1 Poulenc's Wartime Secrets

> Poulenc's choruses . . . have the absence of color of the days we lived through, and the immaterial light of hope.
>
> ANDRÉ SCHAEFFNER, "Francis Poulenc, musicien français"

POULENC'S WAR

After France declared war on Germany on 1 September 1939, Francis Poulenc, at forty a veteran of the First World War, had a much easier time as a soldier in the French army than most of his fellow composers. Instead of being forced to sit idle in a field during months of tense anticipation, Poulenc was sent on a goodwill tour by the Administration of Fine Arts with baritone Pierre Bernac to give concerts in January and February 1940 in Portugal, Italy, and Switzerland. When the Germans finally invaded in May 1940, there followed mass surrenders of French soldiers, including Olivier Messiaen, who were subsequently sent to German camps as prisoners of war; thousands of others in central France fought, with André Jolivet, to defend the country against the advancing German troops; some, most notably Jehan Alain, Maurice Jaubert, and Jean Vuillermoz, did not survive the battles.[1] Poulenc's antiaircraft unit, which was called up on 2 June to the relatively safe city of Bordeaux, retreated around one hundred miles east to a small village outside of Cahors. When the two countries signed an armistice on 22 June, Poulenc found himself south of the demarcation line that divided the country into a northern zone occupied by German troops—including Paris and the country's strategic Atlantic coastlines—and a southern zone nominally in the control of the French government. By mid-July he was demobilized after having served six weeks in uniform.

Poulenc took full advantage of the peace and quiet of his idyllic surroundings. He was enchanted with the countryside and inspired by the people he met; in letters to friends he nicknamed the elderly farmers who were his hosts "Philémon and Baucis," and he described their barn, where he slept with other soldiers, as "very La Fontaine." "I have faith in the

future, in our 'team,' and, what is more, I feel full of music," he wrote to Bernac on 10 July. "I have come up with a thousand melodies and the overall color of my ballet. Even the absence of a piano has been good for me."[2] Poulenc had given some thought to a ballet based on the fables of Jean de La Fontaine as early as 1937, but it was the defeat of France that gave him the impetus and the opportunity to write the piece. By the time he was able to cross into the occupied zone in early September, he had picked out six fables and sketched most of the score.

In choosing to live in the occupied zone, Poulenc had to navigate among the competing demands placed upon prominent civilians there: by the German occupying forces, which sought to promote German music at the expense of French compositions and to encourage collaboration; by the Vichy regime, which balanced the need to defend French culture against German propaganda with not only the necessity of collaboration, but also political pressures to redefine the nation's cultural heritage along new ideological lines; and by the networks of resistance that gradually formed to combat German propaganda while eyeing Vichy's efforts with suspicion. Narrating the trajectory of Poulenc's wartime activities provides us, then, with more than just the story of one celebrated composer's ability not only to survive but to thrive in the adverse circumstances of wartime France. It also gives us the opportunity to explore how the primary agents of those adverse circumstances—German occupiers, Vichy officials, and Resistance agitators—envisioned the role of music, especially new French compositions for the opera and ballet, in their projects and aspirations in wartime France.

For the first two years of the German occupation, Poulenc's activities were typical of most prominent French composers who had escaped capture by the German army. He composed and performed music, organized premieres of his new compositions, and published opinion pieces in the French press. As a composer, Poulenc worked on his largest project, the ballet *Les Animaux modèles,* from June 1940 to June 1942; by September 1942 he had also written one set of *mélodies* (*Banalités,* on the poetry of Apollinaire) and one of *chansons* (*Chansons villageoises,* on the stylized, folk-inspired poetry of Maurice Fombeure). Poulenc also agreed to write incidental music for two plays (*Léocadia,* by Jean Anouilh, and *La fille du jardinier,* by Charles Exbrayat) and one film (*La Duchesse de Langeais,* based on a story by Balzac). As a pianist Poulenc's frequent wartime recitals with Bernac consisted almost exclusively of French *mélodies,* by his predecessors (Chausson, Debussy, Duparc, Fauré, Ravel) as well as his contemporaries, several of whose works he and Bernac premiered.[3] He recorded *mélodies* by Chausson and Fauré with Bernac in December 1940, with a second wartime recording

project of Debussy's vocal music with soprano Lucienne Tragin in 1943.[4] Poulenc also played his own music, performing his *Concert champêtre* with Charles Münch and the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire in February 1941 and with Gaston Poulet and the Concerts Gabriel Pierné in January 1942.[5] As a music critic, Poulenc published three articles in early 1941 on composers who had profoundly influenced French music in the first half of the twentieth century: Stravinsky—he pleaded for more frequent performances of the composer "who honored us by applying for French citizenship"—Ravel, and Chabrier.[6] And in May 1942 he praised Debussy for having given young French composers a model of "how to write music that is purely ours, whether it stems from Couperin, Berlioz, or Bizet."[7] In March 1941 Poulenc teamed up with Roger Désormière to unearth Chabrier's earliest forays into the world of operetta (*Fisch-Ton-Kan* and *Vaucochard et Fils 1er*), paired with Rameau's *Les Paladins,* Stravinsky's *Pulcinella,* and Poulenc's own *Aubade.*

Poulenc's greatest wartime public success, the premiere of *Les Animaux modèles* at the Opéra on 8 August 1942, was a turning point. It was an event that implicated all the competing forces in occupied France. For the Vichy regime, although the ballet was not a state commission, it was exactly the kind of new French work that Vichy's new director of the Administration of Fine Arts, Louis Hautecœur, was seeking to produce with Vichy's expanded commissions program. It reflected nostalgia for the ancien régime in its setting and themes, and the playful seductiveness of its music was bound to appeal to a wide audience.[8] As far as the German occupying forces were concerned, Poulenc's ballet was premiered in the shadows of the Opéra's production, one month earlier, of Werner Egk's *Joan de Zarissa,* a ballet imposed on the French theater as an example of German superiority in contemporary music. For the Resistance, *Les Animaux modèles* showed Poulenc, who had joined the Resistance group the Front national des musiciens (FNM) sometime in 1942, using his public persona as a quintessentially French musician as cover for a subtly subversive act. He inserted into the ballet's score several references to *Alsace et Lorraine,* a song written in 1871 to protest Germany's annexation of French territory following the Franco-Prussian War.

As a result, Poulenc's ballet meant many things to many people. The work's overt references to the time of Louis XIV coexisted with secret references to wounded French pride, while its emphasis on French identity typecast it as less substantial than an analogous German production. In the premiere, Serge Lifar, a notorious collaborator who choreographed the work and danced a leading role, appeared before an audience in which German military personnel were given the best seats, while in the pit, the

orchestra was conducted by Désormière, one of the founding members of the FNM. In his program notes to accompany the premiere—printed in French and German to accommodate the occupying forces in the audience—Poulenc wrote, "There is no need to summarize fables that everyone knows," a tongue-in-cheek reminder that the fables, and perhaps also *Alsace et Lorraine,* were intimately known to the French, but not the German, members of the audience.[9] The work's title had come from Paul Éluard, who was one of the best-known poets of the French Resistance and who had gone into hiding shortly before the ballet's premiere.[10]

In many respects Poulenc's was a typical wartime story. All composers who remained in occupied France had to contend with the same pressures. Several of them achieved public success, thanks in part to the increased funding for contemporary French music provided by Vichy after 1940. More than a few composed secret settings of clandestinely published poetry for postwar performance, as Poulenc did with his 1943 cantata for a cappella double choir, *Figure humaine,* culminating in his setting of Éluard's famous clandestine poem, "Liberté." Where Poulenc's story is unique is that he not only managed to achieve remarkable wartime success with his reputation intact, but he also dared to express during the war, onstage and in public, his profound dismay about the fate of his country, and he wrote a Resistance piece in secret that found eager and receptive audiences after the war.

In this chapter I explore the musical secrets in *Les Animaux modèles* in the context of the competing agendas of German and French officials for the repertory of the Opéra, epitomized in the juxtaposition of Poulenc's ballet with Egk's. I then discuss Poulenc's subsequent musical secrets: his Violin Sonata, with its overt homage to Federico García Lorca; the *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon,* settings of clandestinely published poetry by a known member of the Resistance that were nevertheless performed and published in occupied Paris; and the wartime genesis and postwar reception of *Figure humaine.* Finally, I examine how Poulenc was received after the war as a celebrated national figure through his ability during the war to balance his life as a respected public figure with his composition and performance of musical secrets.

FROM DEFEAT TO RENEWAL: MUSIC AND THE VICHY REGIME

In signing an armistice with Germany in June 1940, France faced severe conditions: occupation of the northern three-fifths of the country by German troops, with the costs paid for by France, and the demobilization of the French military, with over one and a half million French soldiers to be

held in Germany until a peace treaty was signed. In early July 1940 the French parliament met in the resort town of Vichy, just south of the demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied zones, to plan the best way of negotiating a lasting peace. Pierre Laval, a prominent former prime minister in right-wing governments in the 1930s, argued that the country's institutions needed to be completely reformed in order to gain leverage in peace negotiations with Germany.[11] A sweeping majority of ministers and parliamentarians agreed with him, voting the next day to dissolve the parliament, suspend the Republican constitution, and give full powers to the eighty-four-year-old Marshal Philippe Pétain. Pétain, military savior of France during the Great War, the "hero of Verdun," was now to become the spiritual savior of a nation too weak to defend itself with arms; he appointed Laval, a forceful advocate for collaboration with Germany, his prime minister.[12]

Few mourned the passing of the Third Republic. On the contrary, people from across the political spectrum embraced the new government's sweeping vision of reform, under the heading of National Revolution. It was apparent within political circles, however, long before the public became aware of it that the National Revolution was not just about renewal: it was also about revenge. The new regime's scapegoats were the old enemies of the political right: communists, Freemasons, Jews, and foreigners. The French Communist Party (Parti communiste français, or PCF) had already been dissolved when war was declared in September 1939. By October 1940 Pétain issued decrees that outlawed "secret societies," forced schoolteachers to take a loyalty oath to the new regime, revoked the citizenship of recently naturalized French citizens, and severely restricted the professions that French Jews could practice.[13]

Faced with military defeat and economic disarray, the Vichy regime saw the cultural prestige of the country as the salvation of France. "France was not defeated on the battlefield of the arts," wrote Hautecœur, a university professor and museum curator who was appointed director of the Administration of Fine Arts on 21 July 1940. "Our architecture, our painting, our sculpture, [and] our music continue to inspire admiration."[14] The minister of national education was a politically sensitive post, held by no fewer than six men between 1940 and 1944.[15] By contrast, Hautecœur—traditional in his artistic tastes, faithful to Pétain in his social and political views, and nationalist in his defense of French culture—was able to maintain stability in the Administration of Fine Arts until he was replaced in March 1944. The administration under Hautecœur balanced its interests in defending French culture against German propaganda with the pragmatic realities facing a collaborationist regime. He used the Nazi Reich Music Chamber as a model, increasing funding for the composition, performance, publication, and recording of new French music.[16]

The combined result was a dramatic increase in public visibility for contemporary composers in wartime France.

