

TWENTIETH-CENTURY MUSIC FOR THE OBOE

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The twentieth-century saw the development of several different styles of music, and in this paper I will describe three different pieces of music for oboe and piano that are written in this century. The styles vary from being modern and using serialism with or without a tone row, or being more traditional like neo-classical or neo-romantic styles. As a part of my master's recital, I have practiced and performed pieces by the twentieth-century composers Francis Poulenc, Madeleine Dring and Marina Dranishnikova. Interestingly, all of these pieces were written within a twenty-year time period, yet they utilize different styles. This creative project will discuss the composers' personal backgrounds, how they developed their own style, and how the styles are distinctive in each composition.

Francis Poulenc was born in Paris in 1899. He inherited his musical personality from his parents who had very different backgrounds. His father came from a devout Catholic family, and his mother was a cultured socialite. From his mother he gained interest in other arts such as poetry, drama, ballet and cinema.¹ He was introduced to music at a very early age and began formal piano lessons at the age of six. Some composers that Poulenc studied during this time were Chopin, Schubert, Debussy and Schoenberg, while Chabrier was the first composer to have an important effect on Poulenc's style.²

Poulenc is different from almost all other French composers of the nineteenth-century considering the fact that he did not attend formal music school.³ His mother wanted him to go to the Conservatory but Poulenc instead had a general education as his father requested. He attended a normal *lycée* where he had some basic solfege training and harmony training. Upon

¹ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 1.

² Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 3.

³ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 9.

graduating, he did try to enter the Conservatory, but his compositions were dismissed by the notable teacher named Paul Vidal.

Poulenc also took compositional lessons from Ricardo Viñes, who was formerly educated at the Conservatory. Viñes introduced Poulenc to important people such as Stravinsky as well as important fellow pupils. Viñes not only introduced Poulenc to the Parisian musical world, but also helped him get his first works performed by including Poulenc's compositions in his concerts. It can be said that Poulenc was greatly influenced by Viñes.

After serving time in the French army, Poulenc studied privately with Charles Koechlin. They first worked on counterpoint, but upon realizing that Poulenc was more of a harmonist, Koechlin switched the focus of his study to harmony. He also encouraged Poulenc to write his first choral piece. Poulenc says that he owes his interest in choral music to Koechlin.⁴

Poulenc's style was affected by the many friends he made, as well as poetry and art. Satie, Milhaud and Stravinsky were all good friends for at least several years. Poulenc was also part of a group of composers called Les Six, through which he met many other people. Poetic influences included Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob and Paul Eluard. Pierre Bernac was also influential on Poulenc's later works. Poulenc was also moved by certain painters such as Goya, Dufy and Matisse.

In his later years, Poulenc still maintained a busy life by composing, giving concerts and traveling. He was convinced that his death was near so he was working on completing a cycle of woodwind sonatas. He had already completed one for flute and began working on one for clarinet and oboe but died before composing a bassoon sonata. He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1963.

⁴ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 24.

Poulenc's style in general could be considered rather traditional compared to his contemporaries. His works tend to be rather short, and he often employed conservative forms of which modified ternary and rondo form are used the most. He has four compositional periods that are called the 'fauve' period, the 'Stravinsky or neoclassic period,' the third period that was marked as having a more serious and lyrical direction, and the fourth period that was marked by his mature, comfortable musical personality.⁵ Poulenc's style did not change very much throughout his career; instead he just applied everything as he learned. His style was more of a gradual deepening rather than a change of style.⁶

One main component of Poulenc's style of composition was that he wrote in a cellular way.⁷ Contrapuntal passages are very rare in Poulenc's music. Instead of having a theme and developing that theme, Poulenc would have a theme and repeat the theme. Sometimes it would be a strict repetition and other times it would be a slightly varied repetition. Instead of developing a theme, Poulenc would restate it in different keys or he would only change the accompaniment. If he did not repeat an idea, he would simply move to a contrasting idea. One reason Poulenc composed in this cellular way is because the melody was too dependent on the harmony.

Poulenc had a special talent for melody, and his melodic style differed depending on the genre of music. His melodies were primarily diatonic, and even his chromaticism tended to be overshadowed by the diatonic motion. When looking at the harmony, even the chromaticism can be seen as added major sevenths or diatonic tones. Poulenc's melodies are very lyrical and carry

⁵ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 95-98.

