

The Poulenc Trio

Vladimir Lande, Oboe Irina Lande, Piano Bryan Young, Bassoon
With Members of the La Catrina String Quartet

Program, Festival San Miguel de Allende, 15 August 2008

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Duo Sonata in B-flat major, K.292

Allegro

Andante

Rondo: Allegro

With Alan Daowz, Cello

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Quintet in E-flat major, Opus 16

Grave—Allegro ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

With Blake Espy, Violin and Jorge Martinez, Viola

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1878) (arr. Charles Triébert & Eugene Jancourt)

Fantasie Concertante on L'Italiana in Algieri

Intermission

Enrique Gonzalez-Medina (b.1954)

Suite Latina, Op. 33 (2006) — excerpts

Rumba

Habanera

Tango

Jean Françaix (1912-1997)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Adagio - Allegro moderato

Risolute

Andante

Finale

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Chau Paris

With Daniel Vega-Albela, Violin

Astor Piazzolla

Oblivi3n

Otoño Porteña (From *Cuatro estaciones porteñas*)

Astor Piazzolla (arr. Osvaldo Requena)

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

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Hailed by the Washington Post in May 2008 for its “intriguing and beautifully played program . . . convincing elegance . . . [and] near-effortless lightness and grace,” the **Poulenc Trio** brings together three uniquely gifted virtuosos, oboist Vladimir Lande, bassoonist Bryan Young, and pianist Irina Lande. Combining brilliant 21st-century vibrancy with the best of European instrumental tradition, the trio’s performances leap beyond the ordinary concert experience to a world of beautiful sonorities, playful rhythms and dramatic excitement. As the finest of a select few professional wind trios, the Poulenc Trio is committed to expanding the repertoire through the rediscovery of old masterpieces and the commissioning of new works.

The trio was recently featured at Italy’s Ravello Festival, where they premiered two new compositions written especially for the group by Italian composer Gaetano Panariello and Russian-American composer Igor Raykhelson. These works add to the Trio’s growing catalog of commissions, which include a new Triple Concerto with orchestra.

The Trio’s busy touring schedule has included recent tours of Russia with Hilary Hahn (including the Hermitage State Museum), Italy (including the Ravello and Ville Vesuviane Festivals), the Caribbean, and multiple appearances in every region of the United States (including the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC).

Highlights of the Trio’s recent tours include appearances in New York City, Washington DC, and Baltimore; performances with clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein (formerly of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center) and the National Gallery Chamber Players from Washington, DC’ and concerts across the U.S., including California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Since 2004, the Poulenc Trio has directed “Music at the Museum,” a unique and highly successful partnership between the Trio and some of the great American museums, including the Baltimore Art Museum, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University. Each entertaining and thought-provoking program is carefully designed to complement a current exhibit or historical artistic concept.

In the press, the Trio has garnered positive attention in recent full-length profiles in Chamber Music Magazine and the Double Reed Journal. The group has been called “virtuosos of classical and contemporary chamber music” in one profile on Russian television, and reviews from across the USA have praised the Trio’s “new and delicious sounds . . . three virtuosos in complete command of their instruments” who “played with spirit and grace and brought the near-capacity crowd to its feet.”

For more information, visit the trio’s web site at www.poulenc trio.com

Bryan Young, bassoon, a Washington, DC native, has been praised for his “voluptuous sound” by the Double Reed Journal. A prizewinner of the 2002 Gillet International Bassoon Competition, he has appeared as soloist with the National Symphony and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras, as well as in recitals across the United States and around the world. The Washington Post wrote, “Young’s music dances with a lightness and grace uncommon for his instrument.” Bryan is principal bassoonist of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and performs regularly with the IRIS Chamber Orchestra in Memphis. He trained at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and at Yale University.

Vladimir Lande, principal oboist of the Baltimore Opera, was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. He graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory with degrees in both oboe and piano. As principal oboist of the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) Philharmonic Orchestra, he recorded all the Brahms symphonies as well as symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Shostakovich, and performed with distinguished conductors including Leonard Bernstein,

Claudio Abbado, Valery Gergiev, and Yuri Temirkanov. Recent tours have brought him to New Zealand, Australia, Europe and across most of the United States. Vladimir is on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University, where he conducts the chamber orchestra.

