
Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Flute and Piano: A Performance and Interpretative Perspective

Соната для флейти і фортепіано Франсіса Пуленка: виконавсько-інтерпретаційний вимір

УДК 78.082.2:780.641.1/.5:78.071.1(44)
DOI: 10.31500/2309-8155.25.2025.346004

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Abstract. The article examines interpretive approaches to Francis Poulenc's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957) within the neoclassical chamber idiom. Reflecting on how a work is realized in performance, the author highlights the interplay of objective and subjective elements in interpretation. The sonata's genre and stylistic profile is discussed in terms of its symphonic character, dramaturgical design, and thematic unity. The article also offers a comparative analysis of two recorded interpretations—by the duos Emmanuel Pahud (flute) / Éric Le Sage (piano) and Bruno Cavallo (flute) / Bruno Canino (piano)—considering contrasting approaches to overall form, intonational nuance, metrical and rhythmic pulse, timbral coloring, and dynamic shaping. The study argues that Poulenc's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* embodies New French Classicism and exemplifies an instrumental form governed by an overarching dramaturgical arc. Special attention is given to performers' reflective practice and to intonation as a key means of interpretation.

Keywords: Francis Poulenc, performance interpretation, performance practice, flute, chamber sonata, dramaturgy, musical style.

Problem Statement. In contemporary musicology and performance pedagogy, there is a growing interest in analyzing interpretative strategies in the performance of 20th-century chamber-instrumental works, particularly in the context of searching for authorial style, dramaturgical logic, and performance intention. One vivid example of a work that requires deep artistic and analytical comprehension is Francis Poulenc's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957)—a late example of modernist chamber music that combines features of symphonism, neoclassicism, Impressionism, and theatrical dramaturgy. Given the complex internal structure, polyphonic saturation, intonational density, and multi-level dramaturgy of this piece, there arises a need for a professional interpretative evaluation of its performance interpretations. At the forefront is the issue of the relationship between the composer's intent and the performer's concept, which is especially

relevant in light of the numerous divergent interpretations of the same musical text. This situation creates the need to develop and test an algorithm for interpretative analysis that combines compositional-structural understanding with the individual intonational and stylistic characteristics of performers. Additionally, a particular difficulty lies in defining the boundaries between the objective rendering of the musical text and the subjective interpretation that turns the performance into an independent artistic act. In this respect, Poulenc's *Sonata* serves as an illustrative example for analysis—with its integrated dramaturgical lines, intonational markers, and deep individualization of timbral and rhythmic material. The relevance of the study is determined by the need to understand the interpretative specificity of the 20th-century flute repertoire, to develop a methodology for analyzing performance versions, and to form modern approaches

to teaching chamber-instrumental performance based on the composer's intentions and the logic of the work's dramaturgical structure. The study of Poulenc's Sonata in this context allows a deeper insight into the composer's musical thinking and contributes to the formation of performance reflection as an artistic-analytical process.

Analysis of Previous Studies and Publications.

The stated research problem is grounded in three key directions. First, sources on musicology and interpretation theory (works by Viktor Moskalenko [3; 4; 5], Yuliya Nikolayevska [6], Nataliia Riabukha [8], Kira Tymofieieva [9]) provide a methodological basis for analyzing the interpretative process, particularly through concepts of creative-search, interpretative, and performative-reproductive activity. Second, studies dedicated to the work of Francis Poulenc (research by Mykhailo Kozyriatskyi [1], Daria Mendelenko [2], Tingting Pan [7]) create a context for genre-stylistic analysis of the Flute and Piano Sonata as an example of 20th-century neoclassical chamber music. Finally, sources on performance practice (such as the works of Robert Dick [10; 11]) focus on modern flute-playing techniques, which allows for an in-depth comparative analysis of interpretative versions of the work.

Aim and Objectives. Among the main objectives of the study, we highlight the following: to reveal the essence of the concept of artistic interpretation in performance art; to analyze the genre-stylistic features of F. Poulenc's *Sonata for Flute and Piano*; and to perform a comparative analysis of two interpretations of the Sonata as performed by the duos Emmanuel Pahud / Éric Le Sage and Bruno Cavallo / Bruno Canino.

