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# THE OBOE MUSIC OF BACH, MOZART, FRANCAIX AND POULENC IN RECITAL

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THE OBOE MUSIC OF BACH, MOZART, POULENC AND FRANCAIX IN RECITAL

by

GREGORY A. TOMLINSON

B.A., Westmont College, 2011

A Research Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Masters of Music

Department of Music  
in the Graduate School  
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

THE OBOE MUSIC OF BACH, MOZART, POULENC AND FRANCAIX IN RECITAL

By

Gregory Alan Tomlinson

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Masters of Performance

in the field of Music

Approved by:

Professor Edward Benyas, Chair

Dr. Douglas Worthen

Dr. Eric Mandat

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

April 11, 2014

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Gregory A Tomlinson, for the Masters of Performance degree in Music, presented on April 4, 2014, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: THE MUSIC OF BACH, MOZART, POULENC AND FRANCAIX IN RECITAL

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Professor Edward Benyas

The following program notes are written on the occasion of my Master's of Music recital. The recital split in two halves separated by an intermission. The first half opens with J. S. Bach's "Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not", from Cantata No. 21, BWV 21. The second piece is Mozart's *Concerto in C major for Oboe and Orchestra*, KV 314 (285<sup>d</sup>). This first half is designated as standards of Oboe repertoire before 1800. Following the intermission is two pieces from my favorite period—early twentieth century French. The first piece is *L'Horloge de Flore: pour hautbois solo et orchestra*. This seven movement piece by Jean Francaix provided the ultimate challenge for both performance as well as research; for it's quickly changing moods as well as the limited sources existing in the United States. The final piece of the program is the standard *Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon* by Francis Poulenc. Representing the double reed instruments as a family, the blending of voices is a fitting close for the program, and represents the culmination of the oboe as an instrument fitting for chamber music.

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## CHAPTER 1

## SEUFZER, TRÄNEN, KUMMER, NOT

Johann Sebastian Bach is the most prominent figure in the Baroque period, and much of the information we have gathered on his life comes from his son, Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach. A musician by trade, J.S. Bach was an exemplary Organist before becoming the composer we read about today. His birth is carefully recorded in the records of Eisenach, where Bach was born in March of 1685. His father was a respectable church organist, and much of his family and extended family was musical, which constantly surrounded Johann with music. While his parents had many children, only five survived past infancy—three brothers and a sister to Johann. Of these siblings, his oldest brother, Christoph, is the only significant musical influence on his life.<sup>1</sup>

The reformation was long over, but had particularly lasting effects in Germany, homeland to Martin Luther. One of these effects is that the school system was integrated with and oriented around the church. In 1690, Johann Sebastian began school as was customary of the time. The school year was centered around the celebration of Easter in the church, and while we have no entrance records of Bach's actual beginnings, we are able to follow him through the records kept about the end of each school rotation. Looking at these records, we are able to follow Bach's education and how he progressed. At the end of each year, Bach's position in the class was recorded, as well as his attendance record; and despite his penchant for missing half days throughout the school year, Bach nevertheless stayed an admirable student, if not top of his class. The Lutheran school and his participation in the church gave Bach an

intimate knowledge of the church calendar and other church musical practices (such as participating in the church boys choir).<sup>2</sup>

The years 1694 and 1695 were the major turning point in Bach's education. First his mother passed away, and shortly after his father remarried a few months later, he died as well. Both parents dead, Bach's new step-mother was unable to maintain the household, and the family was split up. Bach and one of his other brothers were then sent to live with the eldest, Christoph, who was the church organist in Ohrdruf. Christoph Bach had studied under the famous Pachelbel, but was recognized as little more than a good local musician. Being an organist, Christoph is the first "teacher" of Johann, giving him an elementary education on how to play the instrument. But Christoph had little in the way of skill for composition, and it was his collection of works by Pachelbel and other composers that provided Johann's most valuable education. His entire life, Bach is commended for his dedication in copying parts—an exercise that is recognized as giving him most valuable insight into the forms and genres he writes, particularly the fugue. While living with his brother, repairs were being made to the church organ by Christoph. Whether his brother allowed him to participate in the reconstruction of the Ohrdruf instrument is unknown, however this would be Johann's earliest exposure to the trade that would later help pay the bills.<sup>3</sup>

In 1700, Johann left his brother's household and began education in another curriculum, one more associated to music. In the town of Lüneburg, we know that

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<sup>1</sup> Grove Music Online, S.v. "Bach, §III: (7) Johann Sebastian Bach," by Christoph Wolff and Walter Emery. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed April 1, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Johann sang more, but is also exposed to the work of J.B. Held, a local organ repairman, and to Georg Böhm—his father’s teacher. This was a critical association for the young Johann, as Böhm not only furthered his education at the keys, but also recommended events and the performances of other organists for Johann to attend. Hamburg, nearly 50Km away, was a popular venue for such performances, and Johann spent much of his time traveling there and spending what money he earned to attend what he could. 1702 begins our accelerated period for Johann’s life, as he begins his search for a position of his own to hold. While competing for several different positions, winning some or being turned down for others, the position he finally wins and is most relevant to us is his position in Weimar.<sup>4</sup>

His post in Weimar was where Johann composed most of his Organ music. The post only contracted him to compose one cantata per month<sup>5</sup>, and BWV 21 is one of these cantatas that we have recovered. It isn’t until 1723 that Johann finally moved to his main post in Leipzig, where his main output became the Cantata; and his overall most productive period. It is his post in Weimar, however that produces BWV 21.<sup>6</sup>

