

5, 7 and 10 beats frequently occur. This asymmetrical rhythm, which was to become one of his chief concerns in the later music, is here to be found primarily in Nos.4 and 7. His fondness for counterpoint is to be heard in Nos.3 and 5, both of which contain canons. That in No.5 is between bass and soprano, the bass being an inversion at the fifth, and at the rhythmic distance of an eighth note.

The titles of these preludes are fanciful and exotic. Although none have the theological associations of the later works, they indicate the composer's leaning toward the mystical and bear witness to his literary education.

**GEORGE BENNETTE** (piano) was born in Greensboro, North Carolina and received his musical education at the Oberlin Conservatory and The Juilliard School of Music. In 1956 he made an impressive London debut while studying at the royal Academy on a Fulbright grant. His subsequent New York debut led to extensive concertizing. He has given recitals in the major concert halls of American cities and has played frequently on the campuses of colleges and universities. For two seasons he was invited by the Kentucky Arts Council to tour throughout that state. In 1959 he became Director of the Lighthouse Music School in New York City and in 1966 he became a member of the faculty of the College of Mount St. Vincent.

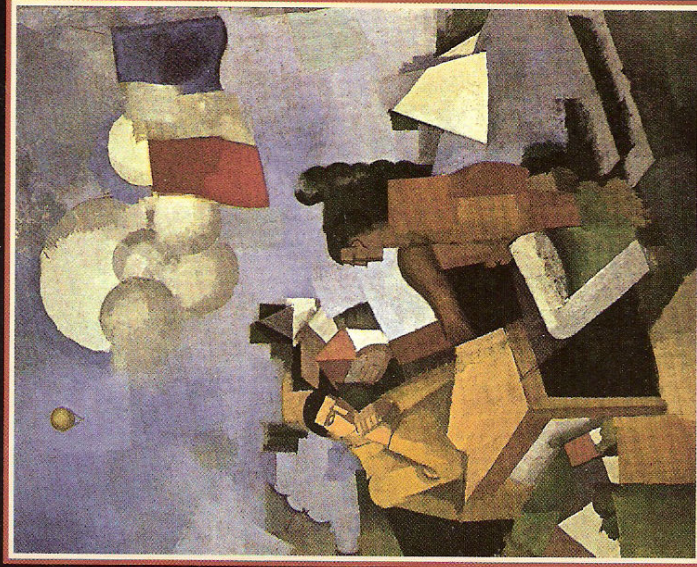
## FRENCH MUSIC OF THE 20TH CENTURY

PHCD 139

Francis  
**POULENC**  
Sept Chansons

Darius  
**MILHAUD**  
Naissance de Vénus

Olivier  
**MESSIAEN**  
Eight Preludes  
for Piano



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COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

The Modern Madrigal Singers    George Bennette, Piano

## Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

### *Sept Chansons*

#### To texts by Guillaume Apollinaire and Paul Eluard

1. *La Blanche Neige* (Apollinaire)  
The angels in the sky dressed one as an officer in blue, one as a cook, the others sing. Sweet Spring, long after Christmas you will be bathed in beautiful sunshine. The cook plucks the geese, the snow falls and, oh, that I had my beloved in my arms.
2. *A Peine Défigurée* (Eluard)  
Adieu sadness, bonjours sadness. You are inscribed in the furrows of the brow, in the eyes that I love. You are not completely miserable for your lips belie you with a smile. Bonjours sadness, kindness from the power of love surges through my body. Sadness-beautiful face.
3. *Par Une Nuit Nouvelle* (Eluard)  
Woman with whom I have lived, now live and will live, always the same. You must wear a cloak of red, gloves of red, a mask of red, stockings of black – reasons, proofs for seeing you nude. Pure nudity, oh my heart.
4. *Tous Les Droits* (Eluard)  
Simulate the shadow of flowers gone till Spring - the shortest day of the year, the Eskimo night. The agony of dreamers, the smell of roses, the burn of nettles...the wounds of truth, the promises which bend not...your eyes full of tears, caresses, smiles – without secret, without limits. Simulate the shadow of flowers gone till Spring.
5. *Belle Et Ressemblante* (Eluard)  
A face at the end of day, a bower in the dead leaves of day. A bouquet of rain clouds, all sunshine hidden. Each mirror from broken mirrors. A face in the balances of silence...a face like all forgotten faces. A bower in the dead leaves, a bouquet of rain clouds, all sunshine hidden.
6. *Marie* (Apollinaire)  
You danced here little girl, you will dance here as a grandmother...all the bells will ring, when will you come back. Masks are silent, the music distant as from the skies. I want to love you but only a little and my pain is delicious. The ewes go out in the snow, soldiers pass, and I have only a fickle heart and then again will I know where your hair, frizzled like the foamy sea, will go. I pass by the Seine, an old book under my arm, the river is like my pain – when will you come back, Marie...

## 7. Luire (Eluard)

The Earth tenderly cultivated, the honey of dawn, sunshine of flowers, the racer, by a thread, holds on to the sleeper. "Summer has never been fresher, never so heavy." It will be lighter, bright Summer sun with heat, sweetness, tranquility and quickly the flowers bourne in the air touch the Earth.

## Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

### *Naissance De Vénus*

#### Poems by Jules Supervielle

Milhaud completed this short choral work, "The Birth of Venus," on January 6, 1949. It was dedicated to "Marcel Couraud and his vocal group."