Government interest in the arts was nothing new in France. Vichy nevertheless differed from its predecessors in the attention it gave to music among all the arts. The allocation for music in the budget of the Administration of Fine Arts increased sharply during the four years of occupation even as the administration's total budget decreased. As a result, funding for music accounted for more than a third of the total arts budget by 1944.[17] Contemporary music was poised to benefit most of all, for what better way could there be to demonstrate the vitality of the nation than in its newest artistic productions? Alongside the increased levels of funding allotted to music, the Administration of Fine Arts proposed that higher sums be given to commissions of new works in both music and the visual arts.[18] Vichy's Administration of Fine Arts provided music commissions with their highest level of funding ever in 1941 and maintained it for the duration of the war. Between September 1940 and August 1944 the administration issued sixty-five commissions to sixty-one French composers and paid them a total of 702,000 francs.[19] Although this sum still constituted only a small fraction of the total devoted to generating new works of art, new music had finally found a permanent home in the government budget.

Hautecœur had discovered great potential in the music commissions program founded by Georges Huisman, his Popular Front predecessor, in 1938 as a form of unemployment compensation during tough economic times. Where Huisman's original conception began and ended with the idea of supporting composers in practicing their craft, Hautecœur was concerned with the eventual performance of the new works. In the context of the German occupation of France, it was not sufficient just to stimulate the production of new French music. It was crucial that this new production be demonstrated to a wide audience: to the French themselves, to maintain a sense of pride; to the German soldiers who now formed a large percentage of Parisian audiences; and to the outside world, which was nervously watching France as a case study of life in a Europe ruled by Nazi Germany. Hautecœur saw German interest in attending cultural events in Paris as a unique opportunity to increase the prestige of French culture in Germany. "These men, who came persuaded of our artistic decadence, discovered a modern school of composers, as well as singers, performers, and set designers that proved to them the vitality of our country," he would write after the war.[20]

To facilitate the performance of commissioned works in occupied Paris, Hautecœur provided additional grants to pay the copying fees and publication costs of commissioned pieces selected for performance. For this extra

funding he turned to a new division of the Vichy government, the Office for the Fight against Unemployment (Commissariat à la lutte contre le chômage). In the 1943 budget this office supplied 9.3 million francs to the Administration of Fine Arts to provide work for unemployed artists and musicians, to assist students at the Conservatoire, and to subsidize orchestras and concert series in the provinces.[21] Of this sum, approximately 121,000 francs went over the next two years to fifteen different composers to help get their commissioned works performed.

More substantial changes in the conception of the commissions program came during 1941, when Hautecœur's administration expanded its funding to performance institutions in exchange for an increase in the stipulated percentage of programming devoted to French music in general and new French music in particular. The basic requirement to perform works by living French composers had long been part of the state's funding programs for the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, and the four Paris orchestras. Jacques Rouché, who as director had been active since 1914 in soliciting new works for the Opéra, had welcomed the commissions program in 1938 (and its first completed opera, Darius Milhaud's *Médée*) as a means of overcoming the Opéra's traditional resistance to new music. The increased percentages of required new French music now meant that all of the state-funded institutions were obliged to embark on a search for new works to perform. Those recently commissioned by the state provided a readily available repertoire. Composers could now expect financial and institutional support for their work, from conception to performance by the country's most prestigious musicians.

In January 1941 the current minister of national education, Jacques Chevalier, signed into law at Vichy more specific directives on how the French opera houses would function.[22] Included in that law were requirements to schedule each year at least two evenings at the Opéra and three at the Opéra-Comique that consisted of new productions whose composers and librettists were French. These stipulations posed no difficulties for Rouché, who negotiated the theaters' reopening with the German occupying forces in August 1940.[23] The Opéra-Comique opened its fall 1940 season with *Carmen* on 22 August, and *La Damnation de Faust* appeared two days later at the Opéra. An article in *Paris-Soir* alerted the public that the regular weekly schedule of three operas and one ballet would continue just as before.[24] As the head of both theaters (united as the Réunion des Théâtres lyriques nationaux, or RTLN, in January 1939), Rouché resumed his work in reviving French repertoire and looking for new works to produce. Among them were a new *Pelléas et Mélisande* to mark the fortieth anniversary of the premiere; Fauré's *Pénélope;* new ballets by Poulenc, Claude Delvincourt,

and Maurice Jaubert; and *Antigone,* by Arthur Honegger and Jean Cocteau. At the same time, Rouché's attention was focused on the new operas and ballets that might cross his desk through government commissions. Before the end of the war he would stage three commissioned operas and plan two others for 1944–45. With Serge Lifar working as both choreographer and star performer in ballets at the Opéra, the occupation was also a golden age for French ballet both old and new—including two state commissions.[25]

Although Rouché had put significant effort into new wartime productions of French operas, it was the wartime productions of new French ballets that won unprecedented popularity among Opéra audiences. By 1940 Lifar's decade of hard work in restoring the corps de ballet at the Opéra to the high standards of the turn of the century had paid off. A choreographer and dancer of great talent and star appeal, Lifar had a large following not only in Paris but across Europe as well. He had convinced Rouché to discontinue the practice of performing ballets and operas on single bills, which he feared gave audiences the impression that ballet was of secondary importance. Having established himself at the Opéra with a mixture of new choreography for beloved old scores and ballets that had been expressly commissioned for him, he maintained both aspects of his work during the war.[26] By 1944 the Opéra had produced eight new ballets to recently composed scores by French composers, to which Lifar supplied the choreography and danced, in most cases, the title role.

Lifar's ambition since his appointment at the Opéra in 1930 had been to reestablish the preeminence of French ballet in the European dance world. After the defeat he multiplied his contacts with both French and German authorities in order to maintain the Opéra's position as the leading institution of European ballet. Left in charge in June 1940 when Rouché retreated south to Cahors with the company in advance of the German army's arrival in Paris, Lifar followed the advice of both Laval and Otto Abetz, the German ambassador to France, in readying the Opéra to reopen its doors as soon as possible. As nominal head of the prestigious institution, Lifar narrowly avoided having to give Hitler a tour of the premises in the early morning of 23 June, but he soon came into contact with Bernard Radermacher—the personal representative in Paris of Josef Goebbels, head of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, or RMVP) in Berlin—and Goebbels himself, who passed through Paris in early July. Lifar sought to expand upon this early contact by inviting the Reich minister to return to Paris for the reopening of the Opéra in the fall.[27] He also arranged for Radermacher to bring reporters to ballet rehearsals, resulting in front-page photos of Lifar and his dancers that publicized the fact that the coming season would be as brilliant as ever.

After Rouché returned to Paris in the fall and took over the leadership of the Opéra, Lifar focused his energy on ballet and its future in the new Europe. He worked hard to make the connection between his dance renaissance and the heritage of the Romantic masters, outlining the history of French ballet in the past hundred years from *Giselle* to the present in a series of articles in the new weekly journal, *L'Information musicale*. Lifar called his own work "neoclassical," explaining that his desire was to bring together the strict vocabulary of academic ballet from the Romantic era with a modified version of the experimental style to which he had been exposed as a member of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.[28] With great fanfare he oversaw an exhibit on Romantic ballet at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in 1942 in cooperation with the Opéra archives and the Vienna National Library. That year Lifar traveled to Germany on three separate occasions, promoting his pan-European vision of dance with a film entitled *Symphonie en blanc* that was screened at the RMVP in Berlin. He also proposed to Abel Bonnard, minister of national education, that it was in the national interest to found a new school of choreography. While it was true, he argued, that French ballet had recently regained its status in Europe after decades of decline, the Opéra's position was precarious as long as he was the only qualified *choréauteur* available. It was therefore crucial to take advantage of the current enthusiasm of the French public by founding a school that would ensure that Paris would remain the dance capital of the world. Lifar proposed that he himself would be the best candidate to direct such a school, for despite his foreign birth, he was, like the great *choréauteurs* of the nineteenth century, fully naturalized as a Frenchman.[29]

The French press enthusiastically embraced the possibility of enhancing the prestige of France by framing Lifar's successes at the Opéra in nationalist terms. Events like the centenary performance of *Giselle* using Lifar's 1932 choreography, and the unveiling of his new choreography of *Sylvia*—at three acts, his longest work—to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Delibes, gave them a lot to praise in the first half of 1941. Lifar's newest ballet, Philippe Gaubert's *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle*, was the dance event of the summer. Dance critics applauded Lifar's efforts to turn away from modernist experimentation in favor of the traditions of academic ballet. Those dancers who were still dazzled by the "religion of choreographic liberty" espoused by Isadora Duncan and others, wrote Henriette Blond in the November 1943 issue of *La Chronique de Paris* (a monthly journal aspiring to replace the *Nouvelle Revue française* after it ceased publication in July 1943), were now outnumbered by a younger generation more fascinated by the expressive possibilities of solid technical

skills than by the "exceedingly dry mechanical asceticism" of years past.[30] Moreover, by reviving dance at the Opéra itself, Lifar was at once restoring the glories of a venerable institution and fulfilling his own visions of dance. "Few theaters from around the world can pride themselves on a choreographic repertoire this vast and varied, on a school of dance so well trained and so rich in major works," gushed Arthur Hoérée at the end of the 1940–41 season. "In this passing of the torch, one has to admit that Serge Lifar has carried the flame entrusted to him higher and further than any other, at a more pressing rate and with the fervor of a priest."[31]

Two sumptuous books published in 1943 used copious illustrations and descriptive text to commemorate Lifar's achievements at the Opéra. The first, *Ballets de l'Opéra de Paris,* by dance historian Léandre Vaillat, was a chronological survey of French ballet since 1900, with special emphasis on Lifar's recent work. The second, *Serge Lifar à l'Opéra*, was a limited-edition art book with large folio sketches of Lifar's many ballets. Paul Valéry and Jean Cocteau contributed texts to drawings by Lucienne Pageot-Rousseaux in an effort to memorialize the ephemeral art of choreography.[32] The music critic Émile Vuillermoz, a staunch supporter of Lifar, praised the "triple academic collaboration" of Valéry, Cocteau, and Lifar for making such a priceless contribution to the libraries of dance lovers everywhere.[33] Even those who resented Lifar's high-profile associations with French and German political figures could not deny the broad appeal of his work.

