



P R E S E N T S

Poulenc Trio



Photo: Christina Bianco (Unison Media)

Alexander Vvedenskiy,
oboe

Irina Kaplan Lande,
piano

Bryan Young,
bassoon

Saturday, September 25, 2021
7:30 p.m.

Kathleen P. Westby Pavilion
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

Salon Concert

Trio Sonata in F Major ("Kammertrio Nr. 24")
Adagio – Allegro – Largo – Allegro

attrib. George Frideric Handel
(German, 1685–1759)

Suite in the Old Style
Pastorale: Moderato
Ballet: Allegro
Minuet: Tempo di Minuetto
Fugue: Allegro
Pantomime: Andantino

Alfred Schnittke
(Russian, 1934–1998)
arr. Mikhail Krutik

Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon
Lento – Presto
Andante con moto
Rondo: Très vif

Francis Poulenc
(French, 1899–1963)

Fantaisie concertante on themes from Rossini's *Semiramide*

Charles Triébert and Eugène Jancourt
(French, 1810–1867; 1815–1901)

The Poulenc Trio's concert weekend is underwritten by Amanda and Kenneth Lawrence.

Chamber Music Tulsa's concerts and educational outreaches are presented with the assistance of
the Oklahoma Arts Council and Arts Alliance Tulsa.



About the Program

by Jason S. Heilman, Ph.D., © 2021

George Frideric Handel (*attributed*)

Born February 23, 1685, in Halle, Germany

Died April 14, 1759, in London, England

Trio Sonata in F Major (“Kammertrio Nr. 24”)

Early to mid-1700s; 8 minutes

Although he is best known today for his sacred oratorios, George Frideric Handel also composed a significant number of what we would consider chamber works. These include at least a dozen trio sonatas for two instruments and basso continuo (encompassing cello or bassoon and harpsichord), although several of the sonatas attributed to Handel have proven to be by other composers. Most of the trio sonatas we can authenticate date from Handel’s earliest years in England, immediately following his permanent relocation from Germany in 1712, but some were composed in the mid-1730s or later, for performance during the intermissions of Handel’s operas and oratorios. Inspired by his time as a student in Italy, virtually all of Handel’s trio sonatas follow the four-movement *sonata da chiesa* pattern, beginning slowly and ending briskly, and feature two similar instruments in the main roles — usually two violins or two oboes.

In 1938, the Leipzig-based publishing house of Breitkopf & Härtel continued its series of Handel’s “chamber trios” adapted for more modern ensembles with a piece that is no longer thought to have been written by Handel at all. While their twenty-fourth published trio follows Handel’s typical four-movement scheme, the manuscript does not appear among any of Handel’s sources. Moreover, the published version is unique in featuring an oboe and a bassoon in the lead roles, though it may have been adapted from a solo sonata for oboe and continuo by the editor, musicologist Max Seiffert. Unfortunately, absent an authentic manuscript, this Trio Sonata in F Major is likely to remain a mystery, albeit a charming one.

Alfred Schnittke

Born November 24, 1934, in Engels, Russia, U.S.S.R.

Died August 3, 1998, in Hamburg, Germany

Suite in the Old Style

1972; 16 minutes; arranged by Mikhail Krutik

During the 1970s and 80s, Soviet composer Alfred Schnittke emerged from relative obscurity to be hailed as the musical successor to Dmitri Shostakovich. Appropriate to the postmodern era in which he flourished, Schnittke had an eclectic musical style that regularly juxtaposed neoclassicism, avant-garde modernism, and just about everything in between. Born to a German Jewish emigre father and a Volga German mother, Schnittke discovered his love of music during the two years his family spent in Vienna just after World War II, where his father worked as a translator for the Soviet occupation. After returning to the U.S.S.R., he continued his musical studies at the Moscow Conservatory, but he retained a distinctly

Western orientation, preferring the classicism of Mozart and Schubert over Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. He was a prolific composer, writing ten symphonies, twenty-one concertos, and dozens of chamber works, but his music was initially neglected in his home country due in no small part to his German ethnic background and European outlook. This only began to change in the late 1970s, as Soviet defectors like Gidon Kremer and Mstislav Rostropovich began to introduce Schnittke’s music to the West. In 1990, just before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Schnittke moved to Germany, where he spent the last eight years of his life.

The burgeoning Soviet film industry of the 1960s and 70s offered Schnittke both a stable early income and an ideal opportunity to develop his unique musical style in many different directions at once. Ultimately, Schnittke would score more than sixty films, and he frequently drew upon his own melodies for these films in his concert works. In 1972, Schnittke borrowed themes from his scores to two very different films by the legendary Soviet director Elem Klimov (1933–2003) to create a five-movement neo-baroque piece he titled *Suite in the Old Style*. Unfolding like a dance suite, the opening *pastorale*, the stately *ballet*, and the sprightly closing *pantomime* each take their melodies from Schnittke’s ironic score to the 1965 dark comedy *Adventures of a Dentist*, while the *minuet* and *fugue* come from his music for the 1970 documentary *Sport, Sport, Sport*. Originally composed for violin and harpsichord, the *Suite in the Old Style* has since been arranged for a wide variety of settings; this version for oboe, bassoon, and piano was created by the Russian composer Mikhail Krutik (b. 1980).