⁶ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 98.

⁷ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 59.

an emotional message in its flow with emphasis on the sixths and sevenths above the tonic.⁸ He also loved using appoggiaturas in his melodies and was known for using popular tunes in his music.

Poulenc was one of the best harmonists of his time.⁹ He was known for writing very tonally. He might not have always used a key signature, but the key of the music was still very apparent. Poulenc's harmonic style was very functional and he mostly used tertian chords, but he implemented seventh chords as much as tertian chords.¹⁰ In addition to sevenths, he often used ninths and thirteenths, but not elevenths. He also liked using appoggiaturas as a harmonic tool but he either resolved them unconventionally or did not resolve them at all.

Other traits or habits of Poulenc's style include the fact that he sometimes used ostinati or his pieces commonly had a constant rhythm of eighth-notes. Many times in the third movements of his instrumental works he will bring back thematic material from other movements. Another common stylistic feature is the use of regular phrase structures but then changing the meter of a fourth phrase of a section to disrupt the expectation.¹¹ One more trait of Poulenc is that a piece commonly ends in a different key than it began.¹²

The last work that Poulenc wrote was his oboe sonata in 1962, a year before his death. It was written as homage to Sergei Prokofiev. According to the editor, Millan Sachania, Poulenc finished it in 1962 but he was still unhappy with it. He then sent it to R. Douglas Gibson, his publisher, knowing that Gibson would have trustworthy input. Poulenc suddenly died, and

⁸ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 66.

⁹ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 73.

¹⁰ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 75.

¹¹ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 66.

¹² Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 85.

despite Poulenc's request, the piece was published with some errors. From letters between Gibson and Poulenc, we know that Poulenc composed the clarinet and oboe sonatas simultaneously and that they share some musical material.

The first movement of the sonata reveals many common characteristics of Poulenc's style. Sevenths can be found throughout including in the main theme. Some examples include measures seven and eight and measures fourteen and fifteen, which can be seen in music example 1 and 2. In these examples he is using the seventh degree on the tonic chord as well as other scale degree chords. These examples of sevenths are part of the original theme as well as the small motives, and are found throughout the movement. A lot of the chromatic notes are actually the sevenths of the chord. Other chords characteristic of Poulenc's style can be found, such as his incomplete thirteenths.¹³ This chord can be found in measures seven and eight as well as measure fourteen.

Example No. 1, Poulenc Oboe Sonata, m. 7 - 8

The image shows a musical score for Poulenc's Oboe Sonata, measures 7 and 8. It is written for Oboe and Piano. The Oboe part (top staff) begins in measure 7 with a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) consists of chords. In measure 7, the piano plays a chord of G4-B4-D5 (a dominant seventh) in the right hand and a bass line of G2-B1-D2 in the left hand. In measure 8, the piano plays a chord of G4-B4-D5 (a dominant seventh) in the right hand and a bass line of G2-B1-D2 in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings of *mf* and *molto*, and a circled number 1 in the top right corner.

¹³ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Buffalo, New York: UMI Research Press, 1980), 76.

Example No. 2, Poulenc Oboe Sonata, m. 14 – 15

Another way that this first movement represents Poulenc's style is in the constant eighth-notes throughout almost the entire movement. The first movement's main theme is repeated on different scale degrees. A key signature is not used in this movement, but a sense of a definite key area is always apparent.

The second movement has many Poulenc characteristics of which one is the constant driving rhythm in the piano. When the piano does not have constant eighths, the rhythm can be found in the oboe part. Again, there are sevenths found everywhere. In the beginning, the piano has the constant eighths while the actual melody in the oboe goes from seventh to seventh. Repetition is also a key component in the movement because the main melody is stated and restated around different scale degrees. This movement also uses Poulenc's favorite form of modified ternary. Like the first movement, a key signature is not used.