1. **Les Heures** The Hours:  
The boiling, red waves are the blood of Uranus. It falls from the sky with the hissing noise of a hot iron as it hits the water. Suddenly a virgin is born, a goddess sprung from the sea, and in her eyes all the hidden secrets of the ocean.
2. **Vénus**  
I emerge from the sea drenched with days of beauty I shall never have known. And, more and more. I shall remain there like a heart that is touched by love.
3. **Le Vent** The Wind:  
The wind will push you on a seashell toward the shore. Born of the sea you will await the future on Earth and, like the air, nothing in you will ever end.
4. **Les Heures** The Hours:  
Here is the Earth, its trees, its people – their heads full of sound as from the highest tree tops. Now, messengers come to show how much they love you. The sparrow becomes a swan, the swan becomes an angel, and the dove a dove!

## **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

*Trois Chansons* (1908)

Text by Charles d'Orleans

1. **Dieu! Qu'il La Fait Bon Regarder!** (Lord! How Lovely You Have Made Her!)  
Lord! you have made my beloved graceful, good and beautiful. All speak of her with praise as each day her beauty is renewed. From near or far, from young or old they praise her. And I, too, as in a dream.
2. **Quant J'ai Ouy Le Tambourin** (When I Hear The Tambourine)  
Whenever I hear the tambourine calling us to the May, I do not leave my bed nor lift my head for it is too early.
3. **Yver, Vous N'estes Qu'un Villain** (Winter, You Are Only a Villain)  
Winter, you are only a villain. How pleasant it is, how gentle the thoughts of April and May that are with me night and day - the blooming of the flowers and trees, the colors of nature. But you Winter full of snow and wind and hail, you I would send into exile. So, Winter, I speak plainly, you are nothing but a villain.

## **Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

*Trois Chansons* (1916)

1. **Nicolette**  
Nicolette went into the fields at evening time to gather some white daisies, jonquils and lilies, merrily skipping and tripping here, there and everywhere. A growing old wolf said, "Hello, Nicolette, are you going to your grandmother's?" Nicolette fled breathlessly. A handsome page came by. "Hello, Nicolette, would you like a genite friend?" Wisely, she turned away sore at heart. Then she met an ugly lord, vile and fat. "Hello, Nicolette, do you want all this money?" Quickly she ran into his arms and never went back to the fields.
2. **Trois Beaux Oiseaux Du Paradis** (Three Lovely Birds of Paradise)  
Three lovely birds of paradise (my love has gone to war) flew by. The first was bluer than the sky. The second as white as snow. The third a brilliant red. "Oh beautiful birds of paradise what do you bring?" "I bring a glance of azure blue (your love is gone to war)." "And I give a

kiss purer than the snow." "And thou red bird of paradise what do you bring?" "A heart all crimson red (your love is gone to war)." "Ah, my heart grows cold, take it also."

### 3. **Ronde** (Roundelay)

Young girls do not go to the Woods of Ormond. Beware, they are full of centaurs, satyrs and sorcerers, of goblins, imps and ogres, will-o-the-wisps, fauns, devils, gnomes and demons. Werewolves, elves and myrmidons, enchanters, magicians, full of outcast monks, cyclops, djinns, goblins - ah! go not to the Woods of Ormond. Alas, we shall go there no more. They have all fled frightened by the old men and women.

The preceding are all performed by The Modern Madrigal Singers:

Lois Winter and June Magruder-Sopranos  
Helene Miles and Helen Streiff-Altos  
Phillip Olson and Harley Streiff-Tenors  
Michael Stewart and Charles Magruder-Basses

## **Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)**

**Preludes (8) For Piano (1929)**

1. La Colombe
2. Chant D'extase Dans Un Paysage Triste
3. Le Nombre Léger
4. Instants Défunts
5. Les Sons Impalpables Du Réve
6. Cloches D'Angoisse Et Larmes D'adieu
7. Plainte Calme
8. Un Reflet Dans Le Vent

The "Preludes", written when the composer was 21, give the impression of being very traditional for their period. Yet they are marked unquestionably with Messiaen's individuality. They are, first of all, melodic, with characteristically long expressive lines. Both the melodies and the harmonies are based on his "modes of limited transposition." These modes consist of various orderings of the whole and half steps of the twelve chromatic tones. Thus a new set of chords and harmonic progressions is obtained. Particularly favored is the second of these modes which is composed of alternating whole and half steps. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 5 are written in this mode, although other modes are occasionally introduced. Messiaen's most characteristic melodic interval, the augmented fourth, can be heard throughout these pieces.

Although they are written in conventional meter, and often in four-bar phrases, meters of

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FRENCH MUSIC OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Francis Poulenc "Sept Chansons"

- (1) La Blanche Neige :58
- (2) A Peine Défigurée 1:37
- (3) Par Une Nuit Nouvelle 1:31
- (4) Tous Les Droits 2:53
- (5) Belle Et Ressemblante 2:22
- (6) Marie 2:07
- (7) Luitre 2:17

Darius Milhaud "Naissance De Vénus"

- (8) Les Heures 2:15
- (9) Vénus :54
- (10) Le Vent :44
- (11) Les Heures 2:15

Claude Debussy "Trois Chansons"

- (12) Dieu! Qu'il La Fait Bon Regarder! 2:06
- (13) Quant J'ai Ouy Le Tambourin 2:07
- (14) Viver, Vous N'estes Qu'un Villain 2:19

Maurice Ravel "Trois Chansons"

- (15) Nicolette 1:54
- (16) Trois Beaux Oiseaux Du Paradis 3:16
- (17) Ronde 1:56

Olivier Messiaen "Preludes (8) For Piano"

- (18) - (25) 30:55

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File under Classical/Messiaen.

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