BWV 21, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss in meinem Herzen* is translated as “I had a great affliction in my heart”. Written in 1713, in Weimar, the cantata wasn’t performed

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Emmanuel Music, “Bach Cantata Notes: BWV 21”, Craig Smith. [www.emmanuelmusic.org](http://www.emmanuelmusic.org), (accessed Apr. 1, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Wolff, Christoph and Walter Emery.

until June 17, 1714, the third Sunday following the Trinity.<sup>7</sup> The work was written for any occasion, and is also considered one of, if not the, turning points in Cantata writing where Johann Sebastian mastered the genre. It utilizes one of the largest orchestras for the Cantata that Bach used at all, and is rather grand all around. It consists of two parts—pieces 1-6, then 7-11.<sup>8</sup> The reason for the split is a point of contention, some saying that the second part was composed much later for a performance in Leipzig in 1723,<sup>9</sup> while others suggesting that it was composed all at once (still undergoing many edits later) with the express intention of being separated by a sermon.<sup>10</sup>

The specific Aria in the program is the third song from the Cantata, “Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not”, for soprano, oboe and continuo. Like most of the first half of the cantata, this particular aria is dark and sorrowful—much like the imagery provided by the simple text: “Sighs, tears, worry, need, Anxious longing, fear and death”.<sup>11</sup> This particular segment is the bookend of the aria, with a middle section that elaborates briefly on the burden that is on the heart of the Soprano. We have to note that this piece is particularly unusual because the role of the burdened character is given to the

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<sup>7</sup> Bach Cantatas Website, “Cantata BWV 21: Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss”. <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/BWV21.htm> (accessed April 1, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Alec Robertson, *The Church Cantatas of J.S. Bach*. Cassell, London: Cassell & Company LTD, (1972).

<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel Music, “Bach Cantata Notes: BWV 21”, Michael Beattie. [www.emmanuelmusic.org](http://www.emmanuelmusic.org), (accessed Apr. 1, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> W. Murray Young, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach: An Analytical Guide*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, (1989).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

soprano, a traditionally much more uplifted role.<sup>12</sup> In rehearsing the piece, the vocalist and the oboist are presented with the unique challenge of trying to blend timbres.<sup>13</sup> It is the goal of each to sound like the other, and fortunately for the oboe, the voice is an easy enough timbre to match. However, the oboe has to be able to communicate the same sorrow without words that the soprano is able to express by default for having the text. The soprano's difficulty then is to manage the leaps and phrasing in such a way as to not sound labored, but to actually communicate a dark depth where the text is wallowing in sorrow. Referring back to the Baroque period in general, this mood discrepancy makes it an awkward turn for the soprano, who would normally be expressing much brighter and happier tones. In interpreting the piece, the soprano and I came together to read the text out loud, and create a story for the singer—why she was repeating, how the structure might be interpreted emotionally. Assigning it an ABA form, rough ideas of tempos were similarly designated according to this story. We gave the first A a slower and sorrowful tempo, as indicative of the aria's purpose. In section B, we moved the tempo to communicate more frantic desperation, so as not to sink into the sorrowful and low section that would resume at the repeat of A, back at the original tempo. By saying "tempo", it does not mean that there is a significant change. Instead, it is the direction and momentum that is important, stretching from a motif-by-motif movement that defines the A sections, to a larger over-arching phrase tying the B

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Hochreither, *Performance Practice of the Instrumental-Vocal Works of Johann Sebastian Bach*. United States of America: Scarecrow Press, Inc, (2002), 148-150.

section into one conjunct movement; much like walking across a room as opposed to thinking of individual steps.

Another problem encountered involved the vocalist's part. Several times in the A sections, there are moments that the Soprano part is written as resolving to the next note a full eighth value before the oboe, which is suspending the pitch before resolving. In later works, Bach leaves this practice and holds the suspensions in the vocal line with the instrumental line. To compromise with the original part, where the soprano moves before the instrumentalist, and with Bach's later practice, we changed the soprano part (measures 9, 10 and 19) to hold the first pitch, moving to the resolution just barely anticipating oboe's resolution. The values then stopped being consecutive eighth notes to being a dotted eighth-sixteenth to the resolution of an eighth note.

Bach's Cantatas are perhaps the most common of the genre, and working with vocalists is a staple for oboists in Baroque music. This particular aria creates a challenge for the instrumentalist not only in trying to match and balance the soprano, but also in the amount of energy the slow pace demands, for the oboist to stay in tune and as a partner to the soprano, not as simply a soloist by itself.

## CHAPTER 2

## CONCERTO IN C MAJOR FOR OBOE AND ORCHESTRA

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is perhaps the most universally known composer, and in the United States is the poster child for all music “classical”—by which I mean more than the period of music itself. Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756, and that is where he spent the early part of his career, before moving to Vienna where he eventually died in 1791; at the young age of 35 years. His father was Leopold Mozart, and Wolfgang was the younger of the two surviving children to the Mozart family. Mozart’s musical talent was quickly identified, but in his early life we have very little information on his education—It has been assumed then, that his father taught him everything that he felt Mozart needed to know, as a performer and composer, as well as all the other subjects that would be necessary for a cultured child growing up in the Salzburg court. As a composer for the court, Leopold had a great amount of freedom, and traveled extensively with his two children. Much of Mozart’s childhood, while formative in the exposure it provided for him, can be boiled down to a long list of places he traveled and people he met. His father was a strict tour manager, but at the same time rarely planned a trip out before taking it—and yet would still find detours to keep his family occupied for expansive time frames (almost two years at a given tour including England). With all this traveling, Mozart didn’t have the time to form a communal family back in Salzburg, but seems to have picked up much of his father’s stiff and inflexible personality traits—traits that would prove to cause him trouble the rest of his life. By 1771, the Mozarts were more firmly established back in Salzburg, and it is there that we have accounts of Wolfgang providing just as much in output as his