Poulenc's *Les Animaux modèles* took its place among the new French ballets choreographed and danced by Lifar with its premiere at the Opéra on 8 August 1942. In writing his new ballet, Poulenc had set out to make its Frenchness as unmistakable as possible. He imagined the fables in a seventeenth-century setting, "the century of Louis XIV, which is also that of Pascal," because, as he later explained, "no other era in history is more specifically French."[34] The ballet was set in the courtyard of a farm somewhere in Périgord or the Dordogne, a tribute to the region where Poulenc had been stationed in summer 1940. Poulenc gave the fables a pastoral aura of peace and goodwill by framing the story with the sight of the farmers leaving for the fields in the morning at the raising of the curtain, and their return for their noonday meal at the end. The dancers themselves were dressed not as animals but in the style of the gentlemen and ladies at the court of the Sun King. Three of the fables—"The Bear and the Two Schemers," "Middle Age and Two Possible Wives," and "Death and the Woodcutter"—concentrated on the foibles of human characters. For the others, Poulenc transformed the animals, already thinly disguised in the original, into actual human beings. In "The Grasshopper and the Ant,"

the happy-go-lucky grasshopper is a prima donna who is now past her prime, and the besotted beast in "The Lion in Love" is a rake whose seduction of a young girl is thwarted by her irate father. In "The Two Roosters," Poulenc added a twentieth-century twist by playing on the slang meaning of *la poule:* the "hens" dance a French cancan, baring their legs in short tutus while wearing a few feathers in their hair. According to Lifar, the decision to humanize the beasts had little in common with the *histoires naturelles* in vogue after the last war. Instead, the idea was to revive the spirit of the *ballets de cour* of seventeenth-century France by choreographing the fables "just as they would have been done when La Fontaine was alive."[35] References to the French cultural heritage, and to the *grand siècle* in particular, permeated every aspect of the ballet's conception.

Poulenc's music delighted the critics. Honegger wrote that the early influences of Chabrier, Stravinsky, and Satie had been assimilated to such a degree that the composer had made their sounds his own. "At every turn," he marveled, "a melodic contour or a harmonic progression causes us to say 'that's so Poulenc.'" Marcel Delannoy detected a kindred spirit in Poulenc's embrace of *demi-caractère,* made manifest in the juxtaposition of *divertissement* and *poésie,* Chabrier's tenderness with the grandeur of Stravinsky. Could anyone imagine, he asked, a more appropriate writer for Poulenc than La Fontaine?[36]

Poulenc's wartime efforts reflect not only his desire to promote French culture at a time of national crisis, but also a lifelong passion for expressing a distinctly French national identity. Just as he sought in *Les Animaux modèles* to explore the Frenchness of La Fontaine and the court of Louis XIV, in his songs he selected texts that drew on a wide range of national imagery, from the urban (Poulenc remarked that he chose "Voyage à Paris" in *Banalités* because "when it comes to Paris, I often cry or sing") to the rural (he wrote to André Schaeffner that his *Chansons villageoises* were "*Pribaoutki* from the Morvan").[37] With Bernac, Poulenc organized thematic programs based on the French repertoire, such as a February 1941 lecture-recital at the Théâtre des Mathurins entitled "Chabrier-Debussy-Poulenc," and a March 1941 program at the Salle Gaveau in which Poulenc and Bernac performed musical selections in alternation with recitations of French poetry on the theme "Baudelaire, Verlaine, Apollinaire and Five of their Musicians: Henri Duparc, Gabriel Fauré, Debussy, Honegger, Poulenc." Poulenc's article on Chabrier was unabashedly rehabilitative: having seen the Opéra-Comique's elaborate new production of *L'Étoile,* Poulenc reported, he was convinced that Chabrier was the clear precursor of several French composers, most of whom were shameless about their disavowal of his influence.

Not, however, the most esteemed: "Messager was passionate about *L'Étoile;* Debussy and Ravel recognized a masterpiece. What a consolation!"[38]

It is hardly surprising, then, that Poulenc's passionate advocacy for French music and culture should have led him to participate in activities that were specifically aimed at the renewal of France through the promotion of its cultural heritage. His initial public appearance after June 1940 as composer and pianist, performing the premiere of his Sextet for Piano and Winds, took place on 9 December 1940 in a concert of the Association de musique contemporaine. This group was organized by Robert Bernard, who had founded *L'Information musicale* as a wartime replacement for both *Revue musicale* and the *Guide du concert,* and its concerts were held at the new journal's headquarters.[39] The first five concerts of the association in November–December 1940 sought to balance the best of French music written before 1918 with the most promising music of the present day. Works such as Franck's Piano Quintet, Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp, piano pieces by Chabrier, and *mélodies* by Gounod were juxtaposed with those of Delannoy, Honegger, and Messiaen, and two new works were given premieres: on 25 November, Jean Rivier's *Symphonie en sol majeur* (a 1938 state commission), and on 9 December, Poulenc's Sextet. The message of the concerts was clear. The solid values of French music composed before the First World War would not only provide a foundation for the future; they would also contribute to the shared goals necessary for the formation of a New French School.[40]

Officially, Poulenc participated in two Vichy administration committees: Henri Rabaud's Professional Committee of Dramatic Authors, Composers, and Music Editors (Comité professionnel des auteurs dramatiques, compositeurs et éditeurs de la musique) and Alfred Cortot's Professional Committee of Musical Arts and Private Music Education (Comité professionnel de l'art musical et de l'enseignement libre de la musique).[41] However, he was often absent from Paris, preferring his country home in Noizay, in the occupied zone some 140 miles southwest of the capital. And after two years of living under German occupation, Poulenc's public participation in the renewal of France gradually began to coexist with a number of small but significant gestures of defiance.

Challenges from Berlin: Music and the German Occupying Forces

There was a particular urgency underlying French decisions regarding the performance of contemporary French music during the war. Behind the

idealized visions of French officials such as Hautecœur and Rouché lay a harsh reality: the French had to act defensively at a time when the nation's capital and northern three-fifths were occupied by a conquering power. In the summer of 1940, while the French government worked out new laws and policies and made changes in personnel, the German occupying forces moved into their headquarters in Paris. German agencies in Paris consisted of the Propaganda Division for France (Propaganda Abteilung Frankreich, or PAF), which was linked to the Wehrmacht and Goebbels's RMVP and also had bureaus throughout the provinces; the German embassy (with Otto Abetz as ambassador to France); and the Institut allemand (a cultural center run by Karl Epting). The latter two were attached to the foreign ministry in Berlin.[42]

By allowing an active and diverse cultural life in occupied France, German officials hoped to encourage collaboration by showing that there was a role for French culture in the new Nazi Europe. They also sought to maintain social order by distracting the population from the hardships of war. The presence of "normal" cultural events served to both stabilize the population and use that stability as evidence of the acceptability of German rule throughout the European continent. By the end of 1940, thirty-four theaters, fourteen music halls, two circuses, six cabarets, and around thirty cinemas had opened their doors in Paris alone.[43] By September 1940 the PAF had also created a new French-language radio station, Radio-Paris, which was controlled by the German occupiers but financed entirely by the French state. Radio-Paris broadcast musical performances—which constituted over two-thirds of its broadcast time—alongside pro-German news and opinions.[44] Here one could listen to live broadcasts from the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées of the Grand Orchestre de Radio-Paris led by France and Germany's most talented conductors, or hear the orchestra of Raymond Legrand accompanying France's most famous popular singers. Listings in the station's weekly magazine *Les Ondes* advertised programming that was both stellar and diverse: in 1942 alone there were appearances by Maurice Chevalier, Jacques Jansen, Germaine Lubin, Charles Panzéra, and Alfred Cortot; organ recitals by Marcel Dupré broadcast directly from the church of Saint-Sulpice; Wilhelm Mengelberg conducting the orchestra of the Concertgebouw Amsterdam; and the Berlin Philharmonic led by Clemens Krauss.[45]

After the armistice Vichy's own state radio station, Radiodiffusion nationale, set up its studios in unoccupied territory in Marseille. Vichy imitated its totalitarian neighbors by coordinating what had previously been independent radio stations into a national network financed by state

subsidies instead of by advertisements. Since June 1940, however, German occupying authorities controlled the broadcast stations and antennas of the northern occupied zone, including the Paris metropolitan region. Radiodiffusion nationale desperately needed access to Parisian institutions such as the opera houses, orchestras, and music halls to compete with Radio-Paris for listeners. Émile Vuillermoz, who was in charge of programming for the radio in Marseille, wrote a panicked letter to Hautecœur soon after the latter's appointment at the Administration of Fine Arts, urging him to do something either to enable Radiodiffusion nationale to return to Paris or to come to an understanding with the PAF about broadcast rights from the capital. Since the broadcasts of Radio-Paris were by French people, he stated, the German-sponsored broadcasts, and not those of Vichy, were accepted abroad as the authorized voice of France. Radio-Paris could be heard across Europe; as long as Radiodiffusion nationale was in Marseille, it could not compete. If France was going to collaborate with Germany anyway, Vuillermoz pressed Hautecœur, why not find a more viable solution in tandem with Germany's own plans?[46]

In September 1941 Radiodiffusion nationale received an important concession from Germany when it regained the right to broadcast musical productions from Paris twice weekly. That same month the Orchestre national, under the direction of Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht, began again to perform live radio broadcasts, first from Marseille and then, after Radiodiffusion nationale relocated to the French capital in March 1943, from Paris. To compete more effectively with Radio-Paris, in August 1943 Vichy increased the musical component of Radiodiffusion nationale from 45 percent of its programming to 60 percent and made sure that only music would be played during the lunch and dinner hours.[47]

German propaganda agencies organized joint cultural activities uniting French and German artists and intellectuals to symbolize of the virtues of friendship between former enemies. The collaboration of French musicians with German visiting orchestras and opera companies made it less likely that the French would reject the visitors outright. In May 1941 one of the first of several illustrious musical visitors, Herbert von Karajan, traveled to Paris with the Berlin Staatsoper.[48] The troupe's performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, starring the Opéra's leading soprano, Germaine Lubin, was broadcast by Radio-Paris and made headlines in the French newspapers. The first French woman to have sung the role of Isolde in Bayreuth, Lubin was a great favorite of the public in both France and Germany. Her participation in the Staatsoper's Paris performance encouraged those who (like Lucien Rebatet in *Je suis partout*) favored French-German symbiosis

to read the musical event as transcending national differences, even if the first of the two performances was reserved exclusively for members of the Wehrmacht.[49] Other critics concurred that the magnificence of the performance allayed all doubts.[50] German officials at the PAF in Paris immediately reported back to Berlin that the success of *Tristan* was an encouraging sign of the receptiveness of the French to German influence.[51] Karajan followed the Staatsoper's performance with an all-German concert at the Palais de Chaillot, conducting the music of Mozart, Beethoven, and Strauss to great acclaim.

