**Poulenc Trio Repertoire, 2023-24 and 2024-25**

Beethoven - Trio in B-flat major, Op. 11 (Gassenhauer)

\*Viet Cuong - *Trains of Thought* (2012)

\*Viet Cuong - *Explain Yourself!* (2019)

Duke Ellington - *In a Sentimental Mood;* *The Mooch / Black and Tan Fantasy*

Fauré - *Pavane*, op.50

Françaix - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Glinka - Trio Pathétique in D minor

Handel - Trio Sonata in F-major

\*Jakov Jakoulov - Yiddish Lexicon (2011)

\*James Lee III - Principal Brothers No.4 (2020)

Piazzolla - *Otoño Porteño* & *Primavera Porteña* (from The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires)

Piazzolla - *Oblivion*

Poulenc - Three Songs: *Les Chemins d'amour*, *C* and *Toréador* (arr. for oboe, bassoon and piano)

Poulenc - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Poulenc - Sonata for Oboe and Piano

Previn - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Rossini - Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *l’Italiana in Algeri*

Rossini - Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide*

Schnittke - Suite in the Old Style

Shostakovich - *Romance* and *A Spin Through Moscow*

Saint-Saëns - Sonata for Bassoon and Piano

William Grant Still - *Vignettes*

\*Juri Seo - *Mélodie de Poulenc* (2021)

\*Octavio Vázquez - *Triptych*

*\*Commissioned by and/or written for the Poulenc Trio. Please see program notes below.*

**Sample programs** (other combinations of works are possible):

1.

Françaix - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Poulenc - Selected Songs (arr. for oboe, bassoon and piano)

Viet Cuong - *Explain Yourself!*

Intermission

André Previn - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano

Duke Ellington - *In a Sentimental Mood; The Mooch / Black and Tan Fantasy*

Rossini - Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide*

2.

Poulenc - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Poulenc - Sonata for Oboe and Piano

Viet Cuong - *Explain Yourself!*

Intermission

Poulenc - Selected songs with Shawnette Sulker, guest soprano

William Grant Still - Vignettes

Rossini - Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide*

3.

Jean Françaix - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Fauré - *Pavane*

Viet Cuong - *Explain Yourself!*

Intermission

Juri Seo - *Mélodie de Poulenc*

Poulenc - Selected Songs (arr. for oboe, bassoon and piano)

Rossini - Fantaisie Concertante on themes from *Semiramide*

4.

Glinka - Trio Pathétique in D minor

Schnittke - Suite in the Old Style

Shostakovich - *Romance* and *A Spin Through Moscow*

Intermission

Poulenc - Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon

Previn - Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano

**Program notes for the new and commissioned pieces, with composer websites:**

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

https://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 Alex Vvedensky 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.

**Jakov Jakoulov** (b. 1958) **- *Yiddish Lexicon***(2010)

https://jjakoulov.wixsite.com/jakov-jakoulov

The composer writes:

"This piece is structured in the same way as a lexicon would be designed. It is a collection of short movements, the musical equivalent of dictionary entries which give brief definitions of a specific words or expressions. To the religious Jewish mind, ordinary life is a logical and organic continuation of biblical history. Metaphysics blends with physicality, the divine with earthly routine, the fairy-tale with the day-to-day. That's why “Job's lament” peacefully shares the pages of this score with that of the the scapegoat, and Jacob observes the angels with the same adoration as a yeshiva boy a blond girl. I tried to bring to this piece a dose of good humor and I hope that despite the rather sophisticated music language, the images are eloquent enough. A short list of definitions will help to understand and enjoy my work."

**James Lee III** (b.1975) **- *Principal Brothers No.4*** (2020) Dedicated to Bryan Young of the Poulenc Trio

www.jameslee3music.com

Lee has recently dedicated a new set of solo pieces called "Principal Brothers" to four Black principal wind players around the country—the McGill brothers, Anthony and Demarre; Titus Underwood, the new principal oboe in Nashville; and Bryan Young of the Poulenc Trio. Lee described the piece as "my gift to you during these challenging times." The bassoon piece is charming, in three movements, about 5 minutes total.

**Juri Seo** (b.1981) **- *Mélodie de Poulenc***  (2021)

www.juriseomusic.com

The composer writes:

"There’s much to love about Poulenc’s Trio. The shockingly bare opening sonority is immediately contradicted by a harsh dissonance. The form is elusive, with the motives moving from one section to another, from *pathos* to *bathos*, in lively virtuosity. One of my favorite moments, somewhere in the middle of the first movement, is when the oboe introduces a lyrical theme in A minor, lushly harmonized by the piano. The theme is unusually sincere, but its journey is short-lived. Poulenc is aware of the theme’s affective potential, marking *très tendre, très chanté,* and *très expressif* at each turn of the phrase. My *Mélodie de Poulenc* is built almost entirely on this theme. The theme is fragmented and altered; it blossoms contrapuntally and is incessantly re-harmonized, never appearing the same way twice. The music’s allusion to Poulenc is both relentless and futile, like an earworm of a song one can’t remember. My decision to work primarily with melodic materials comes from a conversation I had with the members of the Poulenc Trio early in the process. While I admired their agility and playfulness, the members expressed a yearning for long tones and melodies (which have become somewhat scarce in contemporary music). It seemed apt to merge our love for lyricism while sending a nod to the eponymous composer."

**Octavio Vázquez** (b.1972) **- *Triptych*** *(2012)*

www.octaviov.com

The composer writes:

"The piece 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 fugal quality. The theme reaches ever-increasing lightness, only to return to a somber, if more active, 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 an exciting and whimsical ending.

This piece was written closely following a time of personal loss and bewilderment at the paradoxes of life. The suffering brought on by both memories and hypothetical future scenarios was a powerful motivator to stay as focused as possible on the present moment. In that sense, this piece is, within my catalog, one of the closest to the idea of "pure music," as it has little connection to any extra-musical images or stories. There is something of a progression from darkness to light, with its ups and downs and varying moods, so characteristic of western concert music. There is also a pulsating energy that for me seems to emerge with the acceptance of life events, and with remaining in the moment."

The American Record Guide wrote: "*Triptych* by Spanish composer Octavio Vazquez is a fine work and the strongest performance on the program. His music is fresh and original, with some echoes of Shostakovich and Poulenc."

*Triptych* was commissioned by the Poulenc Trio for its premiere as part of the 2013 New York Festival of Now, a leading contemporary arts festival.

**Pieces with guest artists:**

**With guest clarinetist (Alexander Fiterstein, David Shifrin, et. al.):**

\*Viet Cuong - Explain Yourself! (please note: there are versions of this piece both with and without clarinet)

Mendelssohn - Konzertstück No. 2 in D minor for clarinet, bassoon and piano, op.114

Mozart - Divertimento No.4 in B-flat major, K.439b

Poulenc - Sonata for Clarinet & Bassoon

**With guest violinist Anton Lande** (the son of the trio's pianist Irina Kaplan Lande):

George Gershwin - Suite from Porgy and Bess

Duke Ellington - Black and Tan Fantasy; In a Sentimental Mood

Paquito D’Rivera - Afro-Cuban Suite

Piazzolla - Chau Paris

**With guest soprano Shawnette Sulker** (www.shawnettesulker.com)

Poulenc - Selected songs