father was, although it seems that his father was still taking a lead role in their careers. With the death of Archbishop Schrattenbach (a supporter of music), the successor began to crack down on the music that the court and church of Salzburg were willing to put up with. These restrictions began to chafe on the Mozart family, but particularly for Mozart, who looked for work elsewhere. Allusions found in his letters to family indicate that he was offered posts in various places, but he didn't take anything that would settle him into a specific post. Instead he wrote for the post in Salzburg, and quite prolifically, touching virtually every genre of the time. Still taking time to travel, in 1774 Mozart checked out of court life, and his output shows little of the Mozart creative spark. 1777, Mozart petitioned to be released from his contract, and both he and his father were abruptly dismissed.<sup>14</sup>

This dismissal probably barely affected the young Mozart's enthusiasm, as he confidently set out with his mother to find a well-paid position. However, perhaps the way he presented himself, Mozart's many petitions were politely refused, despite his obvious skill. On his journey to find employment (accompanied by his mother), Mozart still composed, probably often selling these compositions to make his way financially. Eventually he made his way to Paris, where he was unhappy and distasteful of all things French. While he claimed to have been offered positions there, he rejected them all. He still composed, but there are several accounts where his commissions went

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<sup>14</sup> Grove Music Online, S.v. "Mozart: (3) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart", Cliff Eisen and Stanley Sadie.

unpaid, and Mozart fell progressively deeper into poverty. His mother who had been accompanying him all this time fell ill, and died in 1778.<sup>15</sup>

The death of his mother caused a rift between father and son, and Wolfgang began to take matters of seeking employment into his own hands, ignoring his father's express orders, and headed back to Mannheim. There were no opportunities for advancement there, however, and in 1779 Mozart returned to Salzburg with the intention of petitioning (and undoubtedly the confidence of being offered) the position of court organist. He was offered and accepted the position, but after a short period of time, his enthusiasm seemed to lag. His employer, Archbishop Colloredo was displeased with many of his later works, and shortly after, Mozart's request to be discharged was accepted. He then resumed his traveling, composing as well as looking for a suitable post that would accept him. Eventually he ended up reconnecting with friends from Mannheim, the Webers, who has since moved to Vienna. This begins Mozart's conquest of Vienna, as through composition and performance, he soon established himself as the supreme keyboard player in Vienna. Mozart's life from here on out is much the same as it had been—he ends up marrying a member of the Weber family, and continues to tour about. The rift with his father never completely healed, and his move to Vienna and the traveling he did the rest of his life never landed him a position that he was both satisfied with, and that his employers were satisfied with him.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

The *Concerto in C major for Oboe and Orchestra, Kv 314(285<sup>d</sup>)* is part of Mozart's output while he was still holding the post in Salzburg. In 1777, he completed the part for the Salzburg principal oboist, Giuseppe Ferlendis. However, on one of his visits back to Mannheim, Mozart became friends with the principal oboist there, Friedrich Ramm, and ecstatically gifted him the concerto. That same season, Ramm performed the concerto 5 times to the great pleasure of Mozart. The movements follow the standard form for a concerto with three movements in a fast-slow-fast progression.<sup>17</sup> This concerto was under much scrutiny for quite some time as the Flute Concerto in D-Major was recovered earlier, and considered to be an original. However, further research showed that it was a transcription of the original that Mozart made in an attempt to meet a deadline—this practice is something that Mozart did time and time again, trying to pass off a previous work as “new”.<sup>18</sup>

The first movement is in standard Sonata form, containing an exposition, development and recapitulation. Specifically this is a “Double Exposition Sonata Form”, with the ensemble initially presenting a different theme than the soloist—one that the oboe never actually plays.<sup>19</sup> The movement is balanced by the ritornello in the violins playing the original exposition, and the oboe who dances around with his own thematic material.<sup>20</sup> That the oboe never lands on this original theme has given some scholars

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<sup>17</sup> Neal Zaslaw and William Cowdery, *The complete Mozart*, New York and London, W W Norton & Company (1990).p150.

<sup>18</sup> Herman Abert. *W. A. Mozart*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press(2007), p422.

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Worthen, “Ornamentation in Mozart’s Flute Concerto in D Major K.314” (2010). *Faculty Charts*. Paper 14. [http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/safmusiccharts\\_faculty/14](http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/safmusiccharts_faculty/14)

<sup>20</sup> Zaslaw, Cowdery, p.150



the idea that it has “misfired”, or otherwise forgotten to play the theme. Audiences of his time were familiar with the concerto and Sonata forms and would expect this theme to be presented in the oboe.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the oboe instead chooses a sweet and joyous theme befitting the instrument’s innate qualities, defying audience expectation.

Movement two is a great example of the oboe’s innate qualities. Often the oboe is an instrument given the distinction as being closest to the human voice—and while other instrument families may take issue, Mozart devotes this second movement to the qualities that he put in his opera arias.<sup>22</sup> The accompaniment is much more sparse in this movement, and the spotlight rarely leaves the oboe solo after the initial introduction. While the first movement has a very instrumental quality in how the virtuosic passages are set, the virtuosity of the Adagio is in the expansive ornamentation given to the oboe line.<sup>23</sup> There are also a few moments where the soloist is given either a break, or the opportunity to perform a cadenza. The part is marked for a Cadenza in measure 85, but the fermata in measure 72 also allows for brief ornament leading in to the final section of the aria. When approaching this movement, it is almost as if one has to tell a story, giving a mood to each of the phrases. Though there are no actual words for the movement, the part nevertheless should be approached as though a vocalist, not an instrument, is performing.