Results and Discussion. Performance theory encompasses a range of interesting scholarly concepts, such as issues of interpretation of works, stylistic analysis, synthesis of practical observations, etc. The very concept of "interpretation" in a broad sense means translating into a more accessible language, elucidation, explanation, or description. We observe interpretation as creative assimilation of artistic works in musical performance and in transcriptions and arrangements (as genres of compositional creativity). Artistic interpretation can be regarded both as performance activity and as the result of such

activity. The process of this kind of interpretation consists of several stages: *emergence*, when the first outlines of the performance conception appear; *formation*, where refinement of individual details and deepening of the performance concept take place (this stage is impossible without incorporating the stylistic characteristics of the composer's work and the stylistic features of the given piece); *clarification*, which implies certain changes in the evolution of the conception; *materialization* of the conceived interpretation and its working-out in the process of performance activity.

Overall, artistic interpretation can be seen as a kind of mechanism for understanding works of art, a means of assimilating them through the rendering by the artist-interpreter (instrumentalist, singer, conductor, actor, director, translator, etc.). Artistic interpretation has a productive, creative character and always culminates in the creation of new artistic values—in other words, performance versions of a work in the time-space of the stage.

In artistic interpretation one can distinguish two main features—external and internal. The external features include: the object of interpretation, the intermediary-interpreter, and the immediate result of the performance activity. The internal feature encompasses the deeper semantic content of the process: grasping the composer's concept, understanding the musical work as the composer's original creative intent, forming one's own performance strategy, and its embodiment in the act of performance. The artistic interpretation of a single work in an artist's practice is a continuous process: it continues to exist in a post-performative dimension—as a variant of interpretation that under certain conditions can be re-actualized.

A performer may have brilliant capabilities to concretize a work—given consummate technique, artistry, etc.—or conversely may have limited abilities to interpret it if his or her expressive means are not fully developed. In both cases, the performance will not be fully realized if the equilibrium of form and content is disturbed. In order to embody a specific image, the artist must "inhabit" it. Not coincidentally, the performances of great master interpreters have always exemplified deep penetration into the composer's intent and a careful attitude towards it.

In musicology, the term “interpretation” came into use earlier than in the theory of other arts. As early as the 19th century, it was often used in art criticism and art studies alongside the term “performance.” In this context, “interpretation” carries a distinct connotation of an individualized reading of the musical canvas, based on the uniqueness of artistic rendering, whereas the meaning of “performance” is confined to a strictly objective, mechanically accurate transmission of the composer’s intent encoded in the score. Thus, performance practice was notionally divided into objective and subjective realms. The objective aspect is connected with the composer’s creativity, and the subjective aspect with the performer’s creativity in reinterpreting the former’s intent. This issue is addressed in the works of V. Moskalenko [3; 4; 5], Yu. Nikolayevska [6], N. Riabukha [8], K. Tymofieieva [9], and others. For instance, according to V. Moskalenko, the practice of realizing a performance conception—the key idea of interpretation—is connected with problems of musical development, specifically with how organically and convincingly the performer can reproduce the process of formation of the work’s figurative component [5]. The researcher touches on the important aspect of how artistic interpretation functions and believes that it should be considered both as a performative activity and as its specific result. He regards the interpretation of musical works as a unity of the subjective and the objective, where in each case the object is the text of the given work and the subject is the individual personality [3]. He develops detailed algorithms for the analysis of a given interpretative realization, which make it possible to create an individual interpretative context for the stage reading of a musical work. In the next subsection, we will consider this interpretation algorithm in detail.

In our view, the methodology of interpretative analysis proposed by V. Moskalenko [4] is quite convincing. Below we present Moskalenko’s algorithm for interpretative analysis, which is based on:

1. Understanding the musical work:

- a. the composer’s intent (real, conditionally real, hypothetical);
- b. the musical idea (compositional and semantic);
- c. the most significant features of the realization of the musical idea.

2. Understanding the musical work in performance versions, taking into account:

- a. the performer’s stylistic orientation;
- b. the performer’s conception (interpretive design);
- c. the performer’s musical idea (compositional and semantic).

It should be noted that the creative activity of a professional musician aimed at performing a musical work is multifaceted. Performance interpretation is a multi-layered phenomenon and has the following planes of manifestation: creative-search, conventionally interpretative, and performative-reproductive [3]. Clearly, the creative-search component is realized during the theoretical analysis of a work; the interpretative component, in revealing the work’s expressive potential; and the performative-reproductive component, in the time-space of stage performance. In general, we understand the process of performance interpretation as “an intellectually organized activity of musical thinking, aimed at revealing the expressive potential of a musical work” [5, p. 50].

