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Two Examples of Music in 1920S France: A Study of Sergei Prokofiev's 1924 Quintet, Op. 39 and the Subsequent Ballet TrapÈze, and Francis Poulenc's 1926 Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano

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COLLEGE OF MUSIC

TWO EXAMPLES OF MUSIC IN 1920S FRANCE: A STUDY OF
SERGEI PROKOFIEV'S 1924 QUINTET, OP. 39 AND THE SUBSEQUENT BALLET
TRAPÈZE, AND FRANCIS POULENC'S 1926
TRIO FOR OBOE, BASSOON, AND PIANO

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For Mom

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ABSTRACT

This treatise discusses two works by Francis Poulenc and Sergei Prokofiev that became a part of the music culture of France in the 1920s. Sergei Prokofiev's 1924 Quintet, Op. 39 for Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Double Bass, and the subsequent ballet *Trapèze*, as well as Francis Poulenc's 1926 Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano, will each be studied. Compositional trends common in France of the 1920s had abandoned the Romanticism of previous decades and new musical ideas were tested and established by composers of this time. Many of those styles were reflections of cultural shifts coming from world political issues leading up to and beyond World War I. The contrasting natures of chromaticism and diatonicism in Prokofiev's *Trapèze* and heavily neoclassical elements from Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano will be examined.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: A STUDY OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLES PRESENT IN PARISIAN MUSIC OF THE 1920'S: NEOCLASSICISM AND DIATONICISM

Music practices of Paris of the 1920s were formed in many ways by the world political climate of the early 1900s. Tensions between Germany and the rest of the world leading up to World War I affected popular culture and the once positive influence of Wagner upon Parisian music deteriorated. French music between 1871 and 1914 yielded a bounty of excellent works. The time was heavily marked by impressionistic music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, but then popularity of impressionistic music of the those decades began to wane. Also, music of Wagner had served as German novelty from the late 1800s into the early 1900s, with productions consisting of his most post popular and forceful pieces, that were developed by the French as true to the German version as they could imagine, and conducted in French.¹

The Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 caused an influx of Russian artists,² which brought the likes of Sergei Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky, both of whom had a major impact on the Parisian cultural scene. Diaghilev first began working in Paris in 1907, and Stravinsky's first Parisian production was the *Firebird* (1910). Diaghilev and Stravinsky's production of ballets such as *Petrushka* (1911) and *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) caused an upheaval in the artist community that led many to reevaluate where compositional trends were headed.³ *Petrushka's* importance is apparent in the plot, which contains proletarian messages, and in it's treatment of

¹ Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 18-19.

² *Ibid.*, 9-10.

³ *Ibid.*, 31.

harmony. Stravinsky's successful presentation of bitonality in *Petrushka* impressed upon others the possibilities that lay behind writing in two different key signatures simultaneously.⁴

Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* was highly influential in that it set a new standard with regards to dissonance and volume, and at the premier in 1914 the audience became hostile. The impact of *Le Sacre du Printemps* later became more apparent through the presence of many of its components in French music of the 1920s. It set these new standards of dissonance and volume by employing a very large ensemble and giving wind players a more important role over the string section. In fact, Stravinsky continuously attempted to revise the orchestration of *Le Sacre du Printemps* to allow the string parts more presence.⁵ This heavy use of winds catered to the French institution's reputation for a high level of wind playing, ensuring the continuation of the importance of wind writing in later works.⁶ The score also contains much rhythmic repetition in the form of ostinatos and recurring melodic material presented in varying keys and settings. This compositional feature tapped into neoclassical trends because it can also be found in the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.⁷

As World War I approached, German propaganda claimed that French intellectualism was on the decline⁸ and Anti-German sentiment led to a decrease in popularity of the music of Wagner and late Romantic styles associated with German music. Also, the popularity of impressionistic music of the previous decades began to wane. By 1918, Claude Debussy was deceased and Maurice Ravel, who garnered much respect from the younger generation, had begun to limit his musical output and was seen as an establishment figure. Another outcome of the war was a decrease in instrumental forces used in new works, a result of decreasing funds for

⁴ Nichols, *The Harlequin Years*, 31-32.

⁵ Nichols, 33.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Nichols, *The Harlequin Years*, 25.

working musicians and a reversal from the large forces fashionable in German music.⁹ Even so, the popularization of wind instruments initiated by Stravinsky continued, and many new works featured wind instruments as can be seen in Prokofiev's Quintet and Poulenc's Trio.

France experienced an influx of tourists after World War I, many of whom had discovered the delights of Paris while in the military during the war. Additionally, Russian immigrants flooded into the city after fleeing their country during and after the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.¹⁰ The presence of so many outsiders led the French to cling to nationalist sentiments in the hope of preserving their culture and sense of self.¹¹ Debussy led the charge on anti-German sentiments, writing numerous articles against the influence of Wagner on French music.¹²

The rejection of German Romanticism led in part to the neoclassical movement: a return to the styles of the Baroque and Classical era, a practice embraced from World War I until the 1950s.¹³ Neoclassical elements that arose post-war and which will be discussed include: a return to Bach harmony and counterpoint practices, a new appreciation of form, which had become less important in the free-writing of the Romantic era, and the use of repeated melodic material in the form of ostinato, among other features.

Two composers of very different backgrounds will be discussed through the study of their differing compositional styles apparent in the Parisian musical culture of the 1920's: neoclassicism, chromaticism and diatonicism. Neoclassicism is a compositional style used by Francis Poulenc. Chromaticism and diatonicism are styles of Sergei Prokofiev, who in the early

⁹ Nichols 217.