The final movement is a quickly paced, though not actually fast, rondo. As opposed to the first two movements, where the ensemble led off with an introduction,

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<sup>21</sup> Worthen, p.3

<sup>22</sup> Phillip Huscher, “Oboe Concerto in C Major K. 314”, Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

the oboe now has taken the wheel and leads the melodic material for the duration of the movement. The repeating rondo theme is later used in an aria in Mozart's opera, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, K. 384. Mozart worked on this opera in 1782, hoping that it would be performed for the Grand Duke of Russia.<sup>24</sup> Sung by the character Blonde, the aria "Welche Wonne, welche Lust" is an aria that is sung with "bliss and delight". The concerto came roughly 4 years before Mozart received the libretto from Gottlieb Stephanie in 1781—the libretto was actually written by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, and had been written some time before this.<sup>25</sup> Unsurprisingly, the oboe part is much more heavily ornamented and not evocative of any text, except that of joy.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Herman Abert, *W. A. Mozart*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2007), p. 402.

<sup>24</sup> Zaslav, Cowdery, pp. 54-55.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> Huscher, p. 2.

## CHAPTER 3

### L'HORLOGE DE FLORE

Jean Francaix was born May 23, 1912. His immediate family was rather musical: his mother was a vocalist that performed as well as taught, and his father was a composer, pianist, musicologist and the director of the Le Mans Conservatoire. So from an early age, he received instruction in piano from his father, and was exposed to the leading composer of France, Maurice Ravel. In fact, after meeting Francaix, Ravel stated that “Among the child’s gifts I observe above all the most fruitful an artist can possess, that of curiosity...”<sup>27</sup> Whether these early lessons included composition remains unclear, but by 1922, his parents had sent his first composition to a publisher. That publisher became interested, and directed Francaix to Nadia Boulanger, the most prominent composition teacher in Europe, and really the world. Boulanger quickly took over the young composer’s education, and became an enthusiastic supporter of his works, often being the pianist to premier and perform much of his output. Soon after he began his studies with Boulanger, Francaix entered the Paris Conservatoire, studying under pianist and composer Isidore Philipp. Finally in 1930, Francaix won the premier prix in piano performance, and graduated from the conservatoire.<sup>28</sup>

A musician from the outset, it was understandable how Francaix grew up entrenched in music. The early twentieth century was also the leading time for French composers; Les Six was in it’s prime, Ravel internationally recognized as France’s lead composer, and Debussy was still fresh in the memories of the world. With all these

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<sup>27</sup> Grove Music Online, S.v. “Francaix, Jean,” by Muriel Bellier. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed April 1, 2014)

influences around him (including Boulanger), Francaix quickly developed a very strong personal voice, one that was not always appreciated. In 1932 he had a few works performed, but they were rejected as “too labored”. However, in the same setting (a music festival), his piano concertante was performed along with a few chamber pieces where Francaix began to get some acclaim. The words “graceful” and “natural” began to be applied to his music, and his curiosity shone through. His voice rarely changed from these early days, as he was always toying around with the chamber “voice”, and it is his chamber works that are most performed today. However, while chamber music is certainly his greatest acclaim, he is very prolific in his output, and toyed around with the older genre types.<sup>29</sup>

One of the exercises that Francaix constantly engaged in was the practice of orchestrating and transcribing his own pieces, and the works of other composers. Francis Poulenc, for example, even requested that Francaix orchestrate his own *L’histoire de Babar*. While this gave him a wide experience with many different musical voices, it didn’t drastically affect his personal voice. He had developed so early on in his compositional career, and most of his experimentation was not in the trending styles that were picking up. Francaix considered atonality an impasse, and was proud of his distinct alliance to tonality as a neoclassic composer. His voice is characteristic of many characters that engage in “animated conversation in the form of brief phrases...

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

different characters and great rhythmic variety”.<sup>30</sup> This quote perfectly sums up the idea of *L’Horloge de Flore*, his piece for oboe and Orchestra.

Finished in 1959, this piece for oboe solo and orchestra was commissioned by one of the oboe patriarchs, United States performer John de Lancie<sup>31</sup>. The subject of *L’Horloge de Flore* (The Flower Clock) comes not from a French source, but actually from *Philosophia Botanica*, written by Swedish Botanist Carl Linnaeus in 1751. This text divided flowering plants into two types—those that flowered according to constantly changing factors (such as weather and light intensity) and those that bloomed strictly to a pre-defined pattern. This strict pattern is the time of day, and in accordance with this theory, Linnaeus created a list of plants that would bloom at specific hours of the day. While his theory holds some measure of credence, it has been since discounted as too dependent on specific latitude and longitude coordinates for a comprehensive list to be made.<sup>32</sup> It is this particular theory that Francaix appeals in the subject of *L’Horloge de Flore*, although why he chose the subject is unclear, or how he narrowed down Linnaeus’ list to the 7 flowers he ended up depicting. While it was probable that Francaix just chose flowers he was familiar with and liked, the only thing we can

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Grove Music Online, S.v. “Lancie, John de,” by Georges Burgess. <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed April 1, 2014)

<sup>32</sup> Brian G. Gardiner, “4. Linnaeus’ Floral Clock”, *The Linnean*, vol 3 (2007)

assume was that the general subject of Linneaus' flower clock appealed to Francaix's whimsical nature and penchant to enjoy antiquated tidbits in history and science.<sup>33</sup>