Let us attempt to apply this algorithm to the example of Poulenc’s *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957). Throughout his life, Poulenc worked in a variety of genres, but symphonic and chamber-instrumental music occupied an important place. It is in the latter—his “creative laboratory”—that one can trace the evolution of his style in the context of the French composer’s stylistic quests. Composed in the late period of his oeuvre, the *Flute Sonata* became a masterpiece of 20th-century chamber-instrumental music. As D. Mendelenko notes, “the sonata genre in Poulenc’s work achieved a vividly original, distinctive embodiment. The composer’s treatment of the genre followed the general trends of individualizing the sonata genre in the 20th century and softening strict limits and canons, and it also reflected the peculiarities of Poulenc’s development as a creative personality, for whom the guideposts were always his listening and performance experience, as well as the composer’s musical preferences—diverse and at times eclectic” [2, p. 223].

All these qualities are vividly reflected in the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957). In addition, one should note its striking melodicism. At its core lies songfulness, which had a significant influence

on the composer's style. Moreover, the *melos* of this chamber sonata by Poulenc is akin to the music of 19th-century lyric operas—Bizet, Gounod, Massenet. It is worth mentioning one rather typical trait of the composer's style. Poulenc was a master of paradoxes, surprises, sharp effects, and dramatic juxtapositions. In his youth, he loved to appear before the listener in the guise of a musician-jester, a prankster, a mocker. Later, in his artistic maturity, such displays of "boyishness" became less characteristic. The paradoxical nature of Poulenc's artistic thinking now manifested itself in sharp, often unexpected contrasts of emotional states, which seemingly convey the idea that all life is a bizarre combination of light and shadow, that both principles cannot exist without each other, and that pure joy must eventually be washed by sorrow. However, this subtext evokes not pessimism or spiritual disillusionment, but rather a fullness of life perception, a truthful reproduction of reality—and life therefore appears even more beautiful and desirable.

Poulenc is credited with saying that he compared himself to his music: "*My music is my portrait.*" In the same vein, one could say that the way he realizes his creative ideas on an instrument is a reflection of his variegated personality. Typical features of the composer's style include exceptional clarity, transparency of exposition, a dominance of melody and, as in everything he did, brilliant ingenuity—an ability to find new textural devices that uniquely refresh the dramaturgy of the musical narrative.

Poulenc's chamber-instrumental style is the brightest expression of the ideas of New French Classicism in the realm of instrumental music. The composer draws significantly on the writing manner of 18th-century musicians—harpsichordists and, to an even greater extent, the authors of early piano music. But the art of the old masters serves him only as an impulse for his own artistic explorations. The expressive forms of times long past emerge in his work so renewed that they become something fundamentally different, a qualitatively new phenomenon in his creative thinking.

A general trend in Poulenc's reimagining of Classical-era textural formulas was infusing them with dynamism through various structural, melodic-harmonic, rhythmic, articulatory, and tempo

modifications. In many works, the transparent hues of the instrument's "hammer-like" sonority give way to pedal-blurred washes, indicating the composer's interest in the coloristic achievements of the Romantics and Impressionists. His chamber-instrumental legacy is marked by genuine novelty.

Poulenc's later years were a time of fruitful work in the chamber music genre. It was during this period that he composed the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957). In terms of expressing dramatic conflict in music, Poulenc's thinking exhibits traits of symphonism. As is known, the principles of symphonism correspond most closely to the features of composition and form in the sonata-symphonic cycle. The transference of symphonism into Poulenc's chamber ensemble music is associated with the peculiarities of form, texture, and melodic-harmonic solutions. He began his compositional career with the *Preludes for Piano* (1916), in which the traditions of 19th-century European Romanticism are quite evident. In the *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon* and the *Sonata for Horn, Trumpet and Trombone* (both 1922), one can clearly trace individual stylistic features that uniquely reinterpret the influence of Romanticism, Expressionism, and Impressionism. In a fully realized aesthetic form, all these creative innovations can be observed in the Flute and Piano Sonata under analysis. This work reveals Poulenc's powerful coloristic thinking, evident both at the level of overall concept and dramaturgy and in the logic of thematic development. A sprawling thematic canvas grows from an initial intonational seed, indicating the nascent principle of monothematicism, albeit not strongly pronounced.