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹ Ibid., 25,27.

¹² Ibid., 21.

¹³ Arnold Whittall, "Neo-classicism," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed October 11, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19723>.

1920s devoted a great deal of energy to exploring how far he could progress into chromaticism before reversing toward diatonicism.¹⁴

Poulenc's compositions are comprised of several different compositional styles: experimental, neoclassical, and popular. His experimental music is a reflection of trends of the 1920s and follows the inspiration of Stravinsky. The Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano is an excellent representation of neoclassicism and highlights Poulenc's skills in melodic writing. Music of the popular style often includes melodies reminiscent of Parisian music hall reviews and circus trends.¹⁵

In his autobiography Prokofiev defined his work as containing several different elements of style: classical, toccata, lyrical, grotesque, and an experimental modern trend. The classical style is most evident in the Classical Symphony, which Prokofiev describes as sometimes neoclassical in nature. He traces the toccata line to his impression of Schumann's Toccata and it is heard in the *Scythian Suite* and *Le pas d'acier*. The lyrical tendency is associated with melody, though Prokofiev did not credit himself with any gift for that technique. Prokofiev loathed the description "grotesque," coined by his critics, and preferred to think of this style as a whimsical version of a scherzo.¹⁶ Finally, the modern trend is related to harmonic language and will be discussed in reference to the Quintet and the Symphony No. 2.¹⁷

¹⁴ Neal Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 8.

¹⁵ Pamela Lee Poulin, *Three Stylistic Traits in Poulenc's Chamber Music For Wind Instruments*, (PhD diss., Eastman School of Music, May 8, 1983), xiii-xv.

¹⁶ Oleg Prokofiev, *Sergei Prokofiev: Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. by Oleg Prokofiev. Assoc. ed. Christopher Palmer (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 248-249.

¹⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO
POULENC'S USE OF NEOCLASSICISM IN THE TRIO FOR
OBOE, BASSOON, AND PIANO

Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano is one of many chamber works involving winds that he composed throughout his career. Prior to the Trio he wrote a Sonata for Two Clarinets (1918), a Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon (1922), and a Sonata for Trumpet, French Horn, and Trombone (1922). In a set of interviews with musicologist and music critic Claude Rostand published in 1954, Poulenc stated: "I have always loved the wind instruments, which I prefer to strings, and this is without paying attention to momentary fads."¹⁸

Poulenc's compositions for piano and solo wind instruments have become staples in the wind literature. These significant contributions include a Sonata for Flute and Piano (1957), an *Élégie* for Horn and Piano (1957), a Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962), and a Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1962). He also intended to write a Sonata for Bassoon and Piano but was not able to complete the project before a fatal heart attack in 1963.¹⁹ In addition to these solo sonatas, he also wrote the popular Sextet scored for Woodwind Quintet and Piano, written between the years 1931 and 1939 and which was finally published in 1945.²⁰

Poulenc came from a family of wealth. His father owned a major pharmaceutical manufacturing company and did not encourage Poulenc to study music, intending for him to pursue a business career. His mother was of the bourgeois class and was a patron of the arts and

¹⁸ Claude Rostand, *Entretiens avec Claude Rostand* (Paris: Juilliard, 1954), 118.

¹⁹ Poulin, 37-38.

²⁰ Poulin, 34-35.

a pianist.²¹ Poulenc began to study piano with his mother at age five and her preference for the music of Mozart and Schubert had a lifelong impact on his musical tastes. In interviews with Claude Rostand from 1953 Poulenc proclaimed to "worship melodic line," and attributed this worship to his Mother for whom he credited "both his gift for melody and his musical preference for those other melodists, Mozart and Schubert."²²

The untimely deaths of his parents, when Poulenc was at the age of 16 and 18 respectively, gave Poulenc the wealth and freedom to pursue his musical interests. After his tragic loss, his piano teacher Ricardo Viñes became his mentor in life. Through Viñes, Poulenc became acquainted with other promising composers of his generation including Georges Auric, Manuel de Falla, and Erik Satie.²³ Satie, an older mentor type, initially dismissed Poulenc calling him a 'bourgeois amateur.'²⁴ But Poulenc quickly proved his credibility and would soon become known for his affiliation with *Les Six*, a group of composers associated through the concert series they together developed in 1920 for the performance and promotion of their own works.

Through the advice of Darius Milhaud, Poulenc began to study composition with Charles Koechlin, with whom he worked from 1921 to 1924, examining mostly four part harmony chorales based on themes of Bach.²⁵ This span of time saw the composition of several piano pieces, the Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon (1922), and the Sonata for Horn, Trumpet and Trombone (1922). The year 1923 brought the success of Poulenc's first major work, a ballet

²¹ Chimènes, Myriam and Roger Nichols, "Poulenc, Francis," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/22202>.

²² Rostand, *Entretiens*, 12-13.

²³ Grove, Poulenc.

²⁴ Chimènes and Nichols, "Poulenc, Francis," 8 Oct. 2015.