Pianist **Irina Lande** is a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia. Winner of the Baltimore Chamber Music Award and the Montpelier Recital Competition, Irina has appeared in series including the Yale Gordon Concert Series, the Bachanalia Recital Series and the New York Times Young Performers Series. Concerts abroad in Russia, Italy, England, Germany and the Caribbean have led to critical praise of her "beauty and brilliance of sound, astonishing flexibility and penetrating interpretation." Fanfare Magazine hails her as "a strong pianist who doesn't settle for an accompanying role." Irina is on the piano faculty at the Peabody Institute.

Members of the La Catrina String Quartet:

Daniel Vega-Albela, violin

Born in Mexico City, Daniel Vega-Albela won silver medal in the first National Violin Competition in Mexico City at the age of fifteen. He has played with many ensembles in the USA and Mexico, such as the St. Cecilia Chamber Orchestra, the Western New York Chamber Players, the Orquesta de Cámara de Morelos, and the Camerata de Torreón. He has toured Japan, Mexico, and the United States, and has appeared as soloist with orchestras in Mexico and Japan.

From 1994-97, he taught at the Academia Yuriko Kuronuma in Mexico City. In 1997, he joined the Conservatorio de las Rosas to teach and to play with their new music ensemble, the Ensemble de las Rosas, with which he performed at the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato. From 2001 to 2003, he was violin Instructor at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Mr. Vega-Albela received his Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance from the Mannes College of Music. He holds a Master of violin performance degree from Western Michigan University, and a Master of Chamber Music from Kent State University.

Blake Espy, violin

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Blake Espy has been associate concertmaster of the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra and a frequent performer with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. He also spent one summer in Mexico City performing with Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería.

In 2007, Mr. Espy was invited to join the New World Symphony in Miami, with which he served as a rotating concertmaster, chamber musician, and educator to young musicians

In his hometown, Mr. Espy created a non-profit organization, MusicAlive, which supports classical music by means of community engagement, unique performance venues, innovative programming, as well as traditional performance practices.

Mr. Espy holds a Bachelor of Music Performance from Western Michigan University, a Master of Music Performance from Louisiana State University and an Artist's Diploma from SUNY Purchase.

Jorge Martínez, viola

Born in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, Jorge Martínez studied viola at the Conservatorio de las Rosas where he graduated with honors, under the tutelage of professor Gela Dubrova.

While at Western Michigan University, Mr. Martínez was awarded, along with his colleagues of the La Catrina, one of the university's most prestigious awards, All University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award, the first time in the history of the university that the Graduate College bestowed such recognition upon a music ensemble.

As an orchestral musician, Mr. Martínez was assistant principal viola of both the Camerata de Coahuila and the Orquesta de Cámara de Morelia. He has appeared as soloist with several orchestras in Mexico and in 2004, he was invited to give a recital and a series of masterclasses in London.

Mr. Martínez is a founding member of the La Catrina String Quartet and holds a Master of Music degree in chamber music from Kent State University.

Alan Daowz, cello

Born in Mexico City, Mr. Daowz started the cello with José Luis Gálvez at the Escuela Nacional de Música and the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Morelia, Michoacán, where he obtained his Bachelors degree in cello performance. He received his Master of Music degree in cello performance from Western Michigan University.

Mr. Daowz has been a member of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Michoacán, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería and principal cello of the Orquesta de Cámara de la Universidad Michoacana. Mr. Daowz has also taught at the Conservatorio de las Rosas's summer music festival.

Mr. Daowz was a founding member of the Salvador Contreras String Quartet and the La Catrina String Quartet.

Mr. Daowz holds a Master of Music degree in chamber music performance from Kent State University.

PROGRAM NOTES:

Mozart:

January 1775 found nineteen-year-old Mozart and his father Leopold in Munich for the premiere of "La finta giardiniera," an opera buffa commissioned by the court theater in that city with which Mozart hoped to create enough of a stir to win a position on the music staff of the elector, Maximilian Joseph III. The opera did not gain Mozart a place at court, however, and he and Leopold left Munich, disappointed, on March 6. In the months preceding the Munich venture and immediately after arriving in the Bavarian capital, Mozart composed several works to display to local music lovers in that city and for possible publication, including the Duo Sonata for Bassoon and Cello in B-flat major (K. 292). The work's three compact movements encompass a cheerful opening allegro in sonata form, a lyrical andante, and a companionable closing rondo.