This work, having absorbed all the hallmarks of the composer's philosophical and aesthetic explorations, demonstrates a high level of mastery of the musical language of the modernist era: chromatic tension and angular melody, polytonal and polymodal shifts, complex, intense dissonant harmony, free improvisatory elements, aperiodic structures, metric-rhythmic diversity, and so on.

Let us outline the main authorial ideas of this work that should be considered in the interpretative analysis of its performance versions. In the *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, Poulenc renews the form of the sonata-allegro. Like the composer's large-scale

works, the flute sonata has much in common with the developmental principles of a theatrical play (this is organically facilitated by sonata form, which reproduces the stages of setup—development—resolution, corresponding to exposition—development—recapitulation). An important quality of the expositions in Poulenc's sonata form is their exceptionally high dynamic activity. This quality is evident in the expositions of movements II and III of the sonata as well. The form of the flute sonata does not have a prolonged development section in the exposition, but there is a developmental character *as a mode of exposition*. The developmental character of the main sections of the piece is often conditioned by the dynamic and structural openness of the musical material. The contrast between the exposition's themes is minimal; however, tension and continuous development are achieved because the transition and secondary themes are perceived as successive stages of development of the primary theme. In the secondary theme sections, emotional tension is concentrated gradually. In such cases, the lyrical theme is enriched in the course of development by polyphonic means (the composer employs various polyphonic devices of voice-leading development), and it undergoes changes in rhythmic and harmonic foundation. In the first and third movements of the sonata, these qualities lead to emotional intensification and a change in character. Emphasizing the boundary between the exposition and the development in this work is typical of the composer's chamber-instrumental symphonic pieces: an increase in tempo marks the onset of the development (*Allegretto malincolico* in the first movement, and *Presto giocoso* in the finale); the beginning of the development section is clearly marked by thematic material; and there is a characteristic juxtaposition of coloristic, energetically charged themes, which uniquely highlights the central conflict. The chief feature of the first movement's development is a dialogical collision of different thematic constructions with contrasting rhythms. In these developmental passages, there are virtually no clearly defined melodic lines; the intonational material is linked to various thematic formations. Moreover, in the developments of the first

movement and the finale, an extremely important role is played by polyphonic techniques as a means of shaping the Sonata's musical thought. Thus, polyphonic devices for developing the musical texture occupy an equal place alongside textural-harmonic means. Another aspect of the composer's symphonic thinking, characteristic of the flute sonata, is that not only do the primary and secondary themes of the exposition contrast with each other, but the entire exposition and development contrast with one another, as do the individual movements of the cycle. This is caused by Poulenc's re-accentuation of the functions of the movements in the sonata cycle. Thus, in the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1957) Poulenc operates with powerful processes that encompass and unite components of the cycle that at first glance seem separate. The sonata vividly demonstrates this phenomenon. Owing to its dramaturgical features and intonational connections, the entire three-movement cycle can be regarded at the macro-form level as a compound single-movement form built on contrasts.

For a comprehensive interpretative analysis, let us consider the main devices that characterize the composer's concept in this sonata-symphonic cycle—namely, the thematism and the ways it is developed, the peculiarities of form-building, the musical-intonational unity, the re-accentuation of the functions of the movements of the cycle, and, as a result, the creation of a through-composed instrumental form.

The *Sonata for Flute and Piano* consists of three movements, united by a through-action form. All the means of musical language are directed toward expressing and sharpening the main features of a central image-mood, characterized by emotional tension and dynamic agitation. The fundamental principle of development in the cycle is the play of tone color and rhythmic formulas. The presence of leit-intonations and leit-harmonies indicates the composer's desire to create a synthetic form where the boundaries between movements are insignificant; what matters is the idea that unites the entire work, which to the ear sounds like a one-movement form.

The structure of the first thematic seed consists of two leit-intonations (the first is built on a ninth, the second on stepwise intervallic shifts). These

intonational elements provide an energetic impulse for the emergence of subsequent thematic material. The main thematic construction is a tense ascending motion upward, juxtaposed logically with a descending motion in eighth-notes. These thematic elements permeate all movements of the Sonata.