²⁵ Henri Hell, *Francis Poulenc*, trans. from French and int. by Edward Lockspeiser (London: J. Calder, c. 1959), 21.

commissioned by Diaghilev for the Ballet Russes called *Les Biches*, a work Poulenc biographer Henri Hell calls a turning point in Poulenc's career.²⁶

Les Biches was commissioned by Diaghilev for the Ballet Russes, first produced in Monte Carlo and then again in Paris in 1924. It is neoclassic in nature and compositionally based on Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*.²⁷ It also contains elements of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and Stravinsky's *Mavra*. One reviewer claimed to hear the influences of Mozart and Beethoven, further highlighting its neoclassic style.²⁸ Poulenc had an admiration for Stravinsky that can be traced to the premier of *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913 when Poulenc was only eleven.²⁹ Poulenc's favorite Stravinsky work was not *Le Sacre du Printemps*, but rather his appreciation was more for *Pulcinella* and *Mavra*, which Poulenc describes as being "more European."³⁰ As an adult Poulenc met Stravinsky and developed a lasting friendship. Poulenc often sought Stravinsky's advice and criticism of his compositions. Stravinsky counseled Poulenc in the composition of both *Les Biches* and the Trio, which was Poulenc's next success story following the popular run of the ballet.³¹

The Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano was premiered in 1926, but Poulenc's earliest reference to it occurs in a letter to Paul Collaer in 1923, where he states that he has "begun work on a trio" and he would be ready to play for Collaer in winter of 1924.³² This is also the year that *Les Biches* was premiered. While there is no specific title mentioned in the letter, scholars often

²⁶ Hell, 24.

²⁷ Jane F. Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 189.

²⁸ Hell, 27.

²⁹ Audel, Stephane, *My Friends and Myself: Conversations with Francis Poulenc*, (London: Dobson, 1978), 135.

³⁰ Ibid, 136.

³¹ Hell, 32.

³² Schmidt, Carl B, *Entrancing Muse: A Documented Biography of Francis Poulenc*, (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2001), 141.

presume this is the Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano, which Poulenc dedicated to Manuel de Falla.

The popular Spanish composer Manuel de Falla lived in Paris from 1907 to 1914 and maintained his connections in the city during the 1920s.³³ Poulenc and Falla were both active in the Parisian music society, and Poulenc describes first meeting Falla in 1918 through his teacher Ricardo Viñes.³⁴ They later encountered each other frequently in the Russian ballet circles run by Diaghilev.³⁵ In interviews with Stephane Audel, Poulenc said, "I dedicated that little trio to Falla, to show him as best I could my loving admiration."³⁶ Their friendship continued with opportunities to spend time together in Venice where many visiting artists stayed at the Palazzo Polignac under the grace of the Princess Edmond de Polignac, a patron of the arts. The palace contained many large drawing rooms with pianos where composers worked while staying in Venice.³⁷ For many years Falla requested that Poulenc visit him in his home country of Spain, and in 1930 Poulenc finally made the trip. Unfortunately, during the visit Falla was experiencing serious medical problems and was unable to attend Poulenc's concerts, which featured the dedicated Trio.³⁸ Falla was devout to his faith and Poulenc thought him to be mystic in nature and close to the folklore of his home country of Spain.³⁹

Poulenc is commonly known as a composer of neoclassicism, but the concentration of neoclassical elements in the Trio exceeds that of other works also classified in that genre. Every section in every movement contains major components associated with the neoclassic style.⁴⁰ Some of the neoclassic elements found and discussed are related to classical forms, in particular

³³ Nichols, 255.

³⁴ Audel, 91-92.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Audel, 93.

³⁷ Audel, 94.

³⁸ Schmidt, *Entrancing Muse*, 177.

³⁹ Audel, 87-88.

⁴⁰ Poulin, 211.

the ternary and rondo forms.⁴¹ This study will also explore Poulenc's use of instrumentation, melody, and texture related to the classical era. Tonal analysis will reveal simple melodies, elegant use of Bach-inspired triadicism and harmonies, and pervasive diatonicism, indicative of neoclassic style. Tonal analysis also reveals deviations from traditional classical tonality, reflecting the prefix "neo" in the term neoclassicism.

When studying formal structure present in the Trio one notes that a return to classical principles should be contrasted with the abandonment of freer formal structures present in Romanticism. This release from Romantic ideals brought a renewed appreciation for traditional forms. When speaking of the Trio, Poulenc directly referenced Haydn's forms, stating in *Entretiens* with Claude Rostand that the trio is based on "*un allegro de Haydn*."⁴²

He also said "It has a length nearly that of a Haydn or Mozart trio, but is not at all in that style."⁴³ In Poulenc's Trio this classicism throwback is immediately apparent. The opening lines of the Presto consist of a slow introduction, an element very common in Haydn's music.⁴⁴ Example 1.1 contains the opening lines of Haydn's Trio XII in C major, which shows a slow introduction to the Allegro just as we see in the first movement of the Trio.

The form of Poulenc's Trio is sectional in nature, with the first and second movements using a traditional ABA ternary form, while the third movement is a rondo. Sections from the first movement are very clearly defined, utilizing key changes, changes in meter and tempo and even complete silence to indicate the close of an idea. The second and third movements, while maintaining sectionalism, are not quite so defined with changes in key center and thematic material indicating movement to new material.

⁴¹ Poulin, 66-67.

⁴² Ronstand, *Entretiens*, 121.

⁴³ Schmidt, *Entrancing Muse*, 141.

⁴⁴ Poulin, 33.

Ex 1.1 Opening with slow introduction, mm. 1-5, Haydn Piano Trio in C major, Op. 40

The instrumentation clearly displays neoclassicism, consisting of two early instruments, oboe and bassoon, alongside the piano. Poulenc, showing his obvious enthusiasm for this combination said, "The combination of instruments having excited me greatly, I hope to do good work."⁴⁵ The positioning of the instruments when introducing content during the pre-Romantic era music of composers such as Haydn and Mozart usually consisted of the keyboard instrument leading the way, followed by others. In a similar fashion, the Trio uses the piano as the leading voice, while the oboe tends to shine during lyrically intense moments, and the bassoon acts as a "discreet commentator" over the whole scene.⁴⁶ Also, when not leading, the keyboard is often doubling the leading instrument, if not with the melody in its entirety, then only with doubled pitches, enhancing the efficacy of the leading line.⁴⁷ In the case of the Trio we find many examples of this beginning in the first measures. At the beginning of each section of the first movement, the piano plays a short introduction to any new material.