The third movement also has no key signature, and sevenths and incomplete thirteenths are composed into the actual melody of the oboe. The first measure of the melody for the oboe contains the root, third, thirteenth and eleventh, which are all over a seventh chord in the piano. This melody is in strict two-bar phrases of which the fourth phrase is extended by two beats. This

four-bar phrase theme is repeated again on a different scale degree and he again changes the rhythm and time signatures of the last two phrases. He then brings back the flowing sixteenth-note theme from the first movement, which is typical for his instrumental works.

The middle section of the last movement has some intense chromaticism starting at measure thirty-one where the chromaticism is actually a part of the underlying harmony. These intense few bars are also rhythmically derived from the fortissimo section in movement one around measures forty-eight to fifty-two. Later on in the last movement at measure forty-three, another theme from movement one is brought back. After this, the recapitulation occurs but this time it is meant to be mezzo forte instead of piano.

This movement is different from the other two because there is no constant stream of eighth-notes. Perhaps that is to help convey the mood of extreme grief. However, each time a theme is brought back from the first movement, the constant eighth-note rhythm returns. These disappear at the recapitulation of the third movement, but then return again for the last small theme that ends the piece. The piano eighths also seemingly fade out as the oboe is holding a note for several measures as if it is still keeping that constant time.

Madeleine Winefride Isabelle Dring was a woman of many talents. She was a composer, an actress, a singer and also played the piano and violin. She is still not very well known and there are only a few sources about her or her works. The only biography about her, titled *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music*, was written by Ro Hancock-Child and published in 2000.

Dring was born into a privileged musical family in London, England, in 1923. Her father was an architect, but both parents were musical and their leisure time included musical activities with the family. Dring learned violin and piano at an early age and at ten years old won a violin

scholarship to the Royal College of Music as a junior student. During this time she would attend catholic school at a French convent and then attend the Royal College on the weekends. She also won scholarships to continue her schooling as a senior student. At the Royal College, she had many different kinds of lessons including violin, piano, mime and composition. Her composition teachers at the Royal College included Howells, Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob. Dring later married Roger Lord, the principal oboist for the London Symphony Orchestra, for whom Dring wrote her many pieces for oboe. She died in 1977 of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Dring was known for her outward positive attitude and her humor, which had a great effect on her musical style. Her musical output consists mainly of shorter works such as songs, piano pieces and instrumental works, of which the piano has an integral part in almost all of her works. At the Royal College, Dring learned a lot about how to write for instrumental ensembles. Her teacher, Angela Bull, would commission Dring to write incidental music for her plays. Dring showed an aptitude and originality in orchestration as well as an understanding of how to achieve interesting orchestra color without making high demands on the players.

Dring admired many composers including Poulenc, Bruch, Prokofiev, Bax and Rachmaninov.¹⁴ She also liked many different types of music of which all affected her musical output. She was attracted to Caribbean dances, French café music, Renaissance and Tudor dance music and modern jazz.¹⁵ In short, she loved dance music, which is reflected in her compositional output. A lot of her music also sounds very complex while not actually being technically demanding. In general, her style of composition is light and unpretentious and is

¹⁴ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 9, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

¹⁵ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 21, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

commended for “being accessible to both highbrows and lowbrows, scholars and amateurs” for its technical brilliance and strongly popular element.¹⁶

Madeleine Dring’s *Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano* was composed in 1968 for Musica da Camera¹⁷ and was published in 1970. It had several performances in the United Kingdom before it was featured at the Florida International Music Festival. The three contrasting instruments blend well together while still retaining their respective characters throughout the piece.¹⁸ Her humor can also be found in the third movement of the trio.

The *Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano* consists of three movements of which the first is marked *Allegro con brio*, second as *Andante semplice* and the third as *Allegro giocoso*. The piano has a rather percussive quality throughout the piece that is similar to Poulenc’s style of accompaniment. The flute and oboe also go back and forth to show off their melodic and technical abilities.

The first movement is brisk and has a constant eighth-note pulse in the piano that creates an insistent driving force. The flute and oboe have smooth and somewhat jazzy lines over the piano. The flute and oboe play parallel each other throughout most of the movement but the flute is a sixth above the oboe nearly all the time. Sometimes a small theme will be presented by one of the instruments and then joined by the others.

