

Poulenc Trio

Creation

VLADIMIR LANDE, OBOE
BRYAN YOUNG, BASSOON
IRINA KAPLAN, PIANO
FEATURING
LIA PURPURA, POET

MUSIC BY
BEETHOVEN
SCHNITTKE
VAZQUEZ



DE 3516



Poulenc Trio

Creation

VLADIMIR LANDE, OBOE
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Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998)
(arr. Mikhail Krutik) Suite in the Old Style
With poems by Lia Purpura

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

Octavio Vazquez (b. 1972)
Triptych for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano (2012)

Alfred Schnittke
(arr. Mikhail Krutik) Suite in the Old Style
no poems, only music

1. Pastorale (First Leaf) (4:14)
2. Ballet (Story) (2:55)
3. Minuet (Old World) (3:59)
4. Fugue (Creation) (3:01)
5. Pantomime (Sunday) (4:24)
6. Allegro con brio (9:16)
7. Adagio (5:05)
8. Tema con variazioni
("Pria ch'io l'impegno": Allegretto) (6:35)
9. Moderato; allegro (5:26)
10. Adagio (5:39)
11. Scherzo (3:58)
12. Pastorale (3:34)
13. Ballet (2:15)
14. Minuet (3:30)
15. Fugue (2:29)
16. Pantomime (4:01)

Total Playing Time: 70:23

CREATION

Alfred Schnittke

(arr. Mikhail Krutik)

Suite in the Old Style (18:35)

With poems by Lia Purpura

1. Pastorale (First Leaf) (4:14)
2. Ballet (Story) (2:55)
3. Minuet (Old World) (3:59)
4. Fugue (Creation) (3:01)
5. Pantomime (Sunday) (4:24)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Trio in B-flat Major,

Op. 11, "Gassenhauer" (20:56)

6. Allegro con brio (9:16)
7. Adagio (5:05)
8. Tema con variazioni "Pria ch'io l'impegno": Allegretto (6:35)

Octavio Vazquez

Triptych for Oboe, Bassoon,

and Piano (2012) (15:03)

9. Moderato; allegro (5:26)
10. Adagio (5:39)
11. Scherzo (3:58)

Alfred Schnittke

(arr. Mikhail Krutik)

Suite in the Old Style

(alternate version, without poems) (15:49)

12. Pastorale (3:34)
13. Ballet (2:15)
14. Minuet (3:30)
15. Fugue (2:29)
16. Pantomime (4:01)

THE POULENC TRIO

Vladimir Lande, oboe

Bryan Young, bassoon

Irina Kaplan, piano

featuring Lia Purpura, poet

Total Playing Time: 70:23

ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934-1998)

Suite in the Old Style

Featuring poems by Lia Purpura

Following the death of Dimitri Shostakovich in 1975, Alfred Schnittke emerged as Russia's most prominent composer. Under the Soviet regime, Schnittke's excursions into modernism sometimes met with official disapproval, and he was for a while banned from traveling outside Russia. During the less repressive period of the 1980s, prominent Russian performers like Gidon Kremer, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Gennady Rozhdestvensky begin introducing his music to audiences in the West, and Schnittke soon became one of the world's best-known living composers.

By the mid-1960s, Schnittke had abandoned his early serialism in favor of a technique that he labeled "polystylism." "The goal of my life," he once explained, "is to unify serious music and light music, even if I break my neck doing so." He fashioned for himself a musical language that freely mixed musical styles and that boldly moved between the traditional and the avant-garde, the classic and the modern.

While far removed from the most radical of his compositions, **Suite in the Old Style** carries traces of Schnittke's arresting eclecticism. Written in 1972 as a duo for violin and piano, the Suite draws upon music that Schnittke produced as soundtracks for films. Schnittke, like other Soviet composers, was often called upon

to compose movie scores. In Schnittke's case these assignments often afforded him a freedom to employ techniques that would've been tabooed for use in his concert works.

As in Grieg's *Suite in the Olden Style* – more commonly known as the *Holberg Suite* – the term "old style" in Schnittke's title refers to the Baroque. It consists of five movements, a gentle pastorale, a bouncy ballet, an unusually slow minuet, a vigorous fugue, and, in a distinct sampling of the composers polystylistic technique, an easy-going, melodious pantomime which slides momentarily into an eerily dissonant section that is far distant from any Baroque practice.

The Poulenc Trio collaborated with the poet Lia Purpura to set each of the piece's movements to a poem from her collection *It Shouldn't Have Been Beautiful*. Purpura writes that "In my new work I'm interested in the ways very short poems can provide an experience of depth, and not merely a fragmented or brief experience – much like *Suite in the Old Style*, a whole made of intense, short pieces, that in their brevity, focus deeply on a single sensation or atmosphere. Similarly, over the course of a whole collection, poems have a chance to converse with one another; by the end of Suite, one hears, too, the fullness of an extended conversation. Finally, the way in which "the new" overtakes "the old" or longs for it, or reworks it – those impulses are vital to my work as well."

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11, "Gassenhauer"

In 1793, Beethoven composed his first major set of trios and had them premiered in Vienna. Haydn, his sometime teacher, had been critical of the works, calling them too extreme for the Viennese public. Stung by the criticism, Beethoven didn't write another major set of string trios until his Op. 70, thirteen years later. An exception to this self-imposed hiatus, however, was his charming **Trio, Op. 11**, written in 1797.

The *Op. 11 Trio's* nickname, "*Gassenhauer*," refers to the theme of the third movement's nine variations. The tune is called "*Pria ch'io l'impegno... prenda per vuo merenda*" ("Before we work...I must eat"), and was taken from the then-popular comedic drama *L'amor marina-ro ossia Il corsaro* by Joseph Weigl. The melody was so popular that music lovers could be heard to hum it in many of Vienna's public lanes ("Gassen" in German). The term "*Gassenhauer*" translates roughly to mean "hit," or success.

