

23|24 SEASON

 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

Franklin College Chamber Music Series

## **POULENC TRIO**

**ALEH REMEZAU**, oboe

**BRYAN YOUNG**, bassoon

**IRINA KAPLAN LANDE**, piano

WED, OCT 25, 7:30 pm

Ramsey Concert Hall

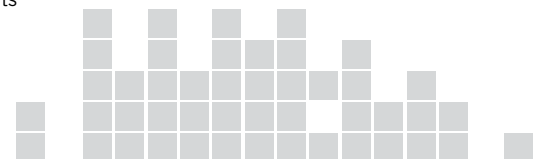


The Poulenc Trio appears by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists.  
[www.chambermuse.com](http://www.chambermuse.com)

Supported by  
**FRANKLIN COLLEGE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY**

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.

#ugapresents



## PROGRAM

### **JEAN FRANÇAIX** (1912-1997)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano [16:30]

- I. Adagio-Allegro molto
- II. Andante
- III. Finale

### **FRANCIS POULENC** (1899-1963)

Selected songs (arr. Dietrich Zöllner, Poulenc Trio) [11:30]

*Les chemins d'amour*

C

*Toréador*

### **VIET CUONG** (b.1990)

Explain Yourself! [11:00]

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

## INTERMISSION

### **ANDRÉ PREVIN** (1929-2019)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano [19:30]

- I. Lively
- II. Slow
- III. Jaunty

### **DUKE ELLINGTON** (1899-1974)

Selected songs (arr. Jonathan Jensen) [7:30]

In a Sentimental Mood

The Mooch/Black and Tan Fantasy

### **GIOACCHINO ROSSINI** (1792-1868)

Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide*  
(arr. Charles Triébert & Eugène Jancourt) [12:30]

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano**

**Jean Françaix** (1912-1997)

Jean Françaix was a modern French composer very much in the neoclassical tradition of Francis Poulenc: He eschewed the trends of atonality and the rejection of traditional form, choosing wit, color and a supple lightness in the service of producing musical “pleasure.” Prolific throughout his life, Françaix was a piano virtuoso, an active performer, a skilled orchestrator, and a composer in myriad forms and ensembles. Like great French composers, Françaix had a skillful penchant for the wind instruments.

The Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano was commissioned by the International Double Reed Society for their 24th festival in 1994. The trio is astonishing for its modernity and its accessibility. In the tradition of neoclassicism, the music is simultaneously familiar from the past, yet new and different, undeniably of the present. But where the original neoclassicists 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 neoclassical 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 man. The strengths of the composition are its exquisite detail and complexity, the virtuosic demands placed on the performer, and the expert use of the idiomatic qualities of the instruments.

Françaix's thoughts are as refreshing as his music:

“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 and 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 crush 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.”

—adapted from a note by  
Kai Christiansen

### **Selected songs**

**Francis Poulenc** (1899-1963)

Comprising more 150 works for piano and voice written over a period of 44 years, the songs of Francis Poulenc remain consistently popular to concert audiences the world over. Varying in style and character in a way that defies generalization, Poulenc set music to a wide range of French poetry, both old 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. The title of the song, “C”, refers to the name of a village in France called Les Ponts-de-Cé (The Bridges of Cé), the site of numerous battles throughout history, beginning with the nearby Battle of Tours in 732, which pushed the Umayyad Caliphate, the reigning Islam kingdom in the world that time, back into Spain. The battle is considered to be one of the turning points in Western history.

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’).

### Explain Yourself!

**Viet Cuong** (b.1990)

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.

Cuong’s works have been performed at the Aspen Music Festival, International

Double Reed Society Conference, Bowdoin Music Festival, the US Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, Midwest Clinic, CBDNA conferences, and the GAMMA-UT Conference. Viet was a winner of the ASCAP Morton Gould Composers Award, Walter Beeler Memorial Prize from Ithaca College, Dolce Suono Ensemble Young Composers Competition, Atlantic Coast Conference Band Directors Association Grant, National Band Association Young Composer Mentor Project, and the Prix d’Été Composition Competition.

The composer’s website is [vietcuongmusic.com](http://vietcuongmusic.com).

*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 Remecau will be heard to play multiple notes at once, similar to the double-stop effect used by string instrumentalists. The multiphonic effect adds to the wild feeling that infuses the piece.

### Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano André Previn (1929-2019)

Sir André Previn was born to a Jewish family in Berlin and emigrated with them to the United States in 1939 to escape the Nazis. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1943 and grew up in Los Angeles. An Oscar winner, Previn toured and recorded as a jazz pianist, and was conductor of the Los Angeles

Philharmonic from 1985-89. In the UK, where he was knighted in 1996, Previn is particularly remembered for his performance on the Morecambe and Wise comedy show in 1971, which involved his conducting a spoof performance of the Grieg Piano Concerto. At a concert in Britain afterwards, Previn had to interrupt the concerto to allow the audience time to stop giggling as they remembered the sketch. It is still considered one of the funniest comedy moments of all time.

Previn composed his Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon in 1994 on a joint commission from the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the National Endowment for the Art and the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. Music for this combination of instruments is unusual but by no means unique; French composers in particular loved the sound of woodwinds, and in some ways Previn’s Trio shows virtues that might be thought typically French: clarity, careful attention to the character of the individual instruments, and a sense of play and fun. Yet if the impulse behind this music might be thought French, here it has an American accent: Previn’s Trio is full of energy, jazz rhythms, and the open harmonies that have, since the time of Copland and Harris, distinguished American music.

The trio is in three movements. The opening, marked “Lively,” moves from a spiky beginning through a flowing second theme-group introduced by the bassoon and marked *espressivo*. The basic metric markings in this movement are 2/4 and 4/4, but Previn frequently interrupts this even pulse with individual measures in subdivisions such as 7/8, 5/8, 3/4, 7/16, and others. It is indeed a “lively” movement, precisely for the vitality of its rhythms,

and a brief coda drives to an emphatic close on a unison B-Flat. In the second movement, “Slow,” a piano prelude leads to the entrance of the solo oboe; this entrance is marked “lonely,” a marking that might apply to the entire movement, where long chromatic woodwind lines wind their way above chordal accompaniment. The music rises to a climax, then falls away to conclude on its opening material, now varied.

The third movement, “Jaunty,” changes meter almost by measure. Previn treats the two wind instruments as a group and sets them in contrast to the piano, which has extended solo passages. The leaping opening idea reappears in many forms, including inversion, and near the end the tempo speeds ahead as Previn specifies that the music should be played with “Jazz phrasing.” These riffs alternate with brief piano interludes marked “simply.” Gradually the movement’s opening theme reasserts itself, and the Trio rushes to its blistering close, once again on a unison B-flat.

—Eric Bromberger

### Selected songs

#### Duke Ellington (1899-1974)

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, and his 125th birthday is being celebrated in 2024.

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.



### **Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide***

**Gioacchino Rossini** (1792-1868)

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 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.

*Semiramide* is based on Voltaire’s tragedy *Semiramis*, which in turn was based on the legend of Queen Semiramis of Babylon. It has been called “the last opera of the great Baroque tradition: the most beautiful, the most imaginative, possibly the most complete; but also, irremediably, the last.”

Duke Ellington (1899-1974) Bettmann Archive

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **POULENC TRIO**

The Poulenc Trio is the most active touring piano-wind chamber music ensemble in the world. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the trio has performed in 47 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 they toured and premiered two new works with violinist Hilary Hahn.

The *New York Times* praised the trio for its “elegant rendition” of Piazzolla’s tangos. The *Washington Post* said the trio “does its namesake proud” in “an intriguing and beautifully played program” with “convincing elegance, near effortless lightness and grace.” The *Palm Beach Post* praised the group’s “polished loveliness,” and the *Palm Beach Daily News* said the “potent combination” of oboe, bassoon and piano “captured the magic of chamber music.” This concert was chosen for broadcast on American Public Media’s nationally syndicated radio program, *Performance Today*. The trio has garnered positive attention in full-length profiles in *Chamber Music* magazine and the *Double Reed Journal*.

The Poulenc 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 no fewer than 22 new works written for and premiered by the group, including three triple concertos for the trio and full orchestra.

The Poulenc 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 in Washington, the Walters Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Hermitage State Museum in Russia.

The trio is deeply engaged in musical and educational outreach programs, including “Pizza and Poulenc,” an informal performance and residency series for younger audiences. The trio regularly conducts masterclasses, most recently at the University of Ohio, San Francisco State University, Florida State University, and the University of Colima in Mexico.