⁴⁵ Schmidt, *Entrancing Muse*, 141.

⁴⁶ Hell, 33.

⁴⁷ Poulin, 204.

Another strong characteristic of neoclassicism is the presence of triadic figures and tonic/dominant pedal tones. Triadic figures are often seen above or below the melody line and one can assume that Poulenc's studies of traditional Bach part writing with Koehlin strengthened his compositional techniques for this type of writing.⁴⁸

Example 1.2 below demonstrates both the piano leading the melody alongside the oboe, and standard neoclassic triadicism. The piano initiates the theme while the oboe reinforces the piano a third above. A brief introductory statement by the piano is also represented.

Ex 1.2 Mm. 17-26, Presto

Example 1.3 shows the piano introducing an entirely new theme at the coda of the A section of the first movement. Following the introduction the oboe joins the piano in doubling the theme. This example also shows the piano sustaining a tonic pedal tone for the key of F major.

⁴⁸ Nichols, 141.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The piano part begins with a melody marked *mf* and *sans ralentir tres chante*. The oboe part enters with a melody marked *mf doux* and *p*. A blue line indicates "New theme played by piano" and another blue line indicates "Oboe doubles theme with the piano".

Ex 1.3 Piano introduction and oboe doubling, mm. 147-155, Presto

Example 1.4 is from the beginning of the second movement. It shows the piano, having just introduced the melody, reinforcing the melody played by the bassoon with the corresponding D, Bb and G. The piano also maintains a tonic pedal tone for the key of B-flat major.

Movement 2 of the Trio has some very delightful yet simple intricacies that come to life as the movement develops. There is a pedal tone present in the bass of the piano, and notice that the opening four measures consist of the first theme played by the piano alone. However, at

Andante con moto ♩=84

Oboe

Bassoon

Andante con moto ♩=84 *Piano plays melody*

Piano

mf

Tonic pedal tone: B♭M

5

Ob.

Bsn.

mf *solo*

Bassoon takes over melody

Pno.

Ex 1.4 Opening, mm. 1-8, Andante

measure 5 the bassoon takes over the melody, playing a secondary theme. After this melody is completed the original theme presented in the first four measures is played again, but this time the antecedent theme is completed in the four measures following with a clear consequent finish, providing a total sense of tonal satisfaction with fulfillment of this lingering phrase right before the movement progresses on to another new theme.

The second main theme in this movement is first heard at measure 23, with the oboe playing a mournful, yearning, and searching line of half step notes. The bassoon responds and here we hear the true genius of Poulenc's skill as the melody progresses into the development section.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano. The score is in 4/8 time and consists of three measures. The Oboe part is in the treble clef and starts with a forte (f) dynamic. It features a melodic line with half-step intervals, marked with 'PT LNT' and 'PT'. The Bassoon part is in the bass clef and also starts with a forte (f) dynamic. It features a melodic line with half-step intervals, marked with 'F# Anticipation'. The Piano part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and starts with a forte (f) dynamic. It features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes, marked with 'BbM' and 'BM'.

Ex 1.5 Portion of ascending chromatic sequence, mm. 41-42, Andante

Many interesting tonal elements are scattered throughout the development and through to the end of this movement. The development begins solidly in B major at measure 35, though it doesn't stay in that key for long. At measure 38 a chord sequence begins in the key of Ab major and proceeds to modulate up the chromatic scale for eight measures. Prior to each chord change, the previous measure adds an anticipation, raising the fifth scale degree before changing chords. Finally the key of C major is reached at rehearsal 7 and the tension of the development abruptly resolves. Example 1.5 shows the modulation from B to B-flat major.

Throughout the entire movement the piano provides a metronomic accompanimental line that is characteristic of the classical period in its use of unrelenting broken accompaniment triadic and six chords. Often the piano also provides counterpoint in thirds to the melody carried by the oboe or bassoon, representing neoclassical triadicism.

Ex 1.6 Opening statement, mm. 1-7, Rondo

Many authors describe the third movement as a "witty parody" of the classical style.⁴⁹ The initial sense of the melody indicates that it should consist of traditional phrases, with a four-measure antecedent and four-measure consequent structure, but that never happens. The opening phrase contains an antecedent that is three measures and a consequent that is four measures. This type of phrase structure, with inconsistent phrase lengths, continues throughout the movement.

Even the return of the opening phrase before moving to B section differs from the original statement with a three-measure antecedent, followed by a three-measure consequent

⁴⁹ Hell, 33.

phrase structure. More wit is added to this particular phrase because the last measure is in 9/8 instead of 6/8, so that only one beat is lost from the original sentence structure.

Ex 1.7 Opening theme with modifications, mm. 30-35, Rondo

The third movement also contains a cyclic theme, a practice that is not neoclassic and was not common during the baroque and classical eras but became popular during the nineteenth century. The theme from the Coda of the first movement acts as a unifying device. The theme in its original form consists of a series of simple rising quarter notes in the key of F major. However, the third movement is in 6/8 so Poulenc cleverly fits the melody in by using dotted quarter notes, creating a hemiola effect.

