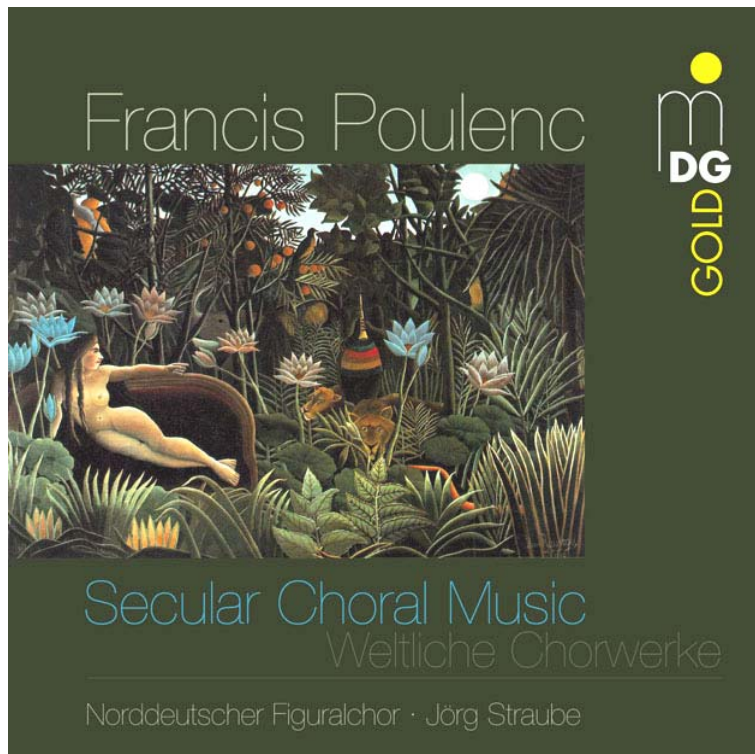


NEW • NOUVEAUTE • NEUHEIT

MDG
GOLD



11/09- (5)

Title:

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
Secular Choral Music

Artists:

Norddeutscher Figuralchor
Jörg Straube, cond.

1 Hybrid-SACD

Order Number:

MDG 947 1595-6

UPC-Code:



7 60623 15956 0

Chansons populaires

On its first CD on MDG the Norddeutscher Figuralchor under the conductor Jörg Straube ranges over the broad spectrum of Francis Poulenc's secular choral music. The Figuralchor demonstrates its own musical multifacetedness and great professionalism in a program including this French composer's very first choral composition, the *Chanson à boire* sung by male choir, his settings of popular poems, the *Chansons françaises* of folk character, and the *Figure humaine* enlisting up to eight parts.

Cheers!

Francis Poulenc was from a very musical Parisian family. He learned to play the piano from his mother. As a young man he was influenced by Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Chevalier and just as much by French vaudeville and soon chanced upon a group of composers led by Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau, known as "Les Six." Is this the environment that gave rise to his drinking song? While piano music predominates in Poulenc's early music, his friendships with Montparnasse poets, including Guillaume Apollinaire, inspired him to compose many choral works.

Liberté française

Poulenc composed the cantata *Figure humaine* in 1943 as an act of resistance at the time of the German occupation. Poulenc set texts critical of the regime by Paul Éluard, his favorite poet. The cantata was smuggled to England prior to the end of the war and was premiered there in a translation in January 1945. The French premiere was not held until 1947, that is, not on the day of liberation (as Poulenc had hoped). Challenges to the singers pervade the work, and in the concluding chord alone the score calls for three-line E from the second soprano.

Hats Off!

During the three decades since its founding the Norddeutscher Figuralchor has become one of Germany's leading chamber choirs. The singers and their conductor Jörg Straube have repeatedly been awarded prizes at German choir competitions, and their CD recordings have thrice won the Echo Klassik award. The choir has also received various distinctions at international competitions. Its repertoire spans five centuries and includes contemporary music. The romantic choral literature and the music of the baroque form a special focus in the work of the Figuralchor.