Although German agencies fostered French cultural activity as part of its desire that life in France appear as normal as possible under German control, there were officials who felt that there ought to be limits on how successful the French should be in terms of cultural prestige. "The task of the bureau must be to pursue *German* propaganda," Captain Lucht, chief of the PAF's division for cultural affairs, announced to his staff in a January 1942 memo, angered by the latest French requests for festivals of French music at home and tours of French artists abroad. Once the Germans had normalized French cultural life, he continued, their ultimate goal should be to create such a strong propaganda campaign on behalf of German culture that the French would be overpowered in every way. Lucht predicted—not inaccurately, as it turned out—that the resolution of the military conflict would lead to an international war of cultural propaganda. The Germans should focus on making conditions so favorable for their own propaganda that there would be no risk of failure after the war. For each tour of French artists abroad, he argued, Germany should be organizing two. If Vichy organized a weeklong festival of French culture, the PAF would celebrate Germany for a month. "From now on," he concluded, "the concessions we make to the French must be offset by advantages for German cultural propaganda on such a scale that will indisputably substantiate German's claims to cultural leadership."[52]

The PAF took an active interest in the repertoire the French planned to perform at the Opéra, which they saw as the leading musical institution in France. Captain Lucht informed a representative of Vichy's Ministry of National Education that the Opéra was "a theater with a worldwide reputation that would play a primary artistic role in the Europe of tomorrow."[53] The PAF requisitioned 20 percent of all seats in the theater—at Vichy's expense—and arranged for others to be sold to German military personnel at half price; it appears that Germans made up roughly half of the audience at most Opéra performances during the occupation.[54] It was agreed that Rouché would submit the programs and names of the artists to the PAF one week in advance for

approval. Initially the PAF forbade the French from presenting any German operas. Heated exchanges followed, in which Rouché argued to both Lucht and Hautecœur that financial ruin would be assured were the Opéra forced to give up the German repertoire.[55] In the end only Wagner's operas were not permitted, "for lack of qualified singers," according to a German memo.[56] They would be reserved, at least initially, for visiting German troupes.

German propaganda officials in Paris developed ideas about promoting new German music in France that would complement the directives sent from Berlin. Under the leadership of Fritz Piersig, a music critic from Bremen who arrived in Paris in January 1941, the music department of the cultural division at the PAF became the driving force behind French-German music cooperation in France.[57] Piersig's semiofficial adviser on contemporary music from both France and Germany was the knowledgeable and well-connected music critic Heinrich Strobel, formerly the editor of the avant-garde music journal *Melos* and officially stationed during the war as the Paris correspondent for German newspapers and the German-language *Pariser Zeitung*.[58] While the RMVP had been organizing the impressive tour of the Staatsoper to Paris with its stellar performances of standard repertoire, Piersig began to lay the groundwork for promoting the new works of German composers in France. Shortly after arriving in Paris Piersig wrote to Berlin that the French had themselves expressed the wish to hear new German music, and that the PAF could foster this interest by providing them with publishers' catalogs and scores. He also met directly with French music critics to stress the importance of reporting on new German music in the French press. Piersig specifically instructed the critics that "objective evaluation of the stylistic and innate features of selected works" would be the most effective in strengthening French interest. By March 1941 the RMVP, having wholeheartedly approved Piersig's efforts on behalf of contemporary music, was making shipments of the scores that would enable new German music to be performed in Paris.[59]

The German occupying forces gutted the repertoire of the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique by forbidding them from performing works by Wagner as well as those by Jewish composers such as Offenbach, Dukas, and Milhaud. To make matters worse, the PAF pressured the French to add premieres of new German operas and ballets to their regular repertoire. German officials presented Rouché with a selection of scores, sent from Germany by the RMVP, from which he could choose the ones he would produce.[60] During the war, the RTLN produced French premieres of three German operas—Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina* in March 1942, Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* in April 1943, and Werner Egk's *Peer Gynt* in October 1943—and

one ballet, Egk's *Joan von Zarissa*, in July 1942, one month before the premiere of Poulenc's *Les Animaux modèles*.

The French were led to believe that this exchange would be reciprocal: that new French operas would soon be allowed to appear in the repertoire of German opera companies. But this was clearly not the intention of German officials. It took the tireless efforts of both the Ministry of National Education and the Armistice Commission in Wiesbaden to goad the RMVP into lifting a ban on French music in Germany that had followed the French declaration of war in September 1939; the ban targeted French music still protected under copyright, affecting living French composers the most.[61] When the ban was finally lifted in December 1943, French music was limited to a maximum of one-fourth of the length of any given public performance.[62] The end result was that the French public witnessed their state opera houses perform new German works in meticulously prepared French productions that placed them on an equal footing with productions of new works by France's own composers, with no comparable events honoring living French composers in German theaters or concert halls.

With Goebbels's support Egk himself became a celebrated presence in Paris in July 1942, when he conducted the premiere of *Joan* at the Opéra and a recording of excerpts by the Opéra orchestra with Gramophone—the first commercial recording made in wartime France by a German musician.[63] In interviews with the radio and press in France, Egk generously praised Lifar's new choreography for the work. On 8 July, two nights before the premiere of his ballet, the Groupe Collaboration held a reception in the foyer of the Opéra-Comique that honored Egk, the German contralto Lore Fischer, and the French pianist Alfred Cortot, who had just returned to Paris from Berlin, where he had performed with Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic. The Groupe Collaboration, made up of what historian Bertram Gordon has called "parlor collaborators," promoted Franco-German ties through cultural events such as concerts, expositions, and lectures. The president of the group's music division was Max d'Ollone, director of the Opéra-Comique and professor of composition at the Conservatoire; two composers from the Institut de France, Alfred Bachelet and Florent Schmitt, held the title of *président d'honneur*.[64] One of the music division's activities was to celebrate the visits of prominent Germans to Paris with gala receptions that facilitated contact with their French counterparts and that were attended by Parisian high society as well as German military personnel. At the 8 July reception, d'Ollone, addressing the crowd, praised the three honorees as "eminent artists" whose current activities worked toward the promotion of "German-French *rapprochement*."[65]

By all accounts, the new production of *Joan de Zarissa* overshadowed the Opéra's latest productions of French ballets. The ballet entered the regular repertoire of the Opéra and subsequently received nineteen more performances before the end of the war. Egk also traveled to Rome to conduct three gala performances of *Joan*, a work that appeared frequently on the stages of Germany throughout the period.[66] But, from the German point of view, the success of Egk's ballet in Paris was the definitive step establishing German prestige in the world of dance. As Hans Borgelt observed in *Musik im Kriege*, "If the Opéra, which cultivates the art forms of dance and ballet like no other institution in the world, accepted *Joan* as part of its permanent repertoire, this signals the recognition of German advances in this area too."[67]

Critics in French journals and newspapers found much to praise in Egk's music for *Joan;* Honegger, for example, wrote approvingly of Egk's decision to reject so-called "sterile complexities" and "disappointing neoclassical formulas" for a style he described as "vivid" and "emotionally direct."[68] The German occupying authorities at the PAF betrayed their investment in the success of new German works such as *Joan* in Paris among French critics such as Honegger by including a discussion of its reception after the premiere of the Opéra's production of Egk's *Peer Gynt* in October 1943 in *Spiegel der Französischen Presse*, a bimonthly summary of the findings of the Gruppe Presse at the PAF. Egk, the report asserted, was already known to the French public "because of an outstanding production of the ballet *Joan de Zarissa*, which provided them for the first time with a glimpse at the work of the new generation of German music and left a lasting impression on the public. The experts were eager to become acquainted with Werner Egk as a dramatist and lyricist." After hearing *Peer Gynt*, the report continued, "by far the largest group of reviewers, among them the names of well-known French musicians and theorists, commented in a sympathetic way."[69]

The fact that Egk's ballet owed more to French history and culture than just the tradition of French ballet probably influenced its selection by the PAF for French performance.[70] The setting for the ballet's reenactment of the Don Juan legend is not Spain but fifteenth-century France; three choral interludes are Egk's settings of the poetry of Charles d'Orléans; and the set design was influenced by the paintings of Jean Fouquet. Egk's *Joan* invited comparison with Gaubert's *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle* because of the rich orchestral writing in both scores and their common use of an archaic French setting—featuring, in Gaubert's ballet, an extended reenactment of a jousting match.[71] But when Lifar danced the part of Don Juan, he impressed his audiences with the seriousness of purpose and the magisterial nature of Egk's music, whose style matched Lifar's conceptions about

dance to a remarkable extent. Lifar provided a new original choreography for the Paris production of *Joan* that he used as a manifesto in dance for his new ideas about "neoclassical" ballet. Whereas German choreographers had relied heavily on pantomime for *Joan* and other recent ballets, Lifar sought to bring together the dramatic and academic traditions of classical French ballets with the best of recent developments in German expressionism. His new synthesis, a truly "European" art form, was also a tribute to the French ballet masters of the past like Noverre, whose traditions had been overshadowed in his opinion by developments in modern dance.

Herein lay the key danger of French productions of new German works at the theaters of the RTLN. If the music of Werner Egk was presented by the French themselves as the embodiment of everything the French hoped to find in their own composers, the only place that left for new French music was a distant second. Reviews of the two summer productions of Egk's *Joan de Zarissa* and Poulenc's *Les Animaux modèles* appeared side by side in many French journals, inevitably inviting comparison. Isolated signs of protest in the French press confirmed the dominance of new German music at the Opéra in occupied Paris, particularly the music of Egk. For example, when *L'Information musicale* decided to run a full-page article by Lifar on his choreography for *Joan* on the front page of its first issue for the fall season (28 August), someone substituted what logically should have been a photo of Egk or Lifar with one of Poulenc. Centered in the middle of the page, the photo bore the caption "Francis Poulenc, whose *Les Animaux modèles* the Opéra has recently premiered"—this despite the fact that Lifar never mentioned Poulenc once in his detailed and enthusiastic account of *Joan*.[72]

MUSICAL SECRET MESSAGES: POULENC AND THE RESISTANCE

After the August 1942 premiere of *Les Animaux modèles,* those reviewing the choreography as well as the score of Poulenc's ballet singled out the episode of "The Two Roosters" for special commentary. "A little ballet in itself," wrote Ferdinando Reyna for *L'Information musicale,* praising Lifar's sense of comedy in the choreography for Lifar's bellicose rooster and Solange Schwarz's spirited hen. But Colette, herself a specialist of animal tales, took exception to the way the choreography and the costumes relied on the stereotypes of the music hall. She argued that such frivolity clashed with what she called the "ferociousness" of the music. Poulenc responded to Colette in print to exonerate his collaborators, confessing that all the comic touches had been his idea.[73] Indeed, the music of "The Two Roosters" switches abruptly from

the violence of the fight between the two roosters and the dramatic descent of a vulture that plucks the proud victor from the rooftop and carries him off to his death, to the sauciness of the hens when they emerge from the hen house. The frivolous moments also jar with Poulenc's melodramatic rewriting of the fable, in which the defeated rooster, merely humiliated in La Fontaine's story, collapsed to the ground, mortally wounded by the duel.