The 2016 International Double Reed Society Conference in Columbus, GA included a very interesting presentation by Italian oboist Sandro Caldini. His research on the Trio led to the unearthing of a new final manuscript of the work. His search began at the Friends of Poulenc website, whose administrators recommended he contact the National Library in Paris.⁵⁰ The

⁵⁰ Friends of Poulenc Association, accessed November 20, 2016, www.poulenc.fr.

Oboe

Bassoon

Piano

mf

Ex 1.8 Cyclic theme, mm. 147-151, Presto

Oboe

Bassoon

Piano

mf

p doux

p

tr

animez un peu

animez un peu

animez un peu

Ex 1.9 Cyclic theme, mm. 171-179, Rondo

National Library in Paris informed him that an American composer, Ned Warren, was in possession of the manuscript. Caldini then did a Facebook search where he found an aging composer named Ned Warren. Through Facebook, Warren told Caldini that the new manuscript

was located in the United States Library of Congress, where Caldini ultimately did find the manuscript.

As previously stated, Stravinsky often advised Poulenc, but it wasn't until two years after the Hansen publishing company released the work that Stravinsky finally gave feedback on the Trio to Poulenc. After receiving Stravinsky's ideas, Poulenc edited the work and this is why there are two versions today. The Trio in its revised version contains subtle, but consistent changes, mostly with regard to articulation and instrumentation. Changes in articulation occur when some staccato notes are changed to slurs and visa versa, causing unexpected character changes that are very surprising to the ear. Changes in instrumentation occur mostly by switching the instrumentation of the accompanying line with the melody line. This switch consistently uses the piano but he also alternates between using the oboe and the bassoon to this end. This new version has just been released and it is probable we will begin to encounter it more in the future.⁵¹

⁵¹ Sandro Caldini, "IDRS Live Stream Poulenc Trio for oboe, bassoon and piano, New Edition," Youtube, June 29, 2016, accessed July 28, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyiCUAc87cI>.

CHAPTER THREE

**THE DIATONIC STYLES AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROKOFIEV'S 1924 QUINTET
FOR OBOE, CLARINET, VIOLIN, VIOLA, AND DOUBLE BASS, OPUS 39, AND THE
SUBSEQUENT BALLET, *TRAPÈZE***

We commonly know of the music from Prokofiev's 1924 ballet *Trapèze* as the Quintet, Op. 39, but its original conception was as a commission from Russian ballet master and choreographer Boris Romanov for his company the Russian Romantic Theatre. At the time, the commission was a secondary project for Prokofiev whose motivation was primarily the money it provided.⁵² Prokofiev decided to optimize his work and published the Quintet separately under the title Quintet, Op. 39.⁵³ What many do not realize is that there are two extra movements associated with *Trapèze* that were not published with the quintet and were considered lost until recently.

Sergei Prokofiev is well known as a leading Russian composer of the twentieth century. His music is avant-garde and quirky, and throughout his career he inspired both admiration and disdain from listeners and critics. The details of Prokofiev's compositional process have perplexed many theorists because of his struggle to create something completely innovative. This led to a compositional style initially considered by theorists to contain intentional "wrong notes," an assertion not only attributed to Prokofiev. Further study of his works reveal a deliberate use of patterns to create new harmonic concepts, and theorists recognize this today.⁵⁴ Several different

⁵² Harlow Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography*, (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1987) 185.

⁵³ Anthony Phillips, *Diaries 1924 - 1933: Prodigal Son*, tr. and an. by Anthony Phillips, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 78.

⁵⁴ Olga Sologub. "Prokofiev Chromatic Practice in Theory." *Society for Music Analysis*, newsletter (November 2011): 6-10, accessed October 20, 2016, http://www.academia.edu/1522956/Prokofievs_Chromatic_Practice_in_Theory.

methods for approaching Prokofiev's music have been developed by theorists including Neal Minturn and Rebecca Rifkin.⁵⁵ Prokofiev's harmonic explorations prompted much criticism, and his works in Paris during the mid-1920s highlight his struggle between extreme chromaticism and diatonicism.

The Quintet contains music that was written in the summer of 1924, a time period that incorporated the height of Prokofiev's use of chromatic harmonic structures.⁵⁶ During this time Prokofiev was also working on a commission from conductor Sergei Koussevitsky for a Second Symphony, which will be discussed for its similar chromatic harmonies and its poor reception by the public.⁵⁷ The Quintet did not initially garner much attention,⁵⁸ but the premier of the Symphony No. 2 received substantial critical feedback, which affected Prokofiev's future compositional styles.⁵⁹

In 1925, upon production of the ballet, the artistic director of the Russian Romantic Theatre and choreographer of *Trapèze*, Boris Romanov, requested additional movements, an Overture and *Matelote*.⁶⁰ Because this occurred after the publication of the Quintet, there are stark differences in the compositional mechanisms employed in the Quintet as opposed to the Overture and *Matelote*.⁶¹ When comparing the two additional movements one can see the stylistic differences as Prokofiev moves away from chromaticism which employs all notes in the chromatic scale and into diatonicism, a style of writing that only uses notes related to a particular key.

⁵⁵ Sologub, "Prokofiev Chromatic Practice in Theory."

⁵⁶ Oleg Prokofiev, *Sergei Prokofiev: Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, tr. and ed. by Oleg Prokofiev, ass. ed. Christopher Palmer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 276.

⁵⁷ Robinson, *Biography*, 184-186.

⁵⁸ Chelsea Gayle Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," (DM diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2007), 6.

⁵⁹ Robinson, *Biography*, 188-189.

⁶⁰ Robinson, *Biography*, 185.

⁶¹ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 5.