The constant eighth-note pulse is a very important part of this first movement. The piano is almost constantly plunking out the pulse whether it is a simple accompaniment or part of the main melody. What makes the rhythm difficult in this movement is the fact that the meter is

¹⁶ RoHancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 17, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

¹⁷ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 48, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

¹⁸ Roe Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 48, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

constantly changing. The meter starts out in 4/4 time but in the sixth measure, the meter starts changing back and forth from 6/8 to 5/8 to 3/4. This constant change of meter and groups of two's and three's alternating gives the piece a dance-like quality.

The first movement is based around the key of C major but flirts with c minor throughout. Dring also seems to create ambiguity or a sense of suspense by omitting the fifth of the chord until the end of a section or the end of the piece. For example, at the beginning of the piece there are a lot of C chords that only have the root and the third. She does not give us a complete C-major chord until the end of the complete statement of theme 1, found in measure fifteen.

The second movement of the Dring Trio is in A major and is a typical slow movement with an expressive melody. Here the piano again keeps time with its constant eighth-notes, but in a much more relaxed fashion. This movement uses the oboe and flute in a conversational manner, where they take turns playing the melody. Following a piano introduction, the oboe plays first and is answered by the flute. The main melody that the oboe plays starts out in A major but leads to E major. When the flute answers the oboe, it is in C major, which leads back to A major. In the middle section of the movement, the oboe and flute are mainly in thirds or sixths. In the recapitulation, when the oboe has the melody again, the flute has an accompaniment line in the same key. But when the flute answers the oboe melody as in the exposition, it is in C major again. The ending again has the oboe and flute in sixths, ending on an A major chord, with a constant eighth-note figure appearing in the flute and oboe parts.

The third movement of the Trio contains examples of Dring's humor. This movement really gives the flute and oboe a chance to be conversational and competitive. There are several moments of hocket between the oboe and flute as well as small cadenza-like sections and an

actual cadenza. The two winds are constantly “talking” back and forth. It could also describe this movement as a “hilarious spoof which takes as its target those empty eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century pieces that are hell-bent on demonstrating every last detail of their performers’ technical prowess.”¹⁹ Also in the midst of the ‘tomfoolery’²⁰ a written out cadenza or showdown for both instruments ensues. Before anyone can win the competition in this cadenza, the piano interrupts everything because it is tired of being left out.²¹

As in the other two movements, the piano assumes its primary responsibility of being an insistent driving force with its constant eighth-notes. However, there are a few measures where either the flute or oboe temporarily relieves the piano of its duty. In this movement, the eighth-notes are heavier and more accented than in previous movements, which provide an angry or insistent character to match the competitiveness.

Very little is known about the composer Marina Dranishnikova. She was born in Russia in 1929²² and died in the 1990’s, though there is conflicting information on the exact years. One source states that she died in 1994²³ while the editor of her piece, Marc Fink, says she died in 1990. She studied both piano and composition with N.I Golubovskaya of the Leningrad Conservatory. Her father, Vladimir Dranishnikov, was a music director at the Maryinsky Theater in Leningrad which was, and is, one of the premier opera houses in Russia. *Poem* was originally written in 1953 in Moscow and was dedicated to V. M. Kurlin who was the solo oboist of the

¹⁹ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 48, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

²⁰ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 48, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

²¹ Ro Hancock-Child, *Madeleine Dring: Her Life, Her Music* (Chippenham, Wiltshire: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2009), 48, [http://rohancockchild.com/pdf %20 Files/ Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf](http://rohancockchild.com/pdf%20Files/Dring%202nd%20Ed%20printable.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2011).

²² “Marina Dranishnikova” Naxos. [http://www.naxos.com/person/Marina_Dranishnikova/ 51621.htm](http://www.naxos.com/person/Marina_Dranishnikova/51621.htm) (accessed January 10th, 2011).

²³ “Marina Dranishnikova” Naxos. [http://www.naxos.com/person/Marina_Dranishnikova/ 51621.htm](http://www.naxos.com/person/Marina_Dranishnikova/51621.htm) (accessed January 10th, 2011).

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. Kurlin and Dranishnikova had a tragic love affair and this piece is a representation of that affair. This can be heard in the music through smooth melodic lines that have a somber character and also through more technical melodies that create agitation.