When looking at *L'Horloge de Flore*, the distinction is made here that this is a piece for oboe and *orchestra*; not specifically an oboe concerto, as one might expect. And while it really feels like an oboe concerto, several elements that are normally present in the concerto genre are missing: an ad libitum cadenza, long virtuosic melismas, and a striking and adamant independence from the ensemble. *L'Horloge de Flore*, by contrast, has only a few moments of cadenza-like freedom, such as the beginning and end of the second movement, but even those are performed almost within strict time. It doesn't make sense to take much liberty in the passages here as the momentum begs to be driven into the following material. Also, regarding Francaix having a voice of many "characters and rhythmic variety", we are drawn to another aspect of the piece that is considerably less "concerto-like": the degree of ensemble involvement. While the oboe is the focus, other wind players are routinely brought to the foreground, often competing for measures to be the soloist.

In order to grasp this piece more deeply, I used a sort of analysis system akin to charts developed for semiotic analysis. This is a surface glimpse of the thematic material that each movement contains, and is charted in sequence. One of Francaix's compositional standards is the realization of "principles of repetition and variation".<sup>34</sup> Each movement has one or two themes that is developed continually; in some cases

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<sup>33</sup> Grove Music Online, S.v. "Francaix, Jean," by Arthur Hoérée and Richard Langham Smith.

<http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed April 1, 2014)

never changing enough from the base theme to be assigned any other designation. As such, for each repetition, I assign the theme the same letter with a new superscript, even if the material virtually does not change. Also while I separate each of the flowers out into a separate movement, the piece as a whole is written as movements with direct attacas, and probably should not be taken out of the context—none of these “movements” are actually meant to be played alone, despite the thematic material being independent from the other movements. Each movement also being assigned a time of day is like each hour bleeding into the next. While identifying the various thematic indicators, I also chose to include a subscript indicator for who was playing the theme in any given moment. An “e” indicates the ensemble or solo member thereof, an “s” that it is the soloist. If there is no designation, than either it is a unison passage moment, or the duration of the phrase includes both the soloist and another member of the ensemble trading off. A final note—being a tonal composer and using Key signatures, Francaix does not actually focus on a specific key. Occasionally a Roman numeral analysis proves useful, but in general Francaix seems to focus on a specific pitch class or arpeggio rather than a specific key.

The first movement, “Galant de Jour”(Poisonberry), centers around an F Major Arpeggio. Looking at the motion in the ensemble, we see a very conjunct arch that starts with an F(in the base), then climbs to settle on the A in measure 2. The short leap to the C-natural in the same measure completes the initial “outline” of our F major chord; and with the second arch that completes the introduction, we have the chord peaking off with the E-natural in measure 6, the seventh of the chord. The entire

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<sup>34</sup> Groves, Hoérée and Smith.

movement follows this arch, although changing harmonically with the constant repetition of only two themes—designations A and E, in this. The movement ends with designation G, an extended F major arpeggio in triplets, firmly establishing that we had previously been in F Major. This is one of the few movements of the piece where we can settle into basic pitch and key classes. The key classes are as follows: m.1-18, Tonic; m.19-22, Dominant(diminished); m.23-26, relative minor of d; m.27-32, development section; m.33-42, the Dominant; and finally m.43-46, ending in our tonic class.

Table 3-1; Galant de Jour, 0300 hours

eA <sub>1</sub>	sB <sub>9</sub>					
	sB <sub>13</sub> <sup>1</sup>					
eA <sup>1</sup>	sB <sub>19</sub> <sup>2</sup>					
	eB <sub>23</sub> <sup>3</sup>	C <sub>26</sub>	D <sub>27</sub>			
	B <sub>33</sub> <sup>4</sup>			sE <sub>35-39</sub>		
				eE <sub>36-39</sub> <sup>1</sup>		
				eE <sub>39-41</sub> <sup>2</sup>	sF <sub>40</sub>	sG <sub>43</sub>

The second movement, “Cupidon Bleu”(Blue Catanache), begins with an opening unaccompanied solo for the oboe in the original key of the first movement. This introduction is almost a intermediary cadenza, because the thematic material from it is not present in the rest of the movement; a reason for which I give it it’s own chart, however small. A distinction about this theme is that while we had an F-Major arpeggio in “Galant de Jour”, now we have an ascending open fifths pattern that starts the introductory motive. What this introduction does for the second movement, however, is to establish the immediate change of character that has taken place, as well as to highlight the grace-not motive that is featured in the whole of movement 2. Also, while



we had some ensemble guest appearances in the first movement, here we have the clarinet as a major player, driving us into the main body that is “Cupidon Bleu”. The Clarinet’s momentum is quickly picked up and firmly established by the strings, who are then creating the pulses that aid the 5/4 time of this movement. While the strings are emphasizing beats 1 and 3, we have the bassoon (and perhaps low strings) filling in the empty “space” in a sort of obbligato. When we get to measure 75, we’ll notice the first instance where there are distinct layers of multiple melodies—the soloist and the reiteration by the ensemble of a previous, already stated, theme. Meanwhile, we still have the running bass line providing the same foundation, unperturbed by the two melodic layers wrestling above it. Characters of note in this section are the clarinet and the bassoon, each representing the main layers that exist apart from the soloist; and that on several occasions. By this point in the piece, the prominence of winds should be noted—they are the main music makers apart from the oboe solo. In an ironic role-reversal, the strings become the occasional color tool, while the winds are taking on a full and present role of always speaking. This quicker movement has much less to be grasped as far as key area, but a firm pitch class can be identified; one that fortunately corresponds to the key signature of A-Major. The twist to this is that while there is a great deal of centering on A as the key, we have a rather large section that is equally centered on A-Flat. This A-Flat section is, however, bookended by the primary A-Major sections, making A the official key.