Beethoven:

This work is often said to have been modeled on Mozart's Quintet, K. 452 for piano and winds, but there are as many differences as similarities between the two scores. Mozart was already an acknowledged master in 1784 when his Quintet appeared (contemporaneous works include the six(!) Piano Concertos he wrote that same year). The 26-year-old Beethoven had published piano trios and sonatas by this time, but his fame had come primarily from his dazzling displays of improvisational skill and keyboard virtuosity. He was still exploring instrumental sonorities before setting out on his voyage of symphonic composition. Opus 16 offered a chance for him to showcase his composing and his performing prowess. Opus 16 was published in 1801 with alternative version for piano and strings; the arrangement performed this evening creatively combines Beethoven's two versions.

The first movement shows Beethoven making a serious attempt to be serious. The extended slow introduction, marked Grave, produces an opening movement that is as long as the two following movements combined. The winds start the proceedings, after which the piano quickly makes itself known with a solo flourish. Thereafter, for the most part, the forces trade thematic materials in democratic fashion, until another cadenza-like flourish from the piano leads into the Allegro proper. An invigorating and sprightly theme is stated and developed in a refreshingly non-dramatic way. After an exposition repeat, things become more agitated and the dynamic level also rises as the development begins. A striding passage reminds us briefly that E-flat is the same key Beethoven will use for his "Eroica" Symphony, still seven years in the future. Might we even hear a few pre-echoes of the "Emperor" Concerto, another work in E-flat? The coda gives the horn an arpeggiated figure, heard earlier in the piano; what is idiomatic for the keyboard is treacherous for the horn, and it is as thrilling to hear as it must be chilling to play.

The Andante cantabile offers opportunities for each instrument to sing, both solo and as a member of the ensemble. The delicate theme introduced by the piano returns to separate the episodes and initiate a new wave of rhapsodic dialogue among the conversationalists.

The concerto ends with a game. The Rondo's nonchalant theme soon picks up speed as it is embellished and embroidered by the piano and the winds in a whirl of activity. As in a piano concerto, Beethoven leaves room for a solo cadenza in the first half of the finale. It is reported that the composer (who played the piano part himself when the work was new) would indulge in some extra improvisational activity, fooling the wind players, who—at first amused and then disgruntled—were waiting to come back in. —Dennis Bade

Rossini:

This "Concert-Fantasy" is from a delightful collection of opera-inspired arrangements dating from 19th century Paris and the salon music of that time. It contains works by the opera composers Rossini and Donizetti, who were the delight of the Parisian audiences, in potpourri

arrangements by the oboe and bassoon virtuosos (and Conservatoire Professors) of the day Charles Triébert, Henri Brod and Eugène Jancourt. These works were not only “tuneful” but enabled the performers to show off their ample virtuosity very well. The rousing *Fantaisie Concertante*, based on tunes from Rossini’s “An Italian Girl in Algiers,” is such a work.

Gonzalez-Medina:

Originally from Tijuana, Baja California, Enrique Gonzalez-Medina has presented new works with soloists, ensembles and orchestras from Mexico, the United States, Italy, and Colombia. He recently finished his *Concertino íntimo*, for piano and small orchestra, a commission by the Baja California Orchestra, scheduled to be premiered in 2008. In 2006 he concluded and premiered the composition of the *Baja California Songbook*, a song collection of twenty-five settings of poems by five Baja California poets. Among his recent works, his children's opera *How Nanita Learned to Make Flan*, a 2003 commission by Cincinnati Opera, has had over one hundred and fifty performances in the United States. He was also commissioned to compose the quartet *Concierto barroco* by Pacific Serenades. In 2002, the guitarist Felix Bullock premiered his guitar concerto *Medellin Concerto* in Colombia, and the Mexican duo of soprano Claudia Montiel and guitarist Carlos Bernal recorded his song cycle *The Teacher's Verses* for their CD *La Cuerda del Tiempo* on the Quindecim Recordings label (Mexico). Enrique Gonzalez-Medina studied composition in Mexico City attending the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and in the United States, he graduated from The Mannes College of Music (B.M.) and CSLA (M.M.). He has been a member of the piano and composition departments of the Pasadena Conservatory of Music since 1997. His website is www.enriquegm.com.

The composer writes about "Suite Latina":

“When I studied composition at the National School of Music in Mexico City, I played French horn and I had the opportunity to perform in a woodwind quintet. It was a wonderful experience! I became very familiar with the woodwind repertory, including Francis Poulenc's wonderful woodwind and piano sextet and his extraordinary trio.

A few years ago I composed the *Baja California Songbook*, a twenty-five song collection in which I used as lyrics the poetry of five poets from Baja California, my home state in Northwest Mexico. Some of the poems are humorous in nature, and when setting these, I happily used Latin American dance rhythms for these songs. I love these rhythms, and they have now become very much part of my musical style.

