



JEAN FRANAIX (1912-1997)  
**Concerto for two pianos and orchestra** (1965)  
FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)  
**Concerto for two pianos and orchestra in D Minor** FP 61 (1932)  
**Les Animaux modeles** FP 111 (1941)  
Ballet after Jean de la Fontaine (Orchestral Suite)  
**MONA & RICA BARD**, *piano*  
DEUTSCHE STAATSPHILHARMONIE RHEINLAND-PFALZ  
**ARIANE MATIAKH**, *conductor*

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PC 21

*To compose a concerto for two pianos is a complex procedure. Jean Franaix wanted his to be brilliant and cheerful, with numerous technical 'acrobatics', difficult in themselves as well as in their coordination with the orchestra. This challenge has been brilliantly met by Mona and Rica Bard and their conductor Ariane Matiakh. Their demand for excellence gives complete meaning to a work that is touchy, but very stimulating to realize and easy to listen to. This was one of the paradoxes of Jean Franaix: though very difficult to perform, his compositions are easily accessible for the listener. Our three artists have satisfied a wish the composer has had throughout his life: making music 'that gives pleasure'.*

*Claude Franaix, 2014 (Pianist and composer's daughter)*

In his musical aesthetics, Franaix was close to the 'Groupe des six' from the outset, and in the connection between cheerfulness and elegance so typical of him to Poulenc in particular. This applies especially to the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, written in 1965, which the composer premiered in Maastricht with his daughter Claude on 26 November of the same year. It is not difficult to discern that Franaix was well acquainted with Poulenc's Double Concerto when he composed his piece. Of the six, the Paris-born Poulenc was probably the 'most French'. Influenced by Surrealism and Apollinaire, on the one hand, and then to a large degree by Catholicism after roughly the middle of his life, he derived his stylistic elements from the greats of music history – from Mozart to Stravinsky. Most striking is surely the second movement of the concerto representing a dialogue of the composer with Mozart.