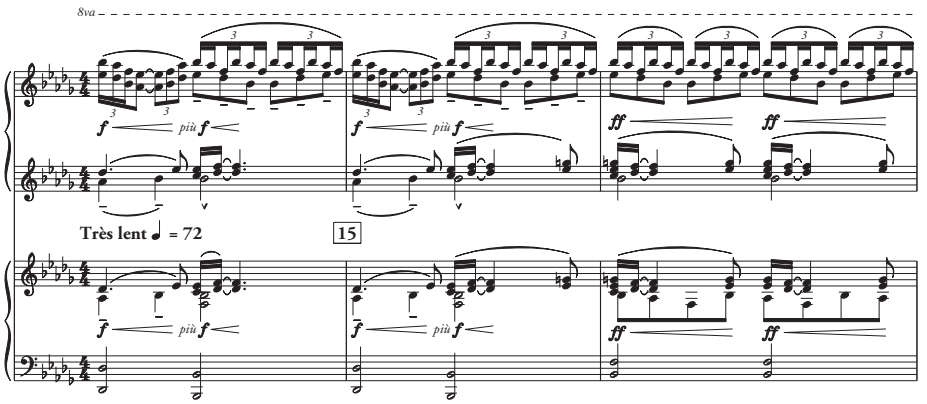
Poulenc's score provides the key as to why the ballet suddenly turns serious in the last of its six fables. As the curious hens approach their fallen beloved leader, the cancan music slows down from sixteenth notes to triplets, in a descending chromatic progression. All of a sudden the rooster who has been left for dead returns to life in a dramatic moment that Poulenc described as an "apotheosis" in the published score. The music for this transformation is no longer Poulenc's own but is instead drawn from Debussy (ex. 1). The trumpets, horns, and woodwinds intone the unmistakable dotted rhythms from the closing bars of the first movement of *La Mer* over harmonies that copy Debussy's vacillation between a major triad with added sixth, and a minor seventh chord a minor third below. The citation is a verbal pun, for midday has arrived not only in Debussy's movement, entitled "From dawn to midday on the sea," but also on the set of *Les Animaux modèles*. As the retreating hens give way to the farmers for the concluding tableau of the ballet, a trumpet echoes the Debussy citation, this time over Poulenc's own distinctive chord progression.

But the use of *La Mer* in "The Two Roosters" has a deeper symbolic purpose. Poulenc's decision to have the beloved rooster mortally wounded rather than ashamed, with the boastful victor mercilessly cut down in his moment of triumph, and then to bring the defeated one back to life to the sounds of France's most beloved composer, turned the fable into an allegory for the current situation in France. As La Fontaine admonishes, "Mere chance overturns what appeared secure / And vaingloriousness may work one's woe."[74] German hegemony might appear solid, Poulenc's ballet seems to be saying, but one must not lose hope that France, too, will recover from defeat in the end.

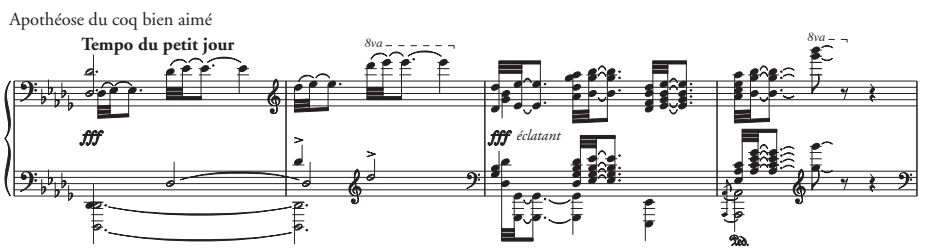
Poulenc's citation of Debussy in August 1942 was not a neutral choice. The Opéra-Comique may have reopened its doors after the defeat with a performance of *Carmen*, but it was the company's revival of *Pelléas et Mélisande* three weeks later on 12 September 1940 that served as a beacon of French cultural pride when all else seemed lost. The production was Désormière's first *Pelléas* since his engagement as a conductor for the Opéra-Comique in 1937; it was also the young soprano Irène Joachim's debut as Mélisande, a role for which she received coaching

EXAMPLE 1. Comparison of Claude Debussy, *La Mer,* and Francis Poulenc, *Les Animaux modèles.* (Ex. 1b: © 1942 Éditions Max Eschig, Paris. All rights reserved. Reproduced by kind permission of MGB Hal Leonard s.r.l.)

a. Debussy, *La Mer,* "De l'aube à midi sur la mer," mm. 135–37.



b. Poulenc, *Les Animaux modèles,* "Les deux coqs," mm. 300–303.



from Mary Garden, who happened to be in Paris at the time. For Joachim, horrified on opening night by the sight of all the German officers in the audience, performing Debussy was a way of "proving that we were still capable of living through the greatest works of music."[75] For Georges Auric, the circumstances alone rendered it no longer possible for him to retain his youthful antagonistic attitude toward the excesses of *debussysme.* In his only signed article published during the occupation, Auric wrote for the *Nouvelle Revue française,* "I listened [to the performance] with an emotion that I can't exactly define. And, at the same time, everyone else in the hall [listened] with attentiveness and passion . . . [and] grateful enthusiasm."[76]

As a quintessential icon of French culture during a period of national turmoil, Debussy was claimed as a representative both of collaboration and of resistance during the occupation. Supporters of Vichy and collaboration saw Debussy's youthful admiration of Wagner as representing the renewal of modern French music through the composer's emulation of German Romanticism; supporters of the Resistance stressed Debussy's rejection of Wagner in favor of French Classical models such as Couperin and Rameau. All sides marshaled *Pelléas et Mélisande* as evidence of their respective interpretations.[77] When the first complete recording of *Pelléas* was released by Pathé in January 1942 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the work's premiere, the sumptuous set of twenty 78-rpm discs elicited universal praise: from members of the Vichy regime (including the future minister of national education, Abel Bonnard, who reviewed the project for *L'Information musicale*), the collaborationist press (Rebatet called it "a prodigious triumph"), and the PAF (with the comment that the French were entirely justified in regarding the first complete recording of *Pelléas* as a "remarkable cultural-political and artistic event").[78]

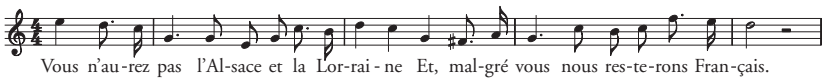
Several musicians who rallied around Debussy's masterpiece and who objected both to German propaganda and the political and cultural changes wrought by Vichy began to organize covertly in the earliest stirrings of a musical resistance movement. Although Désormière met with fellow members of the PCF, Elsa Barraine and Louis Durey, sometime in fall 1940, the first signs of a formal Resistance organization among French musicians surfaced some twelve months later, in September 1941, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union galvanized the PCF. An unsigned directive to Barraine dated July 1942 indicates the existence of a committee, the Comité national du Front national des musiciens (FNM), whose members most likely included, alongside the initial three, Poulenc, Auric, Münch, Roland-Manuel, and Manuel Rosenthal. Membership in the FNM, as in all the covert resistance movements, increased dramatically after the successful Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942 resulted in Pétain's breaking off diplomatic relations with the United States and the German Army subsequently occupying the entire country, for it was now clear that Vichy stood for collaboration with, not merely accommodation to, the Germans. Henri Dutilleux, Honegger, and Joachim probably joined by the end of 1942; other names associated with the FNM but whose date of initial membership remains unclear include Claude Arrieu, Henry Barraud, Jacques Chailley, Monique Haas, Geneviève Joy, and Marcel Mihalovici.[79]

A clandestine newsletter, *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui,* was distributed among fellow musicians from April 1942 until February 1944, at which time it was absorbed by *Les Lettres françaises* as *Le musicien d'aujourd'hui.* In a January 1945 article on the FNM, Claude Chamfray named Poulenc (along with Auric, Barraine, Durey, Roland-Manuel, and Rosenthal) as one of the composers involved with the production of *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui.*[80] The newsletter published several unsigned exhortations to its readers to act upon their patriotic obligations. "All the wounded and fighting of France," proclaimed an article in the October 1942 issue, "have the right to ask us to work on behalf of the country, [and] to participate, through our actions, in the great fight for national liberation." These actions, the article continued, consisted of composers writing new songs and pieces "that celebrate love of country and freedom," and of performers "seizing every opportunity to inspire patriotism in their listeners." "But above all," the article warned, "no collaboration with Radio-Paris, with German concerts, with German journals; no participation in demonstrations of treason!"[81] A second article in the same issue listed recent Resistance activities undertaken by musicians: private concerts of the music of Milhaud; violent demonstrations in Lyons and Marseille at performances of the Berlin Philharmonic; musicians in Parisian nightclubs sliding fragments of "La Marseillaise" and the "Marche Lorraine" into their performances; and the sparse attendance of French musicians at a reception for their German counterparts.[82] Not mentioned, but in a similar vein, was Édith Piaf's contemporaneous performance, at the Théâtre de l'ABC in October 1942, of the patriotic hymn "Où sont mes petits copains?" with the stage lit in the colors of the French flag.[83] A third article, entitled "Debussy, musicien français," praised the composer and cited his anti-German writings.[84]

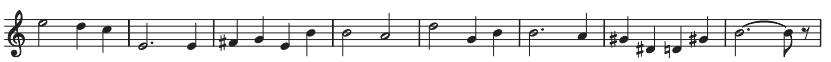
Poulenc's citation of *La Mer* in *Les Animaux modèles* was a nod to Debussy's newly enhanced reputation among Resistance members as "Claude de France." To drive the point home, Poulenc inserted another citation in the ballet that was a classical counterpart to the allusions by jazz musicians described in *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui.* Poulenc based the theme of the ballet's fourth section, "The Lion in Love," on the melody of the refrain of *Alsace et Lorraine,* a song that was written in 1871 to protest Germany's annexation of French territory and whose lyrics evoke French defiance: "You shall not have Alsace and Lorraine / And, despite you, we shall remain French" (ex. 2).[85] Although he transformed the melody from the original military march into a lyrical tune by removing the dotted rhythms, he otherwise retained the original rhythmic values (notated at twice the duration); his initial adherence to the exact intervals of the

EXAMPLE 2. Citations of *Alsace et Lorraine* in *Les Animaux modèles.* (Ex. 2b and 2c : © 1942 Éditions Max Eschig, Paris. All rights reserved. Reproduced by kind permission of MGB Hal Leonard s.r.l.)