The secondary theme is constructed in a more tense, concise manner: the piano part is rendered *senza pedal*, and the flute line features urgent, dotted, accentuated intonations. As the music develops and the main thematic constructions undergo textural and rhythmic transformations, the dramaturgical progression leads into the development section. It should be noted that the melodic line of these thematic constructions is highly individualized—a hallmark of Poulenc's style. At its core are coloristic elements and sharp rhythmic figures. Interesting combinations of narrow and wide intervals, along with syncopated rhythms, imbue the theme with significant tension, inner strength, and energy.

From the outset, the main theme is presented in dynamic motion. Gradual unfolding and active variation-based evolution of the melodic line serve as key characteristics of the development. Rhythm in this work is the foundation of dramaturgy. In Poulenc's writing, rhythm functions like *mélo-déclamation*, used to heighten emotional tension. This effect is achieved by accentuating rhythmic groups against a backdrop of chromatic glissandi in the piano part, resulting in an active, volitional impulse driving the theme forward. All the aforementioned melodic and structural-harmonic models already at the exposition stage carry great potential for further development of the musical fabric; for this reason, one can speak of the symphonic nature of the Sonata's thematism.

Within the exposition of the thematic material, the dotted-rhythm development of the theme gains intensity. It gives a distinctive sonority and defines the composer's individual manner. The main method of developing the thematic material is *sequencing* (the structure of the motive in each new sequence is a variation of the previous one). The sequential treatments form a series of active impulses with sudden stops, and one clearly senses the overall directed motion of the musical flow. In such concise waves, with emotional buildup, the melody

gradually reaches its climax. One means of overall dramatization of the musical texture is the composer's use of dotted rhythm (for example, in a new episode of the development section at rehearsal 8: over a chordal, quasi-chorale sonority in the piano, a jagged dotted melodic line appears in the flute; then the piano doubles the flute's melodic line).

The development of the Sonata is a pivotal stage in the evolution of the main thematic areas, which gradually draw closer together, complementing each other. The development section marked *Un peu plus vite* is constructed by alternating presentations of the dotted-rhythm intonations. (Using a wide register, contrasting dynamics, and dissonant chords, the theme is given a warm coloration, focusing inner strength and energy that will soon "find its way out.") The rapid development of the secondary theme leads to the beginning of the third and concluding section of the sonata form. The presence of accents, changes in motion, and the use of diverse techniques to develop the musical material lend the movement's dramaturgy extraordinary emotional tension and dynamic intensity.

At the crest of the climactic wave, the main theme reappears. The recapitulation is characterized by brevity and conciseness. In the recapitulation, the primary theme sounds energetically charged, conveying sensations that are stirring and passionate. It is enriched with dramatic traits; sequential development remains an important device.

If the first movement of the sonata has features of a coloristic sketch, then the second movement (*Assez lent*) is a lyrical monologue—the protagonist's inner world, his feelings and memories. The introduction of the second movement serves an original function as a *link* between movements. In it, one can trace a continuation of the motion using familiar intonations from the first movement: a gradual subsiding of the earlier principal thematic material, its receding to the background and transformation into the basis for a steady motion with ostinato elements. Furthermore, the very opening of the second movement (a two-bar flute-piano canon) organically connects the first and second movements, smoothing the abrupt boundary between them. Thanks to this device, the composer achieves intonational-dramaturgical unity.

Against a static harmonic background in the piano, the melodic line of the main theme is heard on the flute—transparent and warm. The thematic material of the slow movement evokes associations with Impressionistic sketches. The harmonic basis of the theme, presented in the piano part, is a succession of seventh chords. The absence of a clear tonal center, the slow tempo, the steady rhythmic motion, and quiet dynamics create an atmosphere of tranquility, yet in the chromatic inflections of the ostinato line one senses a hidden inner tension.

Like a powerful burst of energy, the optimistic, life-affirming finale (*Presto giocoso*) begins. The main theme is presented from the outset as a fully formed, integral entity, its appearance having been prepared by the preceding movements. A major mode, clear rhythm, accentuation of each note, and a rich chordal texture—all this recalls features of a grotesque march. The theme is built on a peculiar juxtaposition of the piano's texture and melody with that of the flute, followed by a filling-in of the texture. The thematic core is the establishment of a tonal/intonational center; the second part of the theme develops this thematic core. The simplicity and clarity of the thematic material are manifested in melodic-harmonic terms and in the clear and concise periodic form. The finale does not have an extensive development of the main theme, unlike the first movement. Development of the theme within the primary section is limited to a repetition of the period in the piano part. The development is carried out via sequencing and an intensified motion of the chordal texture, which leads to the entrance of the secondary theme.

