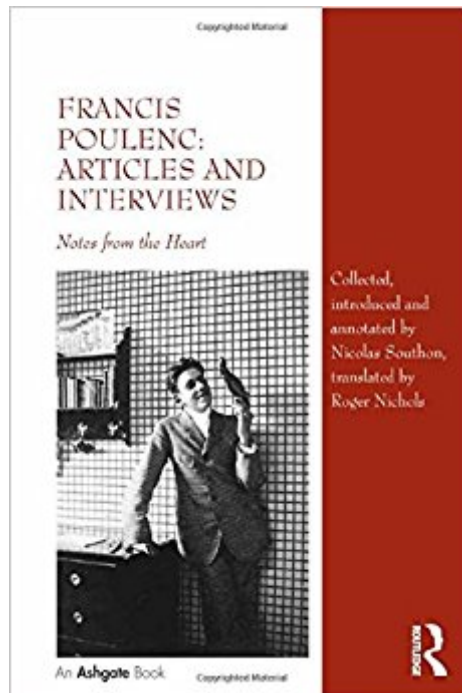




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Francis Poulenc: Articles And Interviews: Notes From The Heart



Synopsis

“He plays the piano well,” wrote the society hostess Mme de Saint-Marceaux in her diary on 18 March 1927. “His compositions are not devoid of talent but he’s not a genius, and I’m afraid he thinks he is.” Intelligent though the lady was, she got this one spectacularly wrong. Poulenc has in fact outpaced his colleagues in Les Six by many a mile, as singers and instrumentalists all over the world will attest, and while he would never have accepted the title of “genius,” preferring “artisan,” a genius is increasingly what he appears to have been. Part of the answer lay in always being his own man, and this independence of spirit shows through in his writings and interviews just as brightly as in his music, whether it’s boasting that he’d be happy never to hear The Mastersingers ever again, pointing out that what critics condemn as the “formlessness” of French music is one of its delights, voicing his outrage at attempts to “finish” the Unfinished Symphony, writing “in praise of banality” - or remembering the affair of Debussy’s hat. And in every case, his intelligence, humour and generosity of spirit help explain why he was so widely and deeply loved. This volume comprises selected articles from Francis Poulenc: *J’écoute ce qui me chante* (Fayard, 2011) edited by Nicholas Southon. Many of these articles and interviews have not been available in English before and Roger Nichols’s translation, capturing the very essence of Poulenc’s lively writing style, makes more widely accessible this significant contribution to Poulenc scholarship.

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Customer Reviews

'... this charming book is fascinating, amusing, provocative, lively, and informative for anyone interested in Parisian culture and the music of 'les six,' of which Poulenc was an important member. Tellingly, the book prompted this reviewer to dust off his Poulenc CD collection to hear again some delightful music ... the content is delightful ... Highly recommended. All readers.' Choice 'This volume ... benefits from a translation favouring sense above stylistic posing ... Sometimes catty but constantly captivating, Poulenc's prose is definitely worth reading'. International Piano Magazine '... a welcome addition to English-language literature on Francis Poulenc.' H-France '... nothing quite matches information 'from the horse's mouth' to be found in this charming new book, compiled almost entirely from Poulenc's own words. The warmth of Poulenc's conversational style is effortlessly conveyed in Roger Nichols' translation'. BBC Music Magazine ***** 'You will spend a couple delightful evenings with this sophisticated raconteur.' American Record Guide '... this invaluable new translation ... the evident warmth of his personality emerges from Roger Nichols's skilful translations, as does the fierce independence of his musical judgements'. Times Literary Supplement 'Nichols's translation is an important addition to the English literature on Poulenc. It contains key texts in which Poulenc describes the circumstances that led him to compose some of his most well-known works, discusses his favorite composers and performers (both of his own works and others), and shares many fascinating anecdotes about the leading composers of his generation.' Notes '... Southon's splendid collection deserves a place in every academic music library and on the shelves of scholars, performers, and devotees of the composer.' Fontes Artis Musicae

Nicolas Southon has a doctorate in musicology and graduated from the National Conservatoire of Music, Paris. Il a enseigné à l'université de Tours ainsi qu'au conservatoire de région d'Aubervilliers, a écrit critique dans des revues musicales spécialisées, et apparaît régulièrement comme producteur sur France-Musique. He has taught at the University of Tours and the Conservatoire of Aubervilliers, as well as writing reviews for numerous music magazines, and appears regularly as a producer on France Musique. Roger Nichols studied Music at Oxford University. In 1980 he became a freelance writer, broadcaster, critic, translator and pianist and has made numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, mainly about French music. In 2006 he was appointed Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur for services to French culture.

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