

Luke Rivard

End of Summer Report

FURSCA, Summer 2023

Over the course of the summer, I have been studying the flute, oboe, and clarinet sonatas of Francis Poulenc. These three sonatas are canonical works for these instruments. These works are interesting to my ear and it has been my goal to understand why. I achieved this through analysis. With my results, I intend to make a guide that will help performers create compelling and informed performances. My intent is for audiences to have the opportunity to hear compelling performances of these pieces.

To find what I now observe to be the best interpretations, there was much work to be done. I started by doing a harmonic analysis of the pieces. This involves finding the chords and progressions that Poulenc used so I could ascertain his harmonic language. After this, I examined the overall forms of the pieces. There are some expectations in structure that accompany the term *sonata* and it is important to know how the composer dealt with them. Finally, I did an analysis of the thematic content to discover how Poulenc developed his governing musical ideas. The next step was to do analytical listenings of a myriad of recordings of these works. I listened to how performers from across time periods interpreted specific moments that served important roles in harmony, form, and theme. From this, I learned where performance practice arose and whether it was the result of the composer's intent or a performer's idiosyncrasies.

Now that I have deeply researched these pieces, I am creating informed opinions of best interpretations. I will use these arguments to create a performance guide to help performers interpret and perform these pieces in a way that is more communicative to the audience. These three guides will become my Albion College honors thesis.

This is work that has been incredibly rewarding and useful to the post-graduate education path I hope to take. Participating in FURSCA has offered me a special hands-on approach to my major. I will present my research at the Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium on Albion College's campus in April of 2024. I am very grateful for the generous support I have received. Thank you to the Taffs Endowment for supporting my research!