

Poulenc: Les Animaux modèles; Concert champêtre; Improvisations 13 & 15

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Composer(s):

Poulenc arr. Stefano Bollani

Works:

Les animaux modèles; Concert champêtre; Improvisations Nos 13 & 15 (elaborated Bollani)

Performer:

Stefano Bollani (piano); Filarmonica '900 del Teatro Regio di Torino/Jan Latham-Koenig

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Avie

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Performance:



Sound:



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Not everyone will warm to Stefano Bollani's jazz improvisations on two of Poulenc's *Improvisations*, and some of the booklet's French titling is less than correct. But there the carping ends. This is a disc to treasure.

The well-known description of Poulenc as half monk, half yobbo is good as far as it goes, but he was a lot more than that. Pianists and singers have long responded to the deep sensuality of his music – deep enough to cause any Father Abbot the gravest concern – as well as to the bouts of crazy high spirits.

Here in, for example, 'L'homme entre deux âges' in *Les animaux modèles*, Poulenc's *prestissimo* is precisely that, while the glorious final return of the opening music is played with huge affection. Should the *Concert champêtre* be performed on the piano? Poulenc said no, but did it often.

Bollani's lightly pedalled sound is, for me, utterly convincing and the balance between piano and

orchestra is ideal. As a further incitement, with Jonathan Darlington's recording of *Les animaux modèles* deleted, this is the only current version complete. *Roger Nichols*