Romanov approached Prokofiev about writing *Trapèze* in 1924 and by June they met to finalize the details of the project. Romanov requested two ballets, which were both to be featured in the upcoming season for the Russian Romantic Theatre.⁶² The first would become *Trapèze* although it would not be given that title until about a year after the commission.⁶³ *Trapèze* centers around a ballerina, and features tumblers and dancers referred to as “Chinamen” by Prokofiev.⁶⁴ For the second ballet Romanov wanted to use Prokofiev's piano pieces and the Schubert waltzes, and he visualized the work to be played by two pianos performing onstage with the dancers. Prokofiev set up a contract giving Romanov the rights to each of the ballets for two years and they agreed to have the works ready for performance in August of that same year, 1924.⁶⁵ Romanov became very neutral from this point forward, giving Prokofiev much autonomy over the work.

Initially the ballet lacked an official title and Prokofiev had only the loose workings of a plot to guide him while he wrote the music. Throughout the writing process Prokofiev and Romanov did not communicate regarding choreography or any other aspect of the ballet.⁶⁶ Prokofiev saw this lack of boundaries as an opportunity and wrote the Quintet to also be featured as a stand-alone concert piece. "I am ready to sit down to make a start on the ballet for Romanov, which I have finally decided to write for a quintet, and even to keep in mind as I compose not merely ballet music but a concert piece for quintet."⁶⁷ After he completed the Quintet in August of 1924⁶⁸ he published it under opus number 39, which is how we most often recognize it today.

⁶² Noelle Mann, "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov," *Three Oranges Journal*, no. 4 (June 2003), accessed August 14, 2014, <http://www.sprkfv.net/journal/three05/retrapeze.html>.

⁶³ Phillips, *Diaries 1924-1933*, 220.

⁶⁴ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 2-3.

⁶⁵ Mann, "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁶⁶ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 2-3, 11.

⁶⁷ Phillips, *Diaries 1924-1933*, 78.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

Boris Romanov had been a dancer and choreographer for Diaghlev's Ballet Russes as well as the ballet master at the Mariinsky Theatre,⁶⁹ where he also completed his studies. Russia experienced many years of social unrest in the fallout of the Russian Revolution, and this unrest directly affected the inner workings of the Mariinsky Theatre, eventually causing Romanov to take his leave.⁷⁰

With the knowledge that Berlin lacked a major dance company, Romanov emigrated there with his wife and prima ballerina Elena Smirnova. With the financial help of a local millionaire, Gutchoff,⁷¹ Romanov founded the Russian Romantic Theatre, debuting the company at the Coliseum Theatre on January 28, 1924.⁷² The mission of this theatre was to be "new and wholly dedicated to the propaganda of Russian art, in particular in its newest forms" and to act as a touring company with bookings all over Europe.⁷³

Reviews of the opening week for the Russian Romantic Theatre do not give a good impression of its quality nor its professionalism. They began with a ballet called *Harlequinade*, a revived work by the deceased Marius Petipa, who is known today as one of the great ballet choreographers of the world. Critics were not impressed with *Harlequinade* with one review stating "it was a great pity that he (referring to Romanov) dragged it from its deserved oblivion." Another testimony said, "If there is a particular inferno to which wicked artist-dancers are consigned, I cannot conceive a more exquisite torture than their being forced to witness an eternal performance of *Harlequinade*." Beyond the value of the work itself, the performance kept stalling due to an old custom that allowed dancers to take calls from visitors during a show.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Mann. "Trapèze: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁷⁰ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 2.

⁷¹ Mann. "Trapèze: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁷² Cyril W. Beaumont, *Dancers Under My Lens: Essays in Ballet Criticism*, (London: C. W. Beaumont, 1949), 15.

⁷³ Mann. "Trapèze: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁷⁴ Beaumont, *Dancers Under My Lens*, 15.

Romanov had issues of his own having nothing to do with the development of *Trapèze*. Immediately after he had commissioned this work from Prokofiev, the Russian Romantic Theatre experienced two back-to-back disastrous tours in London and in Spain. This led to financial turmoil for the theatre company and as a result Romanov had difficulties compensating Prokofiev for his work. In October of 1924, when he finally made a payment, he wasn't able to make it in full. He told Prokofiev that his persistent financial trouble forced him to keep the company touring through the month of February of the next year, and as a result he wouldn't begin rehearsing *Trapèze* until March, a full seven months after the originally planned premier.⁷⁵ Prokofiev seemed less concerned about payment and more concerned about the exposure his new work would get. This is evident through correspondence with Romanov where Prokofiev wrote repeatedly asking when and how often *Trapèze* would be performed.⁷⁶

The lack of organization surrounding the development of *Trapèze* further progressed when Romanov decided to add two extra movements of music almost a year after the Quintet had already been completed.⁷⁷ These movements were present in the original performances of *Trapèze* but were never meant to be part of the Quintet. Because Prokofiev had already published the Quintet before the production of *Trapèze*, the additional movements were lost when the Russian Romantic Theatre disbanded in 1926. In recent times manuscripts for these missing movements have been discovered by musicologist Noelle Mann and orchestrated for the ensemble used in the concert Quintet.⁷⁸ The reconstructed version, arranged by Samuel Becker, was first introduced in 2003 in both concert quintet and ballet performances.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Mann. "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 4.

⁷⁸ Mann. "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁷⁹ Ibid.