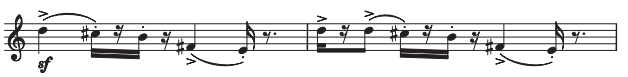
a. Tayoux, Villemer, and Nazet, *Alsace et Lorraine,* refrain, mm. 22–25.



b. Poulenc, *Les Animaux modèles*, "Le Lion amoureux," trumpet, mm. 39–46.



c. Poulenc, *Les Animaux modèles*, "Les deux coqs," violin I, mm. 258–59.



melody in the first measure give way in the next three measures to an approximation of the original melodic contour, followed by four measures of more freely selected pitches. "The Lion in Love" opens with the violins playing the theme, softly and lyrically *(très chanté)* in D major, after which Poulenc transposed it up a major third three times (returning on the fourth statement to the tonic key) and orchestrated it in contrasting ways. The climactic fifth appearance of the theme is in C major (the same key as the original *Alsace et Lorraine*) and is played, with accents on every note, by two trumpets and two trombones (marked *éclatant*), four horns playing in harmony, and doubled E♭ and B♭ clarinet parts marked *fortississimo. Alsace et Lorraine* returns in "The Two Roosters" during the saucy mockery of the hens dancing around the fallen rooster. This time Poulenc cites and repeats the first four notes of the original song in a similar rhythm for a much subtler reference than the theme in "The Lion in Love." The citation appears twice in the same section of "The Two Roosters," first in a lyrical vein (marked *très chanté* for the violins, violas, bass clarinet, and English horn), and then, twenty measures later, in a louder, heavily accented, harmonized version for woodwinds and trumpets.[86] Just as Poulenc claimed in the program notes to the work's premiere that any summary of the fables was "superfluous," perhaps it was equally superfluous to make the citations of *Alsace et Lorraine* any more obvious, for those who knew

the song—and, like the orchestral musicians, knew Poulenc's score—needed no clearer signal of the composer's intentions.

One might assume from the coded allusions in *Les Animaux modèles* that, as a composer of an orchestral work to accompany a ballet, Poulenc's ability to make public statements in support of the Resistance was constrained by the absence of any verbal component to the work. Yet, in a situation where every production had to be approved by German censors before being performed in public, the verbal component of plays and films was a distinct impediment to making subversive political statements. The most direct one could be in these media was to write a historical fiction that suggested allegorical parallels with the present day. The two productions most highly praised after the war in this regard are Jean Delannoy's 1942 film *Pontcarral, Colonel d'Empire* and Jean-Paul Sartre's 1943 play *Les Mouches*. In Delannoy's film, Pontcarral is a former officer in Napoleon's army who bravely defies Restoration authorities; in *Les Mouches*, Orestes avenges the murder of his father, King Agamemnon, by freeing the people of Argos from the unjust and illegitimate rule of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. Any postwar allegorical reading of either Delannoy's film or Sartre's play, however, is highly speculative, with scant evidence (and this includes press reports of audience applause at Pontcarral's patriotic pronouncements) that wartime viewers read any political subtext into them, let alone one supportive of the Resistance.[87] Although the same could be said for my own allegorical reading of the scenario of *Les Animaux modèles*, Poulenc's insertion of a nonverbal citation of a protest song probably known only to his French listeners enabled the composer to show his support for the Resistance in a public performance approved by German censors in a more concrete way than playwrights and filmmakers were able to risk doing at the time.

But Poulenc's citation of *Alsace et Lorraine* may also have been superfluous in yet another way. In April 1944 the young writer Claude Roy wrote a letter to Poulenc after attending a performance of *Les Animaux modèles*, which had just been revived for another run. Like Poulenc, Roy had initially reacted to France's armistice with Germany by becoming involved in Vichy organizations that worked on behalf of French culture. He went to work for Jeune France, an organization founded by Pierre Schaeffer in November 1940 with the support of Vichy's Office of Youth Affairs (Secrétariat général à la Jeunesse) and that was dedicated to the promotion of French culture among the nation's young people.[88] After the Vichy regime, suspicious of the group's experimentalist bent, shut down Jeune France in March 1942, both Roy and Schaeffer joined the Resistance.[89] When Roy expressed his gratitude to Poulenc for giving him hope in the future, he wrote that, in

listening to his music, "we know that there will always be a France." Only a few artists in France, Roy continued, were doing such work, citing the poets Aragon and Éluard, who had been actively working themes of the Resistance into their work in a much more manifest way than *Les Animaux modèles*. Modestly admitting his ignorance of musical matters, Roy may have missed the musical citations in *Les Animaux modèles*. It is possible that he knew of, and was indirectly describing in this letter, another of Poulenc's other musical secrets: *Figure humaine*, the secret Resistance cantata on the clandestine poetry of Éluard that Poulenc composed in July 1943.[90]

For the nonverbal reference by Poulenc to an 1871 rallying cry within the orchestral texture of *Les Animaux modèles* was only the first of four acts of defiance Poulenc committed during the war—a rarity by a composer of his stature. The second was his decision, in the fall of 1942, to base the second movement of his Sonata for Violin and Piano on a line of poetry by Federico García Lorca—"The guitar makes thoughts weep"—and to dedicate the piece to the memory of García Lorca, who was killed by Spanish nationalists in 1936 and whose works were banned in Franco's Spain.[91] Violinist Ginette Neveu, who had requested that Poulenc compose the piece for her, premiered the sonata with Poulenc at the piano on 21 June 1943 at the Concerts de la Pléiade, a musical and literary salon founded in early 1943 by Gaston Gallimard and Denise Tual, who wanted to present works by composers, such as Stravinsky, whose music they felt was not being performed enough in occupied Paris.[92] Poulenc's music had already been performed at three of the group's first five concerts, but this was the first time for both a premiere of Poulenc's new music and an appearance of Poulenc as performer. Gallimard articulated the significance, for him and Tual, of Poulenc's participation in a letter of thanks that highlights Poulenc's status in occupied Paris at the time: "Your collaboration, your presence, and your advice alone enabled us not only to create a project dear to my heart, but to succeed in it. Without you our initiative would not have had the sense we wanted to give it: that of a demonstration."[93]

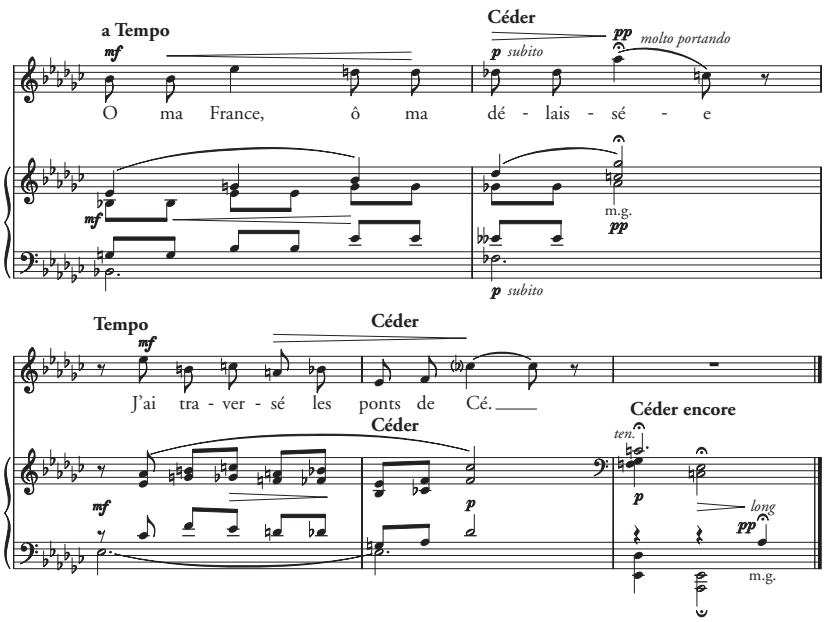
Poulenc's dedication of the Violin Sonata to García Lorca was not only known to the audience members at the premiere but was also made public in the press. Before the concert, the weekly arts newspaper *Comœdia* asked Poulenc to write an article on two upcoming premieres of his music at the Concerts de la Pléiade (the Violin Sonata on 21 June and his *Chansons villageoises* on the 28th). In response, Poulenc sent a brief commentary in which he mentioned both the work's dedication and the line of poetry. It was not unusual for French publications to contain references to the works of banned poets such as García Lorca or composers such as Milhaud or

Schoenberg, even in the case of newspapers, such as *Comœdia*, that had ties to German occupying authorities.[94] But Poulenc did not stop with García Lorca's name alone, placing him instead next to the name of a Resistance poet currently living and publishing his work in secret. Describing the second movement of the Violin Sonata, he wrote, "This intermezzo is a melancholy improvisation in remembrance of a poet whom I love as much as Apollinaire or Éluard."[95] The subtle effect of Poulenc's reference to García Lorca and Éluard in the pages of *Comœdia* is similar to that of the references to *Alsace et Lorraine* in *Les Animaux modèles:* easy to miss for those who weren't paying attention, but unmistakable in its intent for those who were.

Poulenc's third act was more daring, but also more discreet. No press coverage announced the premiere of his *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon* in his 8 December 1943 recital with Bernac at the Salle Gaveau; only a small notice in *L'Information musicale* for the duo performing "the works of Monsigny, Schubert, G. Fauré, E. Chabrier, [and] Fr. Poulenc (premiere)."[96] The poems were taken from Aragon's *Les Yeux d'Elsa*, a collection published in Switzerland in 1942 and distributed clandestinely in France. By the time Poulenc set them in September and October 1943, Aragon had ceased legal publication and was in hiding in the south of France, working actively in the Resistance; he had also begun publishing clandestine Resistance poetry in France under the pseudonym François la Colère.[97]

The subjects of the poems are topical. The first, "C," refers to Les Ponts-de-Cé, a town just south of Angers that, with its three bridges spanning an island in the Loire River, has had strategic significance for centuries. On the evening of 19 June 1940, German forces negotiated the peaceful surrender of Angers with the French army in order to pass over the Loire at Les Ponts-de-Cé, whose bridges were among the few in the region not yet destroyed by retreating French troops. As the Germans approached the town, the French blew up the third and final bridge, killing at least one German officer and trapping the German army on the northern banks, where they were forced to locate another crossing downstream.[98] Aragon's regiment fought the Germans in Belgium, was evacuated to Plymouth in the battle of Dunkirk, and traversed the French countryside from Brest east to the forest of Conches (around sixty miles west of Paris) and then south, arriving in Ribérac (fifty miles northeast of Bordeaux) on the day of the armistice. During its retreat the poet had witnessed events such as the skirmishes at Les Ponts-de-Cé.[99] His poem alludes to both the events he witnessed and their significance: "I crossed the bridges of Cé / It is there where it all began." His references to France's past glory ("A song of bygone days / Tells of a wounded knight") are mixed with contemporary topical

EXAMPLE 3. Francis Poulenc, *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon*, "C," mm. 37–41. (© 1944 Rouart-Lerolle & Cie / Éditions Salabert, Paris. All rights reserved. Reproduced by kind permission of MGB Hal Leonard s.r.l.)



details ("The Loire carries my thoughts away / With the overturned cars / And the unprimed weapons / And the ill-dried tears"). The final couplet, which repeats the first line of the poem, leaves little doubt that what began for Aragon on that day was a determination to resist the invaders: "O my France O my forsaken / I crossed the bridges of Cé."[100]