In 2006, I had the opportunity to participate as a composer in a woodwind chamber music concert, and it was extremely tempting for me to transform five of my songbook songs into the suite for oboe, bassoon and piano trio that you will hear tonight. Enjoy!” —Enrique González-Medina

Françaix:

Jean Françaix, the son of the director of the Le Mans Conservatory, started to compose very early; when Françaix was 11, Ravel was already writing recommendations for this “extremely gifted child.” At the Paris Conservatory, he won a Premier Prix de Virtuosit  in 1932 for piano, and studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. He had a great affinity for wind instruments and is well known for his many contributions to that repertoire. “It is a strange venture to make honest folk laugh,” said Françaix of his own music, quoting Moli re. Yet with characteristic modesty, he undervalued his own achievement. Adhering to the classical ideals of clarity and coherence—the virtues of his beloved Mozart—he wrote music filled with French charm and “esprit” that delights in the play of stylistic manners, making irony an artistic virtue in itself rather than a source of expressive conflict. Inspired mostly by Ravel and Stravinsky, Françaix tried to develop a new style of composing, always tonal but dissonant, even using

elements of jazz. He composed "exclusively instinctively," as he said; he disliked theory and didn't want to be relegated to any "school" of composition.

The Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano was commissioned by the International Double Reed Society for their 1994 festival. It is astonishing for its modernity and its accessibility, the exquisite detail and complexity of his composition, the virtuosic demands placed on the performer, and the expert use of the idiomatic, natural qualities of highly evolved classical instruments. In the tradition of Neo-Classicism, the music is simultaneously familiar from the past, yet new and different, of the present. But where the original Neo-classicists looked to the 18th century and earlier for their inspiration, Françaix, in this work, seems to look back within his own lifespan. In a new loop of Neo-Classical spirit, the music evokes the popular sounds of a young modernism in the early 20th century: syncopated urban rhythms, musical theatre, the exuberance and occasional plaintive nostalgia of contemporary humanity.

Françaix's thoughts are as refreshing as his music. His words are worth quoting at some length: "It's difficult for a composer to talk about his own works. If he praises them, he is accused of boasting; if he disparages them, he is considered guilty of false modesty. If he dissects them into theme A, theme B, musicologists will applaud, but musicians will find him boring. If the work is of any value, it will need no explanation; if it is of no value, no esoteric commentary will render it any better . . . All I ask my listeners is to open their ears and be brave enough to decide whether they like my music or not. I don't want any intermediary between me and my listeners trying to sway their judgment one way or the other. They should remember they are free human beings, not obedient automata. I want them to overcome snobbery, fashion and envy with the power of common sense and to enjoy my music if it gives them pleasure; which of course I hope it does . . ."

Piazzolla:

Astor Piazzolla was without question Argentina's greatest cultural export, both as a composer and as an unprecedented virtuoso on his chosen instrument, the bandoneon—a large button accordion that is a common folk instrument in Latin American countries. Born in Argentina to immigrant Italian parents, Piazzolla started his musical studies in New York, where he stayed for 13 years. In 1946 he set up his own band, with which he toured the two American continents. Most notably, he single-handedly took the tango, an earthy, sensual, often disreputable folk music that he enjoyed as a child, and elevated it into a sophisticated form of high art. The term *nuevo tango* was coined to designate the modernization of the tango by Piazzolla and his followers.

In 1954 the French government awarded Piazzolla a grant to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. "Above all else," Piazzolla wrote, "she gave me self-confidence, showed me that I was first and foremost a composer of tango and that the rest, although important, was not the way forward for me, belonging to a different, intellectual and false me." Piazzolla then began a period of intense production, resulting a series of works that included "Chau Paris." He dedicated the piece to his friend Edouard Pécourt, who owned a record store in Paris and had learned Spanish to deepen his knowledge of the tango. Originally scored for bandoneon and string ensemble, the version performed tonight was made by Piazzolla's own arranger, Osvaldo Requena.

Oblivion, from a score Piazzolla composed for a film version of Pirandello's play *Enrico IV*, is a searing piece that exudes isolation and impassioned eloquence in a most gripping way

When music lovers world-wide hear the phrase "The Four Seasons," they immediately associate it with Antonio Vivaldi's memorable work. Composers ever since have referenced his masterpiece; Astor Piazzolla joined their ranks when he composed—for own quintet of violin, piano, electric guitar, double bass and bandoneon—the *Cuatro estaciones porteñas* (the Four Seasons of Buenos Aires).