Beethoven biographer William Kinderman notes that the Op. 11 Trio is "bound up with Beethoven's colorful competitive encounter with the flamboyant virtuoso pianist Daniel Steibelt." After an evening performance of the Trio, Steibelt baited Beethoven's legendary temper by improvising his own variations on Weigl's popular theme. Beethoven reacted with fury: he snatched up Steibelt's score, set it upside down

on the piano, and pounded the music out on the keyboard with one finger. It was the start of a lifelong rivalry between the two men.

The Op. 11 Trio was originally scored for clarinet, cello, and piano, but was also published in a transcription featuring the violin as the treble instrument. The version on this recording is based on Beethoven's violin transcription.

OCTAVIO VAZQUEZ (b. 1972)
Triptych for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano

Octavio Vazquez was born in Spain in 1972. He has received commissions from the Verdehr Trio, New York State Council on the Arts, Galicia Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Galicia Symphony Orchestra, Meet the Composer, Guernica Project, and Chi-Mei Foundation, among others. International composition prizes include the Prokofiev Award (Russia), the Andres Gaos Prize (Spain), and the Plathner's Eleven Competition (Germany). He currently lives and works in New York. About his piece **Triptych**, Vazquez writes:

"The idea to write this piece first came about over dinner with members of the Poulenc Trio in May 2012. I was looking forward to collaborating with such a wonderful ensemble, and to trying my hand at this relatively unusual combination.

The resulting trio is structured in three movements. After a few introductory measures, the first movement proceeds with unremitting rhythmic propulsion. A middle section in a

slower meter becomes eventually superimposed with the main theme, and out of the resulting ambiguity the movement briefly acquires a light-hearted, almost epic quality, before darkening back to its original mood.

The central Adagio opens with a meditative chaconne-like section that evolves into a series of variations, while maintaining an overall fugual quality. Through a series of contrasting episodes, ranging from thorny to airy, the theme reaches ever-increasing lightness, only to return to a somber, if more active, closing state.

The third movement is a sharp, spirited Scherzo, filled with contrapuntal games, that culminates in a reappearance of the themes of the first and second movements, superimposed, and then drives on to a brisk and whimsical finale.

Behind its at times glossy mask, the underlying idea of the piece is that of incipient recovery from emotional numbness and detachment, a tentative and unsteady return of the prickly sensations of life."

– Bryan Young

POEMS BY LIA PURPURA

First Leaf *

That yellow was a falling off, a fall for once I saw coming—it could in its stillness still be turned from, it was not yet ferocious, its hold drew me, was a shiny switch-plate in the otherwise dark, rash, ongoing green, a green so hun-

gry for light and air that part gave up, went alone, chose to leave, and by choosing embellishment got seen.

Story

Every morning four or five small birds chase a hawk from a stand of pines— another drama in my west facing window like sunset, dependable, but fast with sharp turns, diving and sparring, one party or the other not getting the point so it has to keep happening: one's an intruder, hungry, insistent, there's threat and defense, there's persistence, desire I greet, expect now, welcome in.

Old World

Teach that its objects have dispositions, (visages, comports) and belong to a time, (an era, an epoch), so it's clear how things worked: people sat down and made things to last, for you who were real to them even before you were born.

Creation

I want to get a feeling right, not sensation, clip art, cut and spliced brief samplings of Michelangelo, but exactly the whitish blue space between God's finger and Adam's, the not-yet created in that gap, the moment held, so the world becoming cannot be made to refer to anything else.

Sunday

Signs come. For what I don't know. To be one in a vastness without meaning, except for making something of it, except for it being a conversation I'm not holding alone.

**"First Leaf" was first published in The New Yorker. "First Leaf", "Story", "Creation", "Old World", "Sunday", from IT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN BEAUTIFUL by Lia Purpura, copyright © 2015 by Lia Purpura. Used by permission of Penguin Books, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. In the United Kingdom and British Commonwealth (except Canada). Poems used by permission of Frances Goldin Literary Agency, Inc.*

THE POULENC TRIO

Since its founding in 2003, the **Poulenc Trio** has performed in more than 45 states in the U.S. 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.

In a recent review, *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." A recent performance in Florida – for which 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 had "captured the magic of chamber music" – is regularly rebroadcast on American Public Media's "Performance Today," the nationally syndicated radio program.

The Trio has also garnered positive attention in full-length profiles by *Chamber Music* magazine, and by the *Double Reed Journal*. The group has been called "virtuosos of classical and contemporary chamber music" in one profile for Russian television.

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 25 new works written for and premiered by the group, including three triple concertos for trio and full orchestra.

The Trio is deeply engaged in musical and educational outreach programs and regularly conducts master classes, with recent engagements at New York University, Tulane University, the University of Ohio, San Francisco State University, Florida State University, and the University of Colima in Mexico.

www.poulenctrio.org

LIA PURPURA

Lia Purpura is the author of seven collections of essays, poems, and translations, most recently, *It Shouldn't Have Been Beautiful* (poems), *Rough Likeness* (essays) and *King Baby* (poems). Her honors include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist (for *On Looking*, essays), National Endowment for the Arts and Fulbright Fellowships, three Pushcart prizes, the Associated Writing Programs Award in Nonfiction, and the Beatrice Hawley, and Ohio State University Press awards in poetry. Recent work appears in *Agni*, *Field*, *The Georgia Review*, *Orion*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Best American Essays*, and elsewhere. She is Writer in Residence at The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, a member of the core faculty at the Rainier Writing Workshop, and teaches in graduate programs throughout the country. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

www.liapurpura.com



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