Poulenc's understated musical setting, which reflects the poem's mixture of shame and pride in the modal mixture of tonic minor and major, undergoes a subtle yet significant shift for the final couplet (ex. 3). The first line of the poem ("I crossed the bridges of Cé"), which is the same as the last line, is set in the opening measures unambiguously in the minor mode, in the tonic key of A♭ minor. For the poem's penultimate line, the singer lingers dramatically on a high A♭ marked *pianissimo* and *molto portando*, singing the word "forsaken." Poulenc added suspense to the reappearance of the last line—will it reappear in the minor mode again?—by lingering over a dominant pedal with the telltale flattened third of the minor tonic. But the resolution of the final cadence in the piano is, indeed, to the tonic major, highlighting the poem's message of personal transformation and determined resistance at Les

Ponts-de-Cé. Aragon's second poem set by Poulenc, "Fêtes galantes," begins as a humorous wordplay about life in Paris during the occupation; Poulenc's setting matches the poem's playfulness in a patter-song to be sung "incredibly fast, in the style of a catchy cabaret concert." We hear the phrase "You see," followed by sights both ridiculous (noblemen on bicycles) and mundane (kids on the street) but that turn progressively more disturbing (girls "led astray," corpses passing under bridges), ending in a verbal condemnation—"You see true values in jeopardy / And life swirling by in a slap-dash way"—that Poulenc's musical setting relentlessly ignores.[101]

Although Aragon's "C" has much in common with the words of Jolivet's "Lament of the Bridge at Gien" in his 1942 *Trois Complaintes du soldat* (see chapter 3), Aragon's elliptical poem has a very different subtext. Jolivet's lyrics tell the story of the unsuccessful efforts of the French army, after two days of fighting, to defend the bridge over the Loire River at Gien. His poem, which alludes to the disastrous and often fatal panic that ensued when civilians fleeing the advancing German army were caught in the crossfire of German and French forces, conformed to the predominant narrative in wartime France of the country's tragic inability to defend itself. By contrast, Aragon's subversive reference to a site of a small but successful act of French heroism at Les Ponts-de-Cé was a risky move in a poem published under the poet's own name, albeit in Switzerland, in 1942, before Aragon had gone into hiding. It was equally daring for Poulenc to set the poem to music and perform it publicly in late 1943. Poulenc's friend Paul Rouart took the risk of publishing *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon* legally in June 1944. Their composition and performance in occupied Paris, especially of "C," was significant to the leadership of the FNM: Joachim later reported Désormière's excitement about the song and the fact that audience enthusiasm at the premiere led the performers immediately to repeat it.[102]

Poulenc's fourth act of resistance was the most famous: his composition of the a cappella cantata *Figure humaine*. In a November 1944 interview, Poulenc explained that the initial idea stemmed from a March 1943 request by Henri Screpel, director of the Compagnie des discophiles français, after the performance of *Sept chansons* (his choral settings of Éluard's poems from 1936) at the inaugural concert of Concerts de la Pléiade in February 1943.[103] Éluard's poem "Liberté" had become a familiar symbol of the French Resistance after Allied planes dropped bundles of pamphlets containing the text as they flew over occupied France. It was reprinted in four Resistance publications, including one in London in English translation, and it inspired other artists as well, such as Jean Lurçat, who in summer 1943 wove lines from the poem into a tapestry in his atelier in Aubusson.[104] Screpel wanted

Poulenc to set "Liberté" to music for distribution as a recording. After having agreed to set "Liberté," Poulenc decided to transform the setting of a single poem into a cantata based on a selection of poems from Éluard's *Poésie et Vérité 1942*, which he obtained in a Lyons bookstore selling the Swiss edition. The volume was first published in France in 1942 under Éluard's own name and was reprinted in Switzerland and Algeria in 1943.[105] Upon hearing of the project, a choir from Belgium (the Chorale d'Anvers, directed by Louis de Vocht) commissioned the piece for their own performance.[106]

If the work could not be performed until after the war, that did not stop Poulenc from discussing it, and his pride in the results, with several of his friends and associates. From August to November 1943, he mentioned the work in letters to Bernac, Paul Collaer, Jolivet, Maurice Brianchon, Roland-Manuel ("'Liberté,' which ends the work, is, I believe, rather sensational"), and Marie-Blanche de Polignac ("My cantata is done. I must admit to you that I'm proud of it"). He also gave a private performance of the work at the home of Marie–Laure de Noailles on 5 December 1943.[107] Rouart published the work in secret in May 1944, one month before his legal publication of *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon;* copies were marked "working copy" *(épreuve de travail)* to evade the censors and were kept hidden until the liberation.[108] Although he later added seven shorter poems from *Poésie et Vérité 1942* to form the eight movements of *Figure humaine*, "Liberté," the final movement of the cantata, stood apart from the rest as Poulenc's most extensive musical statement on the war. The twenty-one stanzas of Éluard's poem each consist of a free association on the concept of freedom that ends with the line "I write your name." The verbal repetition creates a litany whose incantatory character Poulenc emphasized with stepwise melodic shapes that circle back on themselves again and again. At the same time, the progression through the stanzas adds tension by the use of gradually increasing tempo and modulations by rising semitones. At the final, revelatory stanza, in which the object of description—freedom—is at last explicitly named, the tempo suddenly returns to the original pace, for an emphatically articulated cadence on the word "freedom."

Written in a technically challenging choral idiom, *Figure humaine* is a more substantive musical expression of anguish and hope than the other secret settings of clandestine poetry by Poulenc's colleagues. For, in contrast to the other FNM composers, whose secret settings expressed political sentiments in musically straightforward idioms, bore moving dedications to the persecuted and the martyred victims of the war, and were scored with an eye to accessibility (solo voice with either piano or orchestral accompaniment), Poulenc had grander musical ambitions for his secret cantata.[109]

Those ambitions stemmed at least in part from his longing to be taken more seriously than the composer of playful and frivolous pieces such as the 1924 ballet *Les Biches*. After the August 1942 premiere of *Les Animaux modèles,* Poulenc wrote to André Schaeffner that the ballet's "grrrrrrrrand success" had its cruel moments when people's praise was tinged with surprise that he was capable of writing such a work: "I suddenly realized that, in the twenty-five years that I have been writing music, there was an entire public that didn't have much esteem for everything I have been doing." He was also stung by Charles Koechlin's private criticism of the ballet after the work's premiere, and above all by Koechlin's stated preference for the frivolity of *Les Biches;* in response, Poulenc complained that Koechlin "was among the rare ones to remain unmoved" by the more serious moments in *Les Animaux modèles* and that the Opéra orchestra suffered from a lack of string players: "Ever since the prisoners [of war] and the Jews haven't been replaced, it's been truly a serious drawback for the music."[110] But Poulenc, having consciously decided to compose a choral setting worthy not only of Éluard's highly symbolic Resistance poetry but also of the momentous historical moment—the liberation—for which he envisioned the work's first performance, seems also to have been inspired to write a far more ambitious, technically demanding choral work than he had ever done before.

POULENC AT WAR'S END

After the liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944, the musical secrets of the occupation were brought into the open. On 16 September *Les Lettres françaises,* the formerly clandestine Resistance newspaper that had absorbed *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui* two months earlier, published an interview with Roland-Manuel that gave a comprehensive overview of the wartime activities of the FNM. Roland-Manuel told of its beginnings in a postrehearsal meeting among Désormière, Barraine, and himself; of the gradual arrival of new members, such as Auric, Delvincourt, Durey, Münch, Poulenc, and Rosenthal; of the dangers that Rosenthal and Barraine faced, the former as a Jew and the latter as a suspected Resistance agent interrogated by the Gestapo; Delvincourt's noble scheme to protect Conservatoire students from the infamous Service du travail obligatoire (STO), a program by which French men between eighteen and fifty and women between twenty-one and thirty-five could be conscripted to work in German factories in France or Germany;[111] and the newsletter they distributed "in order to safeguard the essential traits of French music from the magnificent torrent of German Romanticism." Roland-Manuel cited Poulenc's December 1943 performance

of his settings of Aragon and his composition of *Figure humaine*, and he promised that these and other musical settings of Resistance poetry would soon be heard in a radio broadcast devoted to "the poets and musicians of the Resistance."[112] Indeed, on 1 November 1944 Tony Aubin conducted the Orchestre radio-symphonique de Paris in a broadcast of the premieres of Barraine's *Avis* (Éluard), Durey's "Ma haine" and "Les deux lumières" (Gabriel Audisio), and Rosenthal's "Éloignez-vous" (Jean Cassou) and "Tuer" (Éluard) alongside thematically appropriate music by Beethoven, Debussy, Charles Koechlin, and Albéric Magnard.[113]

Poulenc wrote *Figure humaine* with the expectation that it would be performed in Paris after the liberation. At least one article in the French press in fall 1944 confirms that the upcoming premiere was an eagerly anticipated occasion. Entitled "Secretly Developed during the Occupation, the Work of Two Great French Artists Will Be Revealed to the World by the Chorale d'Anvers," the article, which appeared in *Ce Soir* on 25 November 1944, contained an interview with the composer and indicated a spring 1945 premiere for the cantata.[114] But several practical factors worked against a swift performance of the work in France. Despite Poulenc's efforts to secure funding from the Association française d'action artistique (AFAA), an organization that had been created years earlier to promote French culture around the world, for the Chorale d'Anvers to bring the work to Paris, its plans for the premiere in Belgium as well as a Paris tour were postponed from June to October 1945 before finally being abandoned.[115] Poulenc thought for a time that Nadia Boulanger would be able to direct the work, but its technical demands presented a challenge to French choral groups, the most qualified of which (the Chorale Passani, formed by Émile Passani during the war) was out of the question because of its wartime performances for Radio-Paris.[116] Meanwhile, Vera Lindsay, a producer at the BBC, traveled to France in fall 1944 to discuss with Poulenc the possibility of the British radio station performing the difficult work.[117] Thus the BBC singers' performance in London of the cantata in English translation on 25 March 1945 became the work's official premiere. Although Poulenc played the work twice for private audiences in Paris in fall 1944—on 27 November at the home of Marie-Laure de Noailles and 12 December at the home of Denise and Roland Tual—and the BBC performance was rebroadcast in France by Radiodiffusion nationale late at night on the date of its premiere, *Figure humaine* was not heard live in public in France until 22 May 1947, when Collaer brought the chorus of the Belgian national radio on tour to Paris.

