in the spirit of an eighteenth-century *divertissement*, light and witty, yet spiced with dissonances. Though the combination of instruments is unusual, it is eminently logical, combining and contrasting the two members of the double reed family with the percussive quality of the piano. While composing the Trio in Cannes in 1926, Poulenc took the advice of Ravel (with whom he had been studying) and based the opening Presto on a Haydn Allegro, and the closing Rondo's refrain begins as a near perfect quote of a well-known Beethoven melody until it makes a surprising turn into the fresh vocabulary of Poulenc's own distinctive language. Poulenc hinted that he patterned this movement after a piano concerto by Saint-Saëns. The Andante is gracefully Mozartean, though any suggestion of parody is dispelled by alluring shifts of tonality and chromaticism.

ELLINGTON: Selections

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

Ellington called his music "American Music" rather than jazz, and liked to describe those who impressed him as "beyond category." These included many of the musicians who were members of his orchestra. He often composed specifically for the style and skills of these individuals, such as "Jeep's Blues" for Johnny Hodges, "Concerto for Cootie" for Cootie Williams, which later became "Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me" with Bob Russell's lyrics, and "The Mooche" for Tricky Sam Nanton and Bubber Miley. After 1941, he

frequently collaborated with composer-arranger-pianist Billy Strayhorn, whom he called his "writing and arranging companion." Ellington recorded for many American record companies, and appeared in several films.

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

CUONG: Explain Yourself!

Described as "show-stealing" (Baltimore City Paper) and a "dazzler" (Broad Street Review), Viet Cuong's music has been performed in venues across the USA, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, and Japan. He has been a Naumburg and Roger Sessions Fellow in Princeton University's doctoral program, and holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Peabody Conservatory, where he received the Presser Undergraduate Scholarship, the Peabody Alumni Award, and the Gustav Klemm Award for excellence in composition. He is among the youngest composers to receive residencies from the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Ucross Foundation and Yaddo.

The composer writes: "Explain Yourself! is a contemporary response to Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano. It takes a theme from Poulenc's Aubade and filters it through an energetic post-modern lens." Audience members are in for a sound that they've never heard before: Explain Yourself! features what must be the most multiphonic oboe notes ever written in a tonal chamber music work. Multiphonics are a special playing technique where oboist Aleh Remezau will be heard to play multiple notes at once, similar to the "double-stop" effect used by string players. The multiphonic effect adds to the wild feeling that infuses the piece.

BEETHOVEN: Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 "Gassenhauer"

Beethoven wrote six major piano trios, beginning with the set of three he deemed worthy to claim his first published opus number. Between the Op. 1 piano trios and the three masterpieces of his maturity, Beethoven wrote his charming piano trio, Op. 11, originally scored for clarinet, cello and piano but also published, with little modification, in a transcription for the typical ensemble featuring the violin as the treble instrument. Both versions enjoy the concert stage, but here, it appears in the novel permutation of piano, oboe and bassoon.

The trio's nickname, "Gassenhauer," stems from the theme of the third movement's nine variations. The tune, "Pria ch'io l'impegno" ("Before I go to work"), comes from the then

popular comedic drama "L'amor marinaro ossia Il corsaro" by Joseph Weigl. The melody was so popular it could be heard in many of Vienna's lanes ("Gassen" in German), and "Gassenhauer" is roughly equivalent to the term "hit," or success.

POULENC: Selected Songs

Poulenc composed orchestral and chamber music, ballets, concertos, film scores and opera, as well as powerful choral and sacred music. In the field of French art songs he is an acknowledged master, with over 150 works for piano and voice written over a period of 44 years, varying in style and character in a way that defies generalization. Poulenc set music to a wide range of French poetry—both ancient and modern, and from the serious to the surreal.

Les Chemins d'amour (The Paths of Love) is a waltz from the music for the play "Léocadia."

"C" is the first of two songs, based on poems by Louis Aragon, that evoke life in France under German occupation during the war years, 1939-1945.

In *Toréador*, written for a music-hall evening, Poulenc deliberately mixes genres, producing "a Spanish/Italian song . . . that sends up the geography of the café concert songs of the time, in which a Japanese girl got bored in Peking or Sappho fired questions at the Sphinx." The prevailing waltz rhythm is decorated with Spanish curlicues, notably on the word 'Toréador.'

ROSSINI: Fantasia concertante sur "Semiramide"

This "Concert-Fantasy," based on tunes from Rossini's final Italian opera, "Semiramide," is from a collection of delightful opera-inspired arrangements dating from 19th-century Paris and the salon music of that time. It contains works by the opera composers Rossini and Donizetti, favorites of the Parisian audiences, in arrangements by the oboe and bassoon virtuosos (and Paris Conservatoire professors) of the day Charles Triébert, Henri Brod and Eugène Jancourt. These works are not only "tuneful" but enable the performers to show off their ample virtuosity very well.

Notes by Poulenc Trio

Visit the Poulenc Trio website: poulenc trio.org/

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Trio Casals

Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 2:30 PM
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Anton Arensky, Diane Jones, Ovidiu Marinescu



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CLINTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY

Saturday, May 31, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Clinton Performing Arts Complex • 75 Chenango Avenue North, Clinton NY, 13323

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“L’Italiana in Algeri” Overture, Gioachino Rossini

Selections from “La Bohème” and “Tosca,” Giacomo Puccini
Julie Ebner, Soprano & Lucas Levy, Tenor

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