Francis Poulenc

Born January 7, 1899, in Paris, France

Died January 30, 1963, in Paris

Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon

1926; 13 minutes

One of the most prominent French composers during the tempestuous years between the World Wars, Francis Poulenc was a study in contradictions. Born into a bourgeois family, his parents encouraged his musical pursuits, but forbade him from pursuing a career in it. For this reason, Poulenc never studied at the Paris Conservatoire; instead, he was largely self-taught, with only occasional lessons from “outsider” composers like Charles Koechlin. He carefully analyzed the works of the classical masters, particularly Bach, Mozart, and Schubert, but his own music often seemed to satirize the neoclassical style that was in vogue during his early career. He was openly gay as early as the 1930s but remained a devout Catholic, and even wrote several liturgical pieces. He composed fluently, but was often plagued by bouts of depression that left him creatively fallow for months. One contemporaneous critic summed him up by noting: “In Poulenc there is something of the monk and something of the rascal.”

In 1920, when he was only 21 years old, a Parisian newspaper named Poulenc as part of a group, alongside Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Germaine Tailleferre, of up-and-coming composers to watch. Although *Les Six*, as they were soon known, only collaborated on one project, the exposure raised Poulenc's profile considerably. He soon earned fame in his own right for his one-act ballet *Les biches* ("The Does"), which was staged at the Ballets Russes in 1924, and for his early chamber works for wind instruments, including his 1922 Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon, and his 1926 Trio for what was then the novel combination of oboe, bassoon, and piano. Dedicated to Spanish composer Manuel de Falla, Poulenc's colorful Trio opens with a slow introduction that seems to recall a stately French baroque overture. This soon segues into a sprightly *presto* main section, which alternates between leaping rhythms and flowing, sometimes languid melodies. Many commentators have heard a rustic quality in the *andante con moto* second movement, but its graceful melodic lines in the oboe and bassoon soaring over a piano accompaniment also imply a kind of dramatic opera without words. The three instruments reach an equal footing in the *très vif* finale, which unfolds like a classical rondo, with its recurring theme of bouncing rhythms and fanfares interrupted by contrasting episodes as the movement races to its conclusion.

Charles Triébert

Born October 31, 1810, in Paris, France
Died July 18, 1867, in Paris

Eugène Jancourt

Born December 15, 1815, in Château-Thierry, France
Died January 29, 1901, in Boulogne-sur-Seine

Fantaisie concertante on themes from Rossini's *Semiramide*

ca. 1850; 13 minutes

Based on a play by Voltaire, the 1823 opera *Semiramide* by Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) recounts the tragic legend of Queen Semiramis of Assyria, who had secretly conspired with a lover to murder her husband the king and seize his throne. Fifteen years later, Semiramis must choose a co-ruler and heir, but rather than her deceitful former lover, she picks her upstanding military commander, even though he loves another woman. But when she learns that her newly betrothed is in fact her long-lost son, the truth about the king's suspicious death is revealed and Semiramis's reign comes crashing down. It would be Rossini's last opera for the Italian stage; a year after its premiere, he permanently relocated to Paris, where he served as music director of the Théâtre des Italiens until his sudden retirement in 1830.

Decades later, two principal woodwinds from the orchestra of the Théâtre des Italiens — oboist Charles Triébert and bassoonist Eugène Jancourt — found themselves in search of new and virtuosic repertoire for their joint recitals. Each a talented composer in his own right, Triébert and Jancourt decided to collaborate on a series of pot-pourris of melodies from popular Italian operas, with one inspired by Rossini's *Semiramide*.

Poulenc Trio

The Poulenc Trio is the most active touring piano-wind chamber music ensemble in the world. Since its founding in 2003, the Poulenc Trio has performed in 45 U.S. states and at music festivals around the world, including the Ravello Festival in Italy, the San Miguel de Allende Festival in Mexico, and the White Nights Festival in Russia, where the group toured with and premiered two new works with violinist Hilary Hahn.

The Trio has a strong commitment to commissioning, performing, and recording new works from living composers. Since its founding, the Trio has greatly expanded the repertoire available for the oboe, bassoon, and piano, with 22 new works written for and premiered by the group, including three triple concertos for the trio and full orchestra.

The Trio is committed to exploring and promoting musics that reflect its members' African, Asian, Eastern European, and Jewish roots. Recent concerts have featured works by Afro-Cuban jazz great Paquito D'Rivera, Mexican-American composer Carlos Medina, Russian-American composer Nataliya Medvedovskaya, and *Yiddish Lexicon*, an exploration of Jewish culture by composer Jakov Jakoulov.

The Trio launched a pioneering concert series called Music at the Museum, in which musical performances are paired with museum exhibitions, with special appearances from guest artists and curators. As part of the series, the Trio has collaborated with the National Gallery, the Walters Art Museum and Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Hermitage State Museum in Russia. Guest artist collaborators have included the Thibaud Trio of Berlin, soprano Hyunah Yu, and clarinetists David Schiff, Alexander Fiterstein, and Anthony McGill.

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

For more information on the Trio and its activities, visit poulenc trio.org.