In his 1954 interview with Poulenc, Claude Rostand suggested that *Figure humaine*, which had not been sung in France since the May 1947 perfor-

mance, was suffering the inevitable neglect of circumstantial works once circumstances changed. Poulenc replied defensively that, although the piece was circumstantial, it was not a commission, implying that the piece was therefore not necessarily tethered to its original circumstances. He then told a revised story of the piece's genesis that differed in key details from his report to *Ce Soir* ten years earlier. The idea of writing a secret piece "that one could publish and prepare in secret for performance on the long-awaited day of liberation" came to him in the summer of 1943, he now claimed, after a pilgrimage to Rocamadour, the monastery that had inspired his religious choral works in the 1930s. The scores were sent to the BBC in London as soon as Paris was liberated for a January 1945 premiere even before the war's end. (He was conflating a January 1945 concert tour with Bernac to London with the premiere of the cantata in March 1945, when he and Bernac had returned for a second London tour.) In this telling, Poulenc's decision to write *Figure humaine* was a much more solitary, heroic, and even spiritual act than in his earlier account. Gone are Screpel's initial request for a setting of "Liberté" and the subsequent commission from the Belgian choir; the London premiere had, despite the ongoing hostilities, been planned from the start; and the scoring of the work for a cappella double choir was to give the work, which Poulenc calls an "act of faith," a human dimension, despite the technical difficulties it created. "I have faith in the future," Poulenc remarked, citing swift improvements in choral performance worldwide as a hopeful sign that the work would find wider audiences, despite the fact that he had not written it in the lingua franca of Latin.[118]

Poulenc's revised account of the genesis of *Figure humaine* stemmed partly from his defensiveness that the piece had not received the postwar performances he had hoped for, and partly from his lingering insecurity. The composer concluded his narrative about the cantata to Rostand with the expressed wish that "once people know better all of my choral works, sacred and profane, they will have a more accurate picture of my personality, for they will see that I am not only the lightweight composer . . . of *Les Biches* and *Mouvements perpetuels*."[119] But the new narrative also conformed to the image, formed in the immediate postwar period, of Poulenc as France's most heroic Resistance composer. After the *Ce Soir* article of November 1944 came an article by Auric about *Figure humaine* in *Les Lettres françaises* six days after the work's 25 March 1945 BBC premiere. Auric's article begins with a dramatic description of his first encounter with Poulenc's cantata: "Below us passed German cars. And, at the street corner, police inspectors verified identity cards. We rehearsed, with the anguish and the anger that you might imagine, the latest works by our friends who had been

hunted, arrested, tortured, or deported." Auric wrote that he immediately sensed that *Figure humaine* was a work "whose greatness clearly surpassed everything my friend had already written." Poulenc's music enhanced the words of Éluard's poetry by giving each word "a radiance, a resonance, an irresistible accent."[120] Bitter about those who manufactured excuses for the poor behavior of some musicians during the occupation, Auric wrote that Poulenc's actions since 1940 were above suspicion: the composer refused to "connive" *(ruser)* with Vichy or the Germans and performed exclusively French music in his recitals with Bernac.[121]

For Auric, Poulenc's cantata was vindication that a contemporary French composer could succeed without using "the formulas of a pseudo-'modernism'" that he decried in those who were booing Stravinsky's latest works in spring 1945. For Poulenc, Auric's praise—that, with *Figure humaine,* Poulenc, "worthy of his time, has suddenly acquired a humanity that might surprise you but which you will recognize along with me"—was a clear sign of vindication for his efforts to make a name for himself not only as a French patriot but also as a French composer to be taken seriously.[122] Rostand, in his review of the first concert devoted entirely to Poulenc's *mélodies,* which took place at the Salle Gaveau on 27 April 1945, provided additional encomium. For Rostand, the concert of *mélodies,* together with the BBC's recent premiere of *Figure humaine,* "confirmed for those who could still have had doubts that [Poulenc's] place is definitely in the highest ranks of great contemporary French composers." In Rostand's opinion, *Figure humaine* and *Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon* were the "only musical works up to now that are worthy of the recent years of suffering and martyrdom."[123] Two months later, in his overview of the 1944–45 season, Rostand complained, "Clandestinity, in general so fruitful for writers, does not seem to have been so for musicians." The only exceptions he allowed were premieres of wartime works by Mihalovici, Tibor Harsányi, Messiaen, and Poulenc, only two of which—Mihalovici's *Symphonies pour le temps présent* and Poulenc's *Figure humaine*—were topical works composed in secret.[124]

The trend continued in January 1946 with the reinterpretation of Poulenc's other major wartime work, *Les Animaux modèles,* by André Schaeffner in the new music journal *Contrepoints.* In his article, "Francis Poulenc, musicien français," Schaeffner praised Poulenc's insight in *Les Animaux modèles* not only into the essence of the French national character, but also on the necessity of portraying that character as essentially unchanged by the trauma of the defeat. With its "pure charm," Schaeffner claimed, *Les Animaux modèles,* despite its differences with the composer's settings of Apollinaire and Éluard, "takes no less the shape of a manifesto."[125] The unstated motiva-

tion for the tribute was probably the revival of the ballet at the Opéra at the end of the month, with Serge Peretti replacing Lifar onstage as the lion and the rooster and Christiane Vaussard replacing Schwarz as the ant and the hen.[126]

For the cantata's 1947 French premiere, Schaeffner provided a heroic narrative for the work's genesis in the program notes. "After London, after Brussels, Paris will now get to know this work that was written—and that a few of us were able to hear—during a time when from Poulenc's window we could see 'Dressed in green / Dressed in gray' the inhabitants of Luxembourg." The citation is from Éluard's poem "Bêtes et méchants," published clandestinely in *Les Lettres françaises* in May 1944;[127] the reference is to the Palais de Luxembourg in central Paris, the headquarters of the Luftwaffe during the occupation. "Only material difficulties and the desire that [Poulenc] expressed to hear the work first performed in Belgium," Schaeffner explained, "prevented the performance in Paris of *Figure humaine* after the liberation."[128] Reviewers such as Maurice Brillant at *L'Aube* waxed poetic about the fact that *Figure humaine* "bloomed" in secret during the occupation, "for beautiful flowers cannot help but grow in greenhouses in hiding, in that dreary and unpleasant climate." Brillant crowned Poulenc "the perfect type of French musician who, whatever he writes (and we know he writes in a wide variety of genres), writes nothing that is . . . not French. The admirable cantata proves it once again." And Henri Sauguet, in *La Bataille*, declared that Poulenc's use of a choral ensemble gave the work a "collective character": "We all find a part of ourselves here: the part that is wounded at the same time that it is exalted and consoled by the work of an artist. . . . In this way, *Figure humaine* will remain a date in this era for all who ask that music be the supreme expression of an emotion."[129]

In the immediate postwar period, such unmitigated praise of a prominent public figure was rare. Unlike Honegger, whose wartime choices (as we shall see in chapter 2) were, and continue to be, controversial after the war's end, Poulenc did nothing during the war for which he could be reproached. In particular, he assiduously avoided participating in any concerts, receptions, published music criticism, radio broadcasts, or voyages organized by the German occupying authorities. At the same time, he was certainly not immune to the exigencies of public life or the opinion of others. His pride in his wartime work even led him to seek public honors—such as a state commission for *Les Animaux modèles*—that, decades later, others (such as Frédéric Blanc, the president of the Association Maurice et Marie-Madeleine Duruflé) would see as a source of shame.[130] In 1996, Benjamin Ivry, alone among the composer's biographers, called Poulenc's

reaction to the occupation "self-centered" because, although troubled by German persecution of the Jews, the composer "did nothing to risk his life and career in order to prevent it." Ivry pointed out that Poulenc, in his wartime letters, complained that the absence of Jewish musicians had a negative effect on French musical life—comments that could be read as displaying a regrettable lack of concern for the human, and not just the musical, costs of their persecution.[131] Ivry also labeled *Les Animaux modèles*, with its emphasis on French rural life, a "Pétainist work" and drew parallels between the way Poulenc and Picasso, to whom Poulenc dedicated *Figure humaine*, ignored what was happening around them: "[Picasso's] main virtue was his concentration on creative productivity at all costs." Ivry acknowledged, however, that if Poulenc was no hero, "neither did he profit grossly from the arrival of the Germans" and contrasted his wartime choices favorably with those made by Honegger.[132]

In January 1946, in the same issue of *Contrepoints* as Schaeffner's tribute to Poulenc, Henry Barraud—by then the music director at the postwar Radiodiffusion française—wrote a highly personal account of music and resistance in wartime France that put the Resistance acts of French musicians like Poulenc in perspective. The true heroes, wrote Barraud, were those who put their lives directly at risk. Among those who died for the cause after performing daring acts of sabotage was Barraud's brother, Jean, who was executed by the Germans with forty-nine other Resistance fighters in Bordeaux on 1 August 1944. As for musicians in the Resistance, Barraud continued, "we had the best part of the deal: just enough adventure to enjoy the game without taking great risks, and the internal enrichment that awaited those who voluntarily withdrew from what they lived in their daily lives."[133] Barraud described with melancholy the gratitude he felt that he owed the German occupying forces for forcing him to withdraw from the daily pressures and compromises of French musical life. With no critics, colleagues, or audiences to please, no commissions to dutifully fulfill, and no films to score in haste, Barraud discovered in four years of abstinence the extent to which he had been succumbing to outside forces in his creative work.[134] He hoped that, in his return to public life, he would retain his newfound freedom and resist external judgment: "Whenever that judgment touches me, I will keep in the corner of my heart, amid the enduring hatred it has acquired, a spot for gratitude" for the Germans. Consciously or not, Barraud was echoing Jean-Paul Sartre's provocative declaration on the front page of the first post-liberation issue of *Les Lettres françaises*, "Never have we been so free as we were under the German occupation."[135] As Susan Rubin Suleiman has argued about

Sartre, such statements were designed "for people who *wish* to hear a story of collective heroism—and [Sartre] gives it to them, even if it involves leaving certain things unsaid."[136]

It is true that, like Sartre, Poulenc did not withdraw from public life during the occupation. As Schaeffner noted, in many ways Poulenc continued to compose as if nothing had changed. But this was an attitude he shared with almost all the members of the FNM. Ivry cites Durey's silence during the occupation as the more honorable path, but Durey had already ceased composing as early as 1937 for financial reasons.[137] Auric, who withdrew his new music from French concert halls and restricted his published music criticism to unsigned articles in *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui*, nevertheless composed six film scores during the occupation, including one for the highly successful 1943 film *L'Éternel retour*. The two conductors in the group, Désormière and Münch, were arguably among the most prominent and successful musicians in occupied Paris. Although they were both obliged, in the service of their positions, to participate in various events sponsored by Vichy and the German occupying forces,[138] they were praised during and after the war as patriots for their promotion of French music at the highest artistic level.

Yet Poulenc did not merely resist making compromises, openly or in private, with the competing forces in charge in occupied France. He had the status and the panache to perform subtle but highly symbolic acts of resistance that few musicians—and, indeed, few creative artists in any media—dared to do in occupied France. In the immediate aftermath of the liberation, Roland-Manuel, like Barraud, was modest in his assessment of the achievements of the FNM. "Our field of action was limited," he conceded, "but we gave ourselves over entirely to our task."[139] Indeed, Poulenc's acts may not have been grand in scale, but, when fashioning his musical secrets, he seems to have given himself over entirely to his task.