As mentioned before, Romanov had neglected to communicate with Prokofiev during the composition process, and much time passed between the completion of the Quintet and February of 1925, when Romanov actually began the choreography. Unfortunately, so many months had gone by that many characteristics of the music no longer fit into the staging that Romanov now imagined. In July he asked Prokofiev to add two new movements. First, an Overture and second, a movement called *Matelote*, a French word translated as hornpipe.⁸⁰

Letters between Prokofiev and Romanov from the months of August and September of 1925 show several requests by Romanov for alterations in the format and a final decision that the ballet would not be called *The Acrobats*, which had been a working title used during development. In one correspondence Romanov stated, "*The Acrobats* will now be called *Trapèze*. I think you'll agree to this title because you've mentioned it previously." Letters from September show that Romanov was actively rehearsing *Trapèze* during this time, but after mid-October of 1925 there are no more letters mentioning *Trapèze*.⁸¹

Meanwhile, Prokofiev had begun composing his Second Symphony for Sergei Koussevetsky during what he called "nine months of turmoil." Symphony No. 2 premiered in June of 1925 and its reception was not good. Of the work Prokofiev said.... "I had complicated the piece to such an extent that as I listened, even I couldn't always find the essence--so how could I expect more of anyone else?"⁸² He also commented that neither he nor the audience understood the piece. This experience caused Prokofiev to doubt his ability as a composer for the first time: "The Second Symphony was performed on 6 June 1925, in Paris. It was too densely woven in texture, too heavily laden with contrapuntal lines changing to figuration to be

⁸⁰ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 4.

⁸¹ Mann. "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

⁸² Harlow Robinson, *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 258.

successful, and although one critic did comment admiringly on the septuple counterpoint, my friends preserved an embarrassed silence. This was perhaps the first time that it occurred to me that I might be destined to be a second-rate composer."⁸³

This is important to know when comparing the original Quintet movements with Overture and Matelote, which were composed after Symphony No. 2 and are stylistically different from the Quintet. After the poor reception of Symphony No. 2 Prokofiev's future works contained a more diatonic harmonic language with more transparent textures.⁸⁴

This renewed enthusiasm for diatonicism is heard in both the Overture and Matelote, whereas the Quintet has a chromatic and dissonant style with thicker textures. Musical characteristics that the quintet shares with Overture and Matelote are their use of ostinato, as well as short sections with quick changes in dynamic and tempo, which reflects scene changes for the ballet. Elements of diatonicism in *Trapèze* are almost entirely confined to the first and second movements that were added after the publication of the Quintet, with the exception of the allegro sostenuto movement, which also briefly employs diatonistic characteristics.

Diatonicism is not at all confined to traditional counterpoint harmonies. Prokofiev regularly adds seconds and fourths to the chords through passing tones, upper and lower neighbor tones, and sequential patterns, which is clearly depicted in Ex. 2.1. This example is from the Overture, which is in ternary form with the one truly diatonic section located in the middle of the B section beginning at measure 65. Here, an A minor chord is sustained while the oboe plays an inactive melodic line wandering through many passing tones as it moves around the scale degrees of the key of A minor. The accompaniment provided by the clarinet, violin, and viola also often employs the fourth scale degree, D.

⁸³ Prokofiev, *Sergei Prokofiev: Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, 277.

⁸⁴ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 5.

Example 2.2 is a very similar manifestation of the same concept. Here the clarinet melody employs both the second and fourth scale degrees along-side the tonic of A minor. Also, the viola sustains the second scale degree as part of the bass line throughout the passage. This contrasts to the more chromatic setting present in the Quintet. The opening measures of Adagio Pesante contain bitonality, consisting of the D-flat major and C minor chords occurring simultaneously in the accompaniment. The melody is played by the oboe and employs chromatic tactics. Here every note from B up to E occurs at least once and sometimes with multiple note spellings.

Oboe
p stacc.

Clarinet
p stacc.
LNT LNT

Violin
pizz.
p
INT INT INT

Viola
pizz.
p

Double Bass
pizz.
p
PT

Ām: Baseline: downward passing motion

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Ex 2.1 Diatonicism in B section, mm. 65-71, Overture

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Ex 2.2 Clarinet melody, mm. 78-82, Overture

It is also interesting to view chromaticism and diatonicism through Prokofiev's treatment of sequences in different movements. Matelote contains a diatonic sequence that begins in measure 38 and concludes at measure 41. The sequence starts on F major and rises by step up to G major where it reverses course again resolving on an F major chord, keeping within the diatonic scale throughout. The Andante Energico is from the original Quintet and handles sequences very differently. At measure 7 a sequence begins in the violin, viola, and bass lines, however instead of moving by step the notes rise chromatically every eight note throughout the measure.

Matelote's concluding measures are written with a clear set of diatonic chords that do not include any perceived wrong notes. But the Andantino ending of the Quintet is completely

Oboe

Clarinet

Violin

Viola

Double Bass

mf

pizz. stacc.

ff

f

mf *ff* *f*

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Ex 2.3 Sequence played by violin, viola, and bass, mm. 38-41, Matelote

Oboe

Clarinet

Violin

Viola

Double Bass

CM: V⁶ IV⁶ iii ii I⁶ V_{ii}^{o6} I

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Ex 2.4 Last two measures, mm. 139-140, Matelote

chromatic, using the clarinet, viola, and double bass to play a series of changing chromatically based scale figures, which confuse the harmony, before concluding on a unison G at the end.