The secondary theme (rehearsal 5) occupies a sphere of agitated lyricism, a character that is also present in the overall sound of the principal section. A leading role in developing the intonational material here is played by sequential constructions. This section is fairly extended, saturated with surging waves of activity. The development section (rehearsal 9) follows a roughly wave-like progression. The first wave (rehearsal 9) presents intonations of the first movement's main material in the flute, over a dry ostinato accompaniment in the piano. The second wave (rehearsal 13) uses intonations of the second movement's theme. The third wave

(rehearsal 15)—an ostinato-driven intensification of the musical texture—is suddenly interrupted by the dotted-rhythm intonations in the flute from the first movement's development. The culmination of the dramaturgical development is the recapitulation of the main section. Thanks to the saturated sonority of the theme, the emphatically dense chordal texture, and powerful dynamics, this section achieves its climactic realization.

Next, we turn to an interpretative analysis of the musical text as a means of better understanding Poulenc's work—an approach which, in turn, facilitates flutist-performers' comprehension of the composer's music by examining our own interpretative versions of this piece. In this study, we utilized recordings of the Sonata performed by the duos Emmanuel Pahud (flute)—Éric Le Sage (piano) and Bruno Cavallo (flute)—Bruno Canino (piano).

The performance by the chamber duo Emmanuel Pahud / Éric Le Sage stays very close to the composer's intent, thereby realizing the composer's stylistic vision. The performers strictly adhere to the indications of Poulenc's own edition of the Sonata. They set themselves the challenging task of reproducing the composer's design: the saturated dramaturgy, the minimalist concept, the emotional richness of the musical images and their diverse tone colors.

In the first movement, they vividly trace the contour of the music's dynamic "curve," succinctly delineating the wave-like, improvisational development of the primary material. All technical means are directed toward conveying the subjective element; consequently, the rhythm is fluid and changeable, subordinated to melodic intonation. In this performance, the piano part acts as a kind of matrix on which the flute's thematic components germinate.

As noted earlier, rhythm carries a strong inner potency. In Pahud and Le Sage's interpretation, one immediately senses a strong driving impulse (in the flute part and the active sequential rhythmic groups in the piano part). They bring out an energetically charged structure of gradual rhythmic variation—an unfolding of the theme toward the revelation of heterogeneous micro-structures (leit-thematic elements, leit-intonations) that will manifest vividly in the second and third movements. The interpreters weave the musical fabric tightly

using the main theme's intonations. They treat this material in a graphically consistent manner throughout the piece (the rhythmic pattern remains the same, articulation and touch are unaltered, and the manner of intoning is uniform, with dynamic intensity flowing naturally from the context of the dramaturgical line's development). As a result, in their interpretation the work sounds like a single through-composed form, thus bringing to life the idea of a one-movement structure.

The secondary theme sounds cohesive; to the ear, it forms a complete period. The performers build on the composer's idea of a wave-like development of the musical fabric. They clearly shape the dynamic contour of this development in performance. In this interpretation, the development section, which begins with the main theme's intonations, immediately takes on expressive, intonationally sharpened qualities, while still retaining an overall contemplative character. In the Pahud/Le Sage rendering, the development becomes coloristic: the flute and piano seem to create "colors of timbre and scent." The composer's tempo and character markings, which articulate the form-building structures, are accentuated and intensified by the performers.

It is worth noting the impeccable ensemble coordination and the exceptional technical mastery of the performers, which allow them to produce extremely subtle shades and timbral effects. In this case, it is not mere indulgence in beautiful timbre for its own sake, but a consciously understood fundamental dramaturgical principle. It enables, over the course of the musical form, the unfolding of a variety of differentiated moods in mutual contrast and interpenetration.

The performers imbue the recapitulation with a highly dynamic character. The intonational kernel continues to develop: the flutist actively re-intones the theme, while the piano provides agitated sequential figurations. In their rendition, the main theme in the recapitulation is interpreted as a pre-climactic digression—an anticipation of the dramatic unfolding that will occur in the finale. The pianist enriches the musical fabric with coloristic nuances (a kind of "play" with tonalities, a new timbral presentation of the theme—the graphic contour of the line remains the same, but with a new expressive character).