Table 3-2: Cupidon Bleu, introduction

$sA^{47}$	
$sA^{1}_{51}$	$eB_{54}$

Table 3-3: Cupidon Bleu, 0500 hours

$sA_{59}$										
$sA^{1}_{63}$										
$eA^{2}_{67}$										
$sA^{3}_{71}$	$sB_{75}$									
$eA^{4}_{75}$	$eB^{1}_{79}$									
$sA^{5}_{82}$		$eC_{86}$	$sD_{90}$	$sE_{93}$	$sF_{97}$	$sG_{98}$				
$sA^{6}_{100}$										
$eA^{7}_{104-}$ 107										
$sA^{8}_{106-}$ 107							$sH_{108-}$ 111			
$eA^{9}_{108-}$ 111								$sI_{112}$		
$sA^{10}_{11}$ 6									$sJ_{118}$	$sK_{122}$

“Cierge A Grandes Fleurs”(Torch Thistle) the third movement, is perhaps the simplest of the movements as far as melodic material and form go; it is unchanging. Small adjustments are made harmonically, but the overall material stays the same. This movement is quite beautiful, despite it’s lack of variety, but it is so slow that it creates a much bigger problem for the soloist of stamina. In the grand scheme of the piece, if there were a movement that would trip up the performer, it is this movement that would drain the performer sufficiently enough to create problems in the later movements. This movement focuses on the pitch class D.

Table 3-4: Cierge A Grandes Fleurs, 1000 hours

$A_{127}$
$A^1_{131}$
$A^2_{135}$
$A^3_{137}$

“Nyctanthe du Malabar”(Malabar Jasmine) is the fourth and middle movement, and perhaps one of the hardest to put together. The reason for this is that the disjunct motion in the ensemble creates this rhythm that, while is consistently driving eight notes, feels offset. When putting the solo together with the accompaniment, the feel not only makes it difficult to find the big beats, but it also gives the pick-up beat of the melody a much higher chance of being late. This offset feeling is likely diminished when playing with a full orchestra, as different families of string instruments play the same

beats—the first eights not as well as all of beat 3 being the upper strings. Just listening for these big beats will help the performers to all click together. This activity in the strings is the largest part they have yet had to play, whereas in the previous movements the strings were eclipsed by the voice of the winds. Once again, as far as the wind voices are concerned, the clarinet plays a more prominent role as the guest character in “Nyctanthe du Malabar”. There are several half phrases present in this movement that just toy with the original melodies between voices, but the importance of the guest voices is not to be underestimated. The conversation between the oboe and the clarinet is virtually even in importance; but for the duration of the performance, the clarinet is taking whatever melody the oboe offers and changing it progressively more drastically. Like most of the faster movements, a specific key area is hard to identify, but Francaix’s tonality seems compliant enough with the key signature, and we have a lot of G-Major chords. While B, the third of the key, is the most prominent pitch, it is actually pitched to G-Major.

Table 3-5: Nycthanthe du Malabar, 1200 hours

eA <sub>140</sub>	sB <sub>144</sub>	sC <sub>148</sub>			
	sB <sup>1</sup> <sub>152</sub>	sC <sup>1</sup> <sub>156</sub>	eD <sub>160</sub>		
		eC <sup>2</sup> <sub>164</sub>			
	sB <sup>2</sup> <sub>168</sub>				
	sB <sup>3</sup> <sub>172</sub>				
	eB <sup>4</sup> <sub>174</sub>				
	sB <sup>5</sup> <sub>176</sub>			eE <sub>178</sub>	
	sB <sup>6</sup> <sub>180</sub>			eE <sup>1</sup> <sub>184</sub>	sF <sub>187</sub>
		eC <sup>3</sup> <sub>192</sub>			
	sB <sup>7</sup> <sub>196</sub>				
	sB <sup>8</sup> <sub>200</sub>				

The fifth movement, “Belle de Nuit”(Deadly Nightshade), begins with two measures of a sustained B-Natural that has not been charted. This note is sustained from the ending pitch given by the oboe in the fourth movement, and is an unfortunate moment where intonation is transparent; yet it is also a moment of rest for the soloist, where nothing is happening. The rest of the movement is marked by sustained chords in the strings and clarinet; here the clarinet is used to color the strings motion, and is used a little unconventionally like a harp or another instrument where rolled chords is common place. The only guest character to come in is the Flute for one statement of

melodic material in measure 217. The material for “Belle de Nuit” is constantly being interrupted within the phrases, such as the rest that breaks up the B-Natural to C-Sharp from measures 210-211. In addition to the occasional moment of interruption, the articulation marks actually spread past the cadence of the phrase, bleeding the phrasing together for the performer. This movement is the final big test in stamina for the performer, as the Flute’s solo in measure 217 is the only break for the soloist to gear up for the finish of the piece. The changes in each of the designations are deceptive—on one hand they could be indicated as small changes because of how similar each phrase sounds, but on the other hand, some of the changes are complete opposites in contour, or the slight change in how the arch is formed. The final mention should be that while the Harmonic material is very vertical in quarter note valued chords, the melodic line spells out the horizontal movement of the same pitches, creating arches spelling out the chords underneath.