Marc Fink was the editor for *Poem* by Dranishnikova. This piece would not be available to America and other places in the west if it were not for his research conducted in Russia. Fink was awarded a grant from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to go to Russia and do research on music by Russian composers of the twentieth-century. When he was there, he visited the libraries of St. Petersburg Conservatory and Moscow Conservatory where he found many works that are no longer published. Fink then performed one of the works he found, Dranishnikova's *Poem*, at the 2003 conference of the International Double Reed Society in Greensboro, North Carolina. Several of his colleagues urged him to publish the piece so it would be available to many others in the west. Fink published this piece in 2003.

Poem is written in a romantic style. It has beautiful melodies that fit within a key, and rubato is used throughout. It also contains extensive chromaticism, complex rhythms and mixed meters, and the piano is written in a soloistic manner. The reason this piece is more in the late-romantic style is because of the extremes that this piece takes with each of the mentioned elements. This piece is very demanding for the oboe and the piano because the basic components are taken to extremes, especially the time signatures and key signatures.

In this approximately nine-minute piece, nine of the fifteen key signatures are used. The piece begins in E-flat minor and moves to G-flat major with six flats, both of which are rather unusual keys. The key signature moves to an opposite key of B major. The section with this key signature also includes some G-sharp minor chords. The piece continues throughout in the manner of changing keys and using the major and minor mode of a key signature.

There is also an extreme amount of chromaticism throughout the piece. Dranishnikova uses many accidentals to anticipate a key change. She also uses the chromatic half steps to enrich a melodic line. When using chromatic half steps in a key signature with five or six flats or sharps, double sharps and double flats are required. Most composers try to avoid this because it makes the piece more challenging to read. Instead of writing a C-double sharp, composers might change the note to a D. Many composers frequently choose to write in keys signatures with less accidentals to avoid the problem altogether.

Time signatures also change frequently in this piece. In the lyrical sections, the different time signatures included are 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 8/4 and 9/4. In the Allegretto sections, the different time signatures include 5/16, 6/16, 7/16, 8/16 and 9/16. They can be split into two different groups: meters that have denominations of quarter-notes and meters with denominations of sixteenth-notes. The time signatures in quarter-notes are all found in the more lyrical sections while the time signatures in sixteenth-notes are all found in the faster and more playful Allegretto section. The changes of signatures seem to be used at random and the overall effect is they succumb to the needs of the irregular melodic line. Many other composers writing in the romantic style use a more symmetrical phrase structures that avoids having to use mixed meters.

In addition to the use of mixed meters, the work includes a great deal of syncopation. The piano tends to have constant sixteenth-notes or triplets, which means the oboist has to count very carefully. There are also a number of instances of note groups of two against note groups of three. One of the more difficult examples of this is when the oboe has groups of two sixteenth-notes against the piano's groups of three sixteenth-notes in the Allegretto section.

The piece also includes accents in very technical passages. At a glance, these accents seem confusing and hard to place in the intended spot because they are rhythmically placed on unexpected beats. The accents seem to place the notes of the passages in groups of four while, according to the time signature, the notes should be placed in groups of six. At a closer look, the accents mark the patterns of fingering which actually help. The accents create rhythmical syncopation, but technically make the run easier to comprehend.

Many tempo liberties and dynamic changes are an outlet of expressiveness and are appropriate in romantic music. Dranishnikova indicates that rubato should be used in several places throughout the piece. Other tempo markings include ritardando and a tempo. The three recordings that exist of the piece seem to take much more tempo liberties than what is actually marked. Different dynamics such as pianississimo and fortississimo are used to create tension. The piano part is also very soloistic and challenging, which is probably due to the fact that the composer was a pianist herself. As performers, the oboist and pianist must learn their parts first before they can effectively implement tempo and dynamic changes to emphasize the beautiful, fluid nature of the piece.

The styles of Poulenc, Dring and Dranishnikova are similar because none of them ventured out of tonal boundaries, as some of their contemporaries did. But though they were composing at the same time, each had different influences that affected their overall style of composition. While very little is known about Dranishnikova, she was most assuredly influenced by romantic composers. Poulenc had many composer friends, artists and poets who influenced his style. Dring was influenced by composers including Poulenc, but was perhaps most influenced by her own personality and sense of humor.

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