Another regularity of Poulenc's writing is vividly revealed in this performance of the Sonata: in Poulenc, the build-up of dynamics is achieved through harmonic means, and climaxes are interrupted by unexpected dynamic contrasts. In the Pahud/Le Sage duo's interpretation, the structural segments are highlighted with exaggerated harmonic shifts amid a continuously unfolding dynamic and coloristic texture. This creates an effect of "stage exaggeration," where on the one hand the performers reproduce the composer's intent in terms of imagery and the "purity" of his conception (they have based their approach on Poulenc's own reflections about his style), and on the other hand, the traditions of European flute and piano performance assert their role. In the latter, every element of the texture must be clearly articulated, under the principle that intonation is paramount.

In the dramaturgy of the second movement, particular attention is given to the unfolding of the melodic material's intonation. The performers interpret this material as a complex polyphonic layering. The primary expressive characteristic of the second movement in Pahud and Le Sage's performance is its contemplative focus. As the musical fabric continues to unfold, an improvisational feeling and timbral play emerge, with the main theme being passed between the instruments in turn, all within an overall atmosphere of reflection.

The continuous development of the finale's exposition (an authorial hallmark of Poulenc's synthetic one-movement sonata form) is vividly realized by the performers through sharpened rhythmic drive, clearly defined intonational models, and thinking in large thematic units. By dynamizing the musical texture and emphasizing its developmental character, the interpreters lead the music to its climax. This is achieved through rhythmic intensification, a thickening of the piano's texture, and an emphatic, almost provocative manner of intonation on the flute.

The finale in Pahud/Le Sage's interpretation is the embodiment of romantic uplift and pathos, akin to the character of the first movement's music. Faithfully reproducing the composer's idea of integrating the movements into a single through-composed form, the performers carry the dramaturgical development to the work's dramatic resolution (rehearsal 18), which is built on the intonational

kernel of the main theme. They logically prepare the anticipation and appearance of the main thematic seed from the first movement (rehearsal 20), thereby creating a dramatic thematic arc across the entire flute sonata.

The interpretative version by Bruno Cavallo / Bruno Canino represents a somewhat different approach to the Sonata. In their performance reading, one senses the influence of a percussive piano sonority (a neoclassical approach); the primary mode of tone production is *non-legato*; and there is a “non-tempered” approach to the ensemble sound, reflecting contemporary compositional trends. These points form the basis for comparing and aurally analyzing this interpretation versus the previous one.

The main thematic kernel is rendered in a dramatic, intense manner. The dynamism in the development of the main thematic structures in Cavallo and Canino’s performance is achieved by emphasizing the rhythmic pulsation. In this interpretation, significantly less importance is given to melodic intonation; however, the role of rhythmic drive is sharply elevated. The rhythm is percussive and pulsating, deliberately introduced by the performers into their interpretation of the work, and it enables them to create a grotesque sonic imagery. The performers consciously pay less attention to wave-like shaping of phrases. In their reading, the piece acquires traits of confidence and decisiveness.

If in the previous interpretation the main theme was treated as a process of active becoming (a typical feature of Poulenc’s writing), then in the Cavallo/Canino interpretation the theme’s presentation is a dramatically intense statement or narrative. The unifying factor that ensures the secondary theme sounds coherent is the metric pulse, which serves as the cementing foundation of their concept. Here one clearly perceives the polyrhythm of structural layers and a transparency that allows the thematic strata to be heard distinctly. Instead of a wave-like development of the musical material, the interpreters offer a more straightforward expository mode of delivery, in which dynamic juxtapositions often play an important dramaturgical role.

In the development section, the performers focus on the saturated sound of the texture and on the graphic solidity of the linear development

of the thematic material in both flute and piano parts. As in the previous interpretation, here too the interpreters strive to fully reveal the composer’s intent for the Sonata as a unified one-movement conception. In the development, the flutist prominently presents the theme against an active, vigorous texture in the piano. Subsequently, a similar type of presentation of musical material is taken up by the pianist. The second theme in the development is perceived in contrast—its character is detached, contemplative. The main expressive characteristics intensify, leading to a climax that is highly rhythmic. In this section, through accentuation, rhythmic modifications, and pointed phrasing, an emotional and tense expressive image is constructed.