Table 3-6: Belle de Nuit, 1700 hours

eA <sub>206</sub>	sB <sub>209</sub>			
	sB <sup>1</sup> <sub>213</sub>	eD <sub>217</sub>	sE <sub>221</sub>	sF <sub>225</sub>

All the movements up to this point have been introduced with some harmonic or melodic material in the ensemble (whether as a whole or from a guest soloist), before the oboe comes in with the melody that becomes the primary theme. “Geranium Triste” (Mourning Geranium) begins with the primary theme beginning with the ensemble soloists, the flute and the clarinet again. The movement is marked in common time, but

at the tempos indicated, feeling the quarter note pulse actually will pull the melody behind—so the movement should actually be felt to the half note pulse instead. Only this original “A” theme is short and quick in temperament—all the following themes are legato in nature. The written keys are in D and B Major, and while B becomes the ending pitch concentration, there is also a lot of C present throughout the movement. While there isn’t so much that I would explicitly say C is the assigned pitch class, Francaix very likely could have made this movement hover around the intended pitch, which is why he chose two key areas that surround C. His choice to end on B is because the last movement will pick up with the focus on B.

Table 3-7: Geranium Triste, 1900 hours

eA <sub>230</sub>	sB <sub>238</sub>				
sA <sup>1</sup> <sub>246</sub>	sB <sup>1</sup> <sub>250</sub>	sC <sub>257</sub>			
eA <sup>2</sup> <sub>262</sub>					
A <sup>3</sup> <sub>266</sub>					
sA <sup>4</sup> <sub>269</sub>			eD <sub>274</sub>	sE <sub>277</sub>	
	sB <sup>2</sup> <sub>285</sub>				
sA <sup>5</sup> <sub>292</sub>					sF <sub>295</sub>
sA <sup>6</sup> <sub>297</sub>					

“Silène Noctiflore”(Night-Flowering Catchfly) is the final movement of *L’Horloge de Flore*. It also starts with a small introduction by the oboe(not charted) that gives us

the character and tempo of the last movement. Unlike all the other movement to movement sequences, in this case we move from a quick tempo to a fast one—every other time alternating with a slow movement. The themes in this movement are almost entirely legato, with intermittent slurs in the texture. The bass gives us a quarter note pulse for almost the entire piece. Guest characters in the ensemble still surface in this movement, but they have much smaller moments of trade off than they have had in the past sections. It is important to note, however, that it is the ensemble as a whole, without the oboe, that has the last statement of the theme. The whole of the movement is centered around the pitch B, and yet the key signature is C-Major, the same chord the piece ends on.



Table 3-8: Silène Noctiflore, 2100 hours

$eA_{306}$					
$A^1_{308}$	$sB_{314}$				
$sA^2_{318}$					
$eA^3_{322}$					
$sA^4_{326}$					
$eA^5_{330}$					
$A^6_{334}$		$sC_{338}$	$sD_{346}$		
			$sD^1_{350}$		
		$sC^1_{354}$			
$aA^7_{358}$				$sE_{362}$	
	$sB^1_{367}$				
$sA^8_{370}$					
$eA^9_{374}$					
$sA^{10}_{378}$	$B^2_{386}$				$sF_{389}$
$eA^{11}_{395}$					

In analyzing this piece I am obviously less concerned with a specific harmonic progression idea. While using key signatures, this is typical in the twentieth century vein in that it doesn't take long before we've left our key area completely to go to whichever path tickles the fancy of the composer. I do, however, note that Francaix seems to have moments where he would focus on a specific pitch, and for that reason I assign a

specific pitch to every movement, some based on chords I found, or just on a specific pitch that the bass or soloist would continually resolve to (even if not in the key signature). My greater interest is in how Francaix managed to take one theme, and spend almost the entire two minutes of each move just varying that same theme over and over again; or creating brand new “themes” that are similar enough to the original as to almost be the same theme. While looking at the charts, there is almost always a one-sided distribution, focusing on either theme A or theme B. From there, we have some branching out, but it is a skeletal branch just meant for a little breaking up of the mood, and we always return to that original theme. And finally, in the course of his output, Francaix is much more noted for his chamber works; and that is the idea he gives this piece for oboe and orchestra. With liberal use of the Clarinet and Flute in particular, this piece is most definitely following a single character as he perhaps walks around the garden, and sees familiar sights.

## CHAPTER 4

## TRIO FOR PIANO, OBOE &amp; BASSOON

Francis Poulenc was one of the most well known composers of his time. Born in Paris in 1899, Francis was a member of a well to do family. His mother was from artisan stock, and was very artistic herself. His father, however, was more industrial, but rooted in a devote Catholic faith. Poulenc always looked back at these two elements of his heritage as the earliest role to be played in his musical personality—a personality marked by intense emotional and religious subjects, as well as beautifully functional. At the age of 5, Poulenc’s mother began teaching him piano, but he quickly outgrew her ability to instruct him, and she passed him on to another teacher.<sup>35</sup> His mother greatly appreciated his budding musical talents, and encouraged her son to pursue music as his vocation—however, his father, being much more industrial oriented, insisted that Francis first complete his two exit exams from the school system, and then pursue whatever vocational path he wanted. Unfortunately, by the time he had completed the exams, both parents died, and Poulenc entered the close of the war.<sup>36</sup> Before he entered the war, Poulenc began studying with Ricardo Viñes, the famous piano performer and instructor. Viñes became a mentor for the young musician, and helped introduce him to many of the days artists, from every practice. It was during this period (1914-1917) that Poulenc began composing, but he admittedly discarded everything that he wrote. It wasn’t until 1917 that Poulenc allowed one of his pieces to approach

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<sup>35</sup> Groves Music Online, “Poulenc, Francis”, Myriam Chimènes, <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed April 1, 2014).