Trapèze was premiered in the small German town of Gotha. The reviewer said it was “funny, fantastical and clown-like,” but also that “the dancing was completely overshadowed by the intensity of the colours and the luxurious drapery.” Another review stated that, “the tightrope walker floats, the wild beast tamer blazes up wildly; the sailor is clumsy and yet very agile, the King of the air is supple. [...]The clowns are grotesque and vivacious. The scenery gives you the impression that you are sitting in front of an expressionist picture.”⁸⁵

The Russian Romantic Theatre then toured through the city of Hanover and also danced six other ballets in a tour of Italy. Unfortunately, the tours were disastrous on several fronts and, according to their financial backer at the time, they were “forced to abandon scenery and costumes and return to Berlin, where the company then disbanded.” In 1926 the termination of the Russian Romantic Theatre saw the loss of the manuscripts for both *Overture* and *Matelote* until musicologist Noelle Mann scoured Prokofiev's archived music in search of the missing documents.⁸⁶

Noelle Mann was the curator for the Prokofiev archive and responsible for gathering the missing documents necessary to piece together the lost music for *Trapèze*. The Prokofiev archives hold many manuscripts that had been collected in an unsystematic fashion and Mann took it upon herself to sift through these papers in the search for *Overture* and *Matelote*. What she found were manuscripts that appear to be piano parts from *Matelote*, and manuscripts found at Sotheby's containing a nearly full score of the version of *Overture* that had been used during

⁸⁵ Ibid., 5-6.

⁸⁶ Mann. "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

the staging of *La Pas d'Acier*.⁸⁷ These manuscripts contained notes referencing staging directions, which led experts to believe that they were intended for use in rehearsals.⁸⁸

South East London had a rare concentration of expertise in Russian music based at Goldsmiths College, with its Centre for Russian Music, the Serge Prokofiev Archive, and the Prokofiev Association. The year 2003 marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Prokofiev and in celebration of his life these three organizations jointly hosted a festival in Prokofiev's honor. It was here that a revived version of *Trapèze* was performed for this first time since the disbanding of the Russian Romantic Theatre.⁸⁹

It was Mann's intention to revive *Trapèze* for the 50th anniversary celebrations and so she contacted arranger and composer Samuel Becker, who had been her student at the Russian Centre of Music at Goldsmiths College.⁹⁰ Prokofiev used the music from Overture and Matelote in two later works: the first as an Interlude for the ballet he wrote after *Trapèze*, *La Pas d'Acier*, the second as two movements of a four movement piece called *Divertissement*, Op. 43 for symphony orchestra. In fact, movement two and four of the *Divertissement* contain music recycled in full from the Overture and Matelote, consisting of the same composition arranged for quintet or symphony orchestra respectively. Samuel Becker employed the personal writings of Prokofiev as well as the score from these two works to guide his arrangement of Overture and Matelote and it is because of Becker and Mann's collaborations that we have these works today.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Howell, "Multidisciplinary Performance Issues in Sergei Prokofiev's *Trapèze*," 74-75.

⁹¹ Mann. "*Trapèze*: A Forgotten Ballet by Serge Prokofiev and Boris Romanov."

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

While Poulenc is considered to be a composer who relies heavily on the neoclassical style, his works do diverge from this genre. Probably due to his absence of conservatory study, Poulenc lacked much of the Romantic influence of pre-war musical styles and he assimilated the popular music of the time and incorporated these sentiments unabashedly into his works. He was able to compose freely without the judgment of the establishment weighing his work and this, along with his genius for melody, allowed him to contribute excellent music to the French repertoire.

Prokofiev's compositions are famous among theorists for the presence of perceived "wrong notes," though a structured system within his progressive harmonic writing has been proposed and studied with at least three different methodical approaches.⁹² After criticism of his extreme use of chromaticism, Prokofiev moved forward by incorporating more diatonicism in his subsequent compositions of the mid-1920s.⁹³ The Quintet, Op. 39 and the ballet *Trapèze*, which has been discussed in depth, contain movements reflecting both of these compositional trends.

Prokofiev was solidly from the Russian school, a legacy that followed him throughout his career. He constantly endeavored to create something truly original, which caused a struggle that occasionally left his work misunderstood.⁹⁴ Though his brilliance was sometimes met with discord, even his most controversial works are celebrated today. These two composers musical styles are very different, and yet both of their respective contributions to music in France during the 1920s are extremely significant.

⁹² Sologub, "Prokofiev Chromatic Practice in Theory."

⁹³ Prokofiev, *Soviet Diary*, 277, 282-283.

⁹⁴ Prokofiev, *Soviet Diary*, 232, 248.

APPENDIX A

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Rachel Maczko, Oboe

Rachel Maczko is a sought after performer throughout the Southeast and holds the position of English Horn in both the Tallahassee Symphony and the Savannah Philharmonic. Along with these appointments she enjoys regular performances in the Atlanta area, most recently appearing with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Atlanta Pops Orchestra. Rachel has performed extensively in the Southeast and New England and toured much of the Midwest and China. She has appeared alongside artists such as Shirley Jones and the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players as well as with esteemed ensembles that include the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

Rachel is also interested in alternative music projects and enjoys exploring the role of the oboe in non-traditional settings. As a member of the band Meetings in Secret she performed a combination of funk and jazz music and looks forward to learning more about electronic genres in the future.

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Rachel went on to attend prestigious music schools, obtaining higher education degrees from Boston University as well as Florida State University. Her primary teachers include Jonathan Dlouhy, Linda Strommen, Eric Ohlsson, and Laura Ahlbeck. She has developed a thriving studio in Nashville, TN and enjoyed teaching positions at Florida State University and Tennessee State University. Rachel is a member of the International Double Reed Society and has appeared in masterclasses with John Ferillo, Elaine Douvas and John Mack. Having recently returned to Atlanta, Rachel is excited to be working and teaching in her native city.