



An oboe recital by **Reynard Ardian Simanjuntak**  
Wednesday, 30 April 2025, 15.30

**Gerald Lim**, Piano  
**Matthew Mak**, Piano

## PROGRAMME NOTES

GIOVANNI BENEDETTO PLATTI (1697 – 1763)

Oboe Concerto in G minor, I47

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro

Giovanni Benedetto Platti is one of the few Baroque composers who was also a renowned oboist. Because of this, his oboe writing—while virtuosic, as is typical of Italian Baroque music—is surprisingly idiomatic, even on the Baroque oboe. His proficiency as a vocalist likely also influenced his ability to write expressive, lyrical melodies that allow the oboe to "sing," even in complex compound melodies.

While Platti's harmonic progressions may not be as intricately structured as Bach's, he certainly knows where and how to put the "spicy" chords for maximum dramatic effect. From the beautifully expressive dissonances and satisfying resolutions in the Largo to the unexpected harmonic shifts in the Allegro movements, Platti keeps listeners on the edge of their seats—a true showman indeed.

Another very crucial aspect that contributes to this dramatic concerto is Platti's use of rhythmic drive, an effect that can be heard from the very first bar of the piece with its insistent rhythmic pattern. This effect is best realized with the percussive attack of the harpsichord rather than the more rounded sound of the piano. Having written nine harpsichord concertos himself, this effect was certainly well in Platti's mind as he was composing this piece.

FRANCIS POULENC (1899 - 1963)

Sonata for Oboe and Piano, FP185

- I. Elégie (Paisiblement)
- II. Scherzo (Très animé)
- III. Déploration (Très calme)

The year was 1920, one could easily imagine Francis Poulenc and Sergei Prokofiev sitting together in a Parisian salon, playing a game of bridge—perhaps after performing a piece or two of four-hand piano duets. Though Prokofiev reportedly could not care less about Poulenc as a composer, the two shared a long-lasting friendship. So much so that, 42 years later, Poulenc would dedicate the very last piece he ever wrote—his Oboe Sonata—to Prokofiev's memory.

It would have been hard not to want to befriend the charming Francis Poulenc. He was humorous and witty yet deeply sincere and serious at times. He was even described as "half monk, half rascal" by some, a duality that is unmistakably present in this sonata, as it is a sincere composition that represents everything that Poulenc ever was. Fitting, as nearing the end of his life, he was likely thinking more than just Prokofiev's life and legacy, but also his own.

This was not the first time Poulenc had been profoundly affected by loss. In 1936, the tragic death of his friend, composer Pierre-Octave Ferroud, in a car accident led him to rediscover his previously lost Catholic faith. This event shaped much of his later music, revealing just how much friendships mean to Poulenc, and what kind of thoughts mortality brings to his mind.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the sonata's final movement. The oboe's hymn-like melodies seem almost like a prayer, a quiet meditation on the fleeting nature of life. The music fades into an eerily quiet conclusion as if even the sounds themselves die and wither into nothing—a poignant farewell from Poulenc's own hand.