<sup>36</sup> Francis Poulenc, *My Friends and Myself*, London: Dennis Dodson (1963), pp34-35.

the public, and he continued composing from then on. These early works, and many of the later ones, were programmed in small studio concerts, hosted by such people as artist Emile Lejeune; and it is this setting that Poulenc met the other 5 members of *Les Six*, the most famous community of French composers of the day.<sup>37</sup>

1921 marked Poulenc's approach to start composing "intelligently" as opposed to "instinctively". Composer Charles Koechlin became his teacher until 1924; the break was originally unintentional as Poulenc was not in a position to take lessons, and in correspondence expressed the explicit desire to resume regular lessons. But with his lessons, and after having fulfilled a rather successful commission for the impresario of Ballet Russ, Diaghilev, Poulenc's confidence outgrew his desire for lessons, and he continued to practice on his own. Constantly circulating in society and surrounding himself with many artists and patrons, Poulenc acquired many friends as well as commissions in the periods following his association with Diaghilev.<sup>38</sup>

Poulenc's music never left tonal and modal spheres. Even chromaticism is a tool that he only used in passing. When talking of his own music, Poulenc unabashedly admitted to borrowing material from other composers. His inventiveness was not in harmonic language or rhythmic complexity—instead it was in the power of the melodies he creates.<sup>39</sup> Originally, in 1921, Poulenc had planned to write a piece for oboe and piano that was a *Caprice espagnol*, but he quickly discarded it when it didn't measure

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<sup>37</sup> Chimènes, [www.grovemusic.com](http://www.grovemusic.com)

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Groves Music Online. "Poulenc, Francis", Roger Nichols (accessed April 1, 2014).

up to the standard he wished to achieve for his dedicatee, Manuel de Falla.<sup>40</sup> He picked the piece up again soon enough, this time adding the bassoon to the mix for a piece that was dedicated to de Falla and premiered in a concert featuring Georges Auric and Poulenc in May, 1926.<sup>41</sup> This trio marked a turning point in Poulenc's writing, and is considered the first mature work of chamber music he produced.<sup>42</sup>

The music of Poulenc is described more as “additive”, rather than “developmental”. While his compositions are considered rather traditional<sup>43</sup>, this is one area where he is distinctly different from the traditional forms he is emulating. Instead of developing old melodies, Poulenc uses completely new material, only occasionally heralding back to those older melodies for the sake of form. The first movement, for example, Poulenc has been noted as describing as in a “Haydn-style allegro”—that is sonata-allegro form. However, instead of the normal exposition-development-recapitulation, we have a more skeletal ternary: ABA'.<sup>44</sup> The A section opens up with a slow “recitative-like” introduction where the winds are doing a variation on “Taps”, the military funeral music, and the piano is molding chords anticipating the jazz style of Duke Ellington.<sup>45</sup> The piano's beginning is a firm foreshadowing of the piano's central role, not only to the piece, but in the chamber music Poulenc produces from here on.

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<sup>40</sup> Queensland Symphony Orchestra, “The Soldier's Tale” (accessed April 6, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> George R. Keckm *Francis Poulenc: A Bio-Bibliography*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990.

<sup>42</sup> Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*. Ann Arbor: UMI RESEARCH PRESS (1982), p. 113.

<sup>43</sup> Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel, p. 110.

After the Presto begins, the A section finishes like standard exposition. However, the subsequent development section beginning with r.12, B, can hardly be called such. Instead of working on the older material, Poulenc complete changes the character the piece has held so far, and gives us new material altogether, and an almost cadenza-like moment for each of the instruments in turn. By the time the A' comes back at r.16, Poulenc recycles some of the older material, but only that from the latter half of the first A section.<sup>46</sup> Despite his insistence that the movement is based on a sonata form, it seems more like rounded binary, still altered in that it is the second half of A that shows the repetition.

The second movement is a slow movement, likewise in an ABA' form, and has been labeled as one of Poulenc's "finest lyrical, melancholy creations". This material is later used for Poulenc's piano concertos. The piano once again opens the movement, another statement of it's importance as an equal collaborator. The B section is the longest section in the movement, and marked by "nondescript melodic material" and frequent seventh chords within the diatonic texture. This full bodied section is the first music in his chamber repertoire that is evocative of the mature Poulenc harmonies. The beauty of this movement is in the perfect balance and equality Poulenc gives the elements of music to each of the parts, none of them showing greater importance.<sup>47</sup> The final movement is a Rondo that Poulenc attributed to being similar to Saint-Saëns' second piano concerto. Another example of Poulenc's musical style being additive, the

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<sup>45</sup> Benjamin Ivry, *Francis Poulenc*, London: Phaidon Press Limited (1996).

<sup>46</sup> Daniel, pp. 110-11.

key difference between the two composers is that Saint-Saëns actually develops the material and Poulenc just writes more melodies. In progression, the Poulenc rondo is ABACA||Coda (|| as indicative of a separation, not indicating a specific section).<sup>48</sup>

The *Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon* distinctly introduces the piano first in order for the title, then as the first voice in each of the movements. This emphasis on the piano as a full contributing member of the group is starkly different than Poulenc's past works, and is one of the main reasons that this work becomes a turning point for him. Looking at the whole of the piece, Poulenc's mastery of the language of melody creates a perfect blend of all the voices, and ideally communicates the voice of the double reeds and piano within his tonal framework.<sup>49</sup> A joy to perform, it is no wonder that this piece has held and will continue to hold a place in the standard repertoire of all these instruments.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp. 111-112.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 112-113.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 110, 113.

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