Notably, the meditative character of the second movement enables the performers to create a deep figurative interpretation with a vivid coloristic realization. In this rendition, one can clearly follow the transformations of the main monothematic kernel (the dotted-rhythm figures) in character; the interpreters vividly showcase their variability.

Characteristic features of the finale in this interpretation include a pronounced display of dynamic contrasts and textural changes. The performers place extremely high importance on rhythm and saturated sonority, in contrast to the previous interpretation, where intonational coherence of thematic links prevailed. Their performance style is marked by brilliance, freedom, masterful phrasing, a filigree technique, ease of execution, emotionality, sensuality, and a flexible, homogeneous tone enriched with color.

The approach to flute tone production by Emmanuel Pahud and Bruno Cavallo is based on several common performance principles: a) the sound is at once palpable and weightless; b) it is full-bodied yet light; c) it is voluminous but not forced; d) it remains flexible and homogeneous throughout the entire range; e) it is bright and characterized by a distinct timbral quality.

Moreover, whatever the attack—hard or soft—it is always precise, clear, expressive, and very clean, which automatically precludes any unwanted noises or flubs. These flutists are also distinguished by a particular vibrato (inseparable from the sound itself) and an exceptional command of the *piano* dynamic.

Conclusion. Interpretation in performance art emerges as a multi-stage creative process that includes both objective (the composer's text) and subjective (the performer's rendering) components. It encompasses the stages of conception, its deepening, refinement, and materialization in the act of performance. Artistic interpretation does not cease after the performance, but continues to exist as a variant that can be re-actualized under new circumstances. In this process, a key role is played by the performer's thinking—his or her ability to profoundly comprehend the work and to resonate with it emotionally.

Poulenc's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* is a vivid example of 20th-century chamber-instrumental music that synthesizes features of French neoclassicism, Impressionism, and elements of symphonism. It demonstrates a renewed sonata-allegro form, a use of dramaturgy reminiscent of a theatrical play, and a coherent dramatic arc spanning the entire

cycle. The characteristics of its melody, texture, rhythmic organization, and intonational logic testify to Poulenc's deeply individual style, in which simplicity and clarity are combined with emotional depth and structural complexity.

In the first interpretation (Pahud—Le Sage), emphasis is placed on intonational integrity, coloristic refinement, and the idea of a continuous one-movement form. This performance is distinguished by a profound understanding of the work's dramaturgical logic, subtle dynamic shaping, and intricate technique. In the second version (Cavallo—Canino), rhythmic pulsation, textural expressiveness, and dramatic intensity dominate. The approach is more percussive and grotesque, reflecting a modern neoclassical mindset. Both interpretations reveal different layers of meaning in the sonata, demonstrating the multi-faceted performance potential of the work.

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ХУАН ЦЗЯЯО
СОНАТА ДЛЯ ФЛЕЙТИ І ФОРТЕПІАНО ФРАНСІСА ПУЛЕНКА:
ВИКОНАВСЬКО-ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЙНИЙ ВИМІР

Анотація. У статті розглянуто особливості виконавської інтерпретації «Сонати для флейти і фортепіано» (1957) Франсіса Пуленка в контексті неокласичної камерно-інструментальної стилістики. У своїх міркуваннях про природу виконавського втілення твору автор акцентує увагу на поєднанні об'єктивних і суб'єктивних складників виконавської діяльності. Зокрема, визначено жанрово-стильові риси твору з опорою на його симфонічну природу, драматургічну архітектуру та тематичну єдність. Також здійснено порівняльний аналіз двох інтерпретаційних версій сонати у виконанні дуєтів Емануель Паю (флейта) — Ерик ле Саж (фортепіано) (Emmanuel Pahud / Eric Le Sage) та Бруно Кавало (флейта) — Бруно Каніно (фортепіано) (Bruno Cavallo / Bruno Canino), з урахуванням різних підходів до трактування цілісної організації опусу, його інтонаційної специфіки, метро-ритмічної пульсації, тембрової колористики та динамічної драматургії. Доведено, що Соната для флейти та фортепіано Ф. Пуленка втілює ідеї новофранцузького класицизму та є прикладом інструментальної форми з наскрізною драматургічною аркою. Особливу увагу приділено виконавській рефлексії та ролі інтонації як ключового засобу інтерпретації.

Ключові слова: Франсіс Пуленк, інтерпретація, виконавство, флейта, камерно-інструментальна соната, драматургія, стилістика.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 11.11.2025