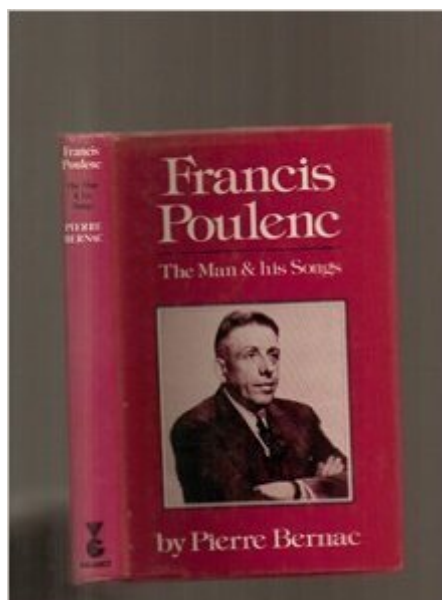


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Francis Poulenc: The Man And His Songs



Synopsis

In 1935 the French baritone Pierre Bernac formed a duo with the composer Francis Poulenc that became a legend throughout the world. Unprecedented in the history of music, it was the first duo in which the singer and pianist were perceived as equals. It lasted for 25 years and was a determining influence on Poulenc's vocal output: more than two-thirds of his songs were written for Bernac to sing. Bernac's general book on the French repertoire, "The Interpretation of French Song", has long been the standard and indispensable work on its subject. In "Francis Poulenc - the Man and His Songs", first published in 1977, he gives us the fruit of his long association with Poulenc, paying moving tribute to the composer both as man and musician, and providing detailed analyses of every piano-accompanied song that Poulenc wrote. Each of the 137 poems is annotated for pronunciation, with a line-for-line translation into English by Winifred Radford, who also translated the text of the book. The discussion of each song is preceded by a brief biographical note on the poet and a description of Poulenc's own attitude towards both poet and poem. Bernac aimed in this book, to pass on his personal understanding of the songs of Francis Poulenc, as well as a little of their mutual experience in interpreting and performing them. He has thereby left a unique record whose importance cannot be overestimated. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Pierre Bernac probably knew Francis Poulenc's songs better than anyone save the composer -- they had a working relationship that stretched across several decades, and Bernac personally

premiered the lion's share of Poulenc's song output. This volume is Bernac's tribute to his friend and collaborator, and includes a useful biographical sketch with some amusing anecdotes, and a comprehensive survey of Poulenc's song output (though a few songs including the Eight Polish Songs, Fancy - Poulenc's only English language setting, from Shakespeare - and the Quatre chansons pour enfants are conspicuously missing). Each song includes complete texts and translations and Bernac's notes on composition, general mood and singer's motivation. This book goes alongside Bernac's The Interpretation of French Song as essential reading for the serious devotee of French melodies. Must reading for anyone thinking about singing Poulenc's songs.

This is THE book for singers and anyone interested in the wonderful melodies of Francis Poulenc.

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