

# Eduqas A Level Music

## AoS E: Into the Twentieth Century

### Core Wider Listening: Poulenc

The term Neo-Classical in music history has two overlapping meanings:

- 1) a trend in the 1920s to write simpler, clearer and more economical music in reaction to maximalism of various kinds including Expressionism, Serialism and Post-Romanticism
- 2) twentieth century composers that take features of an older style of music and present them in a more contemporary language and context (this is typically be aspects of structure, genre, melody and/or harmony)

Neo-Classical traits can be identified in many composers but they arguably dominate in Poulenc, middle-period Stravinsky and some (but not all) Prokofiev, the three composers studied in this AoS.

**Listen out for:** traditional sounding rhythms, melodies, harmonies etc. but given a twentieth century twist (often with more complex and dissonant harmonies)

#### Core Wider Listening Work

Although **Poulenc** called this piece **Sonata for Trumpet, Horn and Trombone** the first movement is not in sonata form, nor, as was usual at this time, is it written for a solo instrument with piano accompaniment. A sonata is usually a serious and extended work; Poulenc pokes gentle fun at this idea by writing music that is brief and humorous in nature. Poulenc was pleased that the premier of this sonata, first played in 1924, was greeted by laughter.

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#### Core Wider Listening Piece: NEOCLASSICISM

<b>Composer</b>	Poulenc (1899-1963)
<b>Work</b>	Sonata for Trumpet, Horn and Trombone, first movement (1922)
<i>Essay introduction</i>	
<p>Poulenc's trio is on the lighter end of the Neo-Classical style. The music is humorous with a generally uncomplicated melodic and harmonic language. However both melody and harmony are given a twentieth century twist, with unexpected dissonances, harmonic turns and rhythmic irregularities.</p>	
<i>Structure</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modified Ternary form (see structure table overleaf)</li> <li>• Poulenc exaggerates the contrast between A and B sections with a modulation to a relatively distant key (Eb from G), change of tempo and drastic change of mood from spiky to lyrical.</li> <li>• He bridges the gap between the end of the B going back to A by adding a linking passage that is similar to B in tonality but to A in general feel</li> <li>• The end of the first A section has a humorous codetta that augments the rhythm of the opening idea before putting it into the minor as he passes it between instruments</li> </ul>	
<i>Harmony and tonality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonic language is mostly diatonic with lots of primary chords, particularly in A section (I IV V I at opening).</li> <li>• Added note harmonies add an astringent edge and there are also some unorthodox dissonances (e.g. the cadence in bar 8).</li> <li>• The second part of the A section is unstable with sporadic implications of the minor key in the horn part in particular</li> <li>• The tonal structure is unusual with a modulation to Eb from the opening G for the B section</li> <li>• There are also several unexpected modulations at the end of this section, which ends up briefly in Db major before suddenly modulating back to G for the beginning of the A section reprise.</li> </ul>	
<i>Melody and rhythm</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melodies are short and memorable in the classical vein.</li> <li>• The main idea is a simple descending triadic one</li> <li>• The phrasing is often regular, but the middle of the A section shifts between different meters, making the it much more irregular.</li> <li>• The motif from the beginning undergoes a range of transformations, including rhythmic augmentation at the end of the A section.</li> <li>• There are touches of chromaticism, for example in the final coda.</li> </ul>	
<i>Texture and sonority</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instrumentation of horn, trumpet and trombone trio is an unusual combination</li> <li>• There are also some strange uses of the instruments, for example the large leaps in the trumpet at the end of the B section</li> <li>• In the reprise of the A section, the horn and trombone swap roles, with the former taking on the bass part.</li> <li>• The texture is mostly melody and accompaniment, including a comic oom-pah accompaniment in the bridge section.</li> <li>• Extensive use of doubling in sixths and thirds, for example in the second part of the A section</li> </ul>	

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<b>Section A</b>		
1-8	Idea A1	G major, modulating to D major in bar 6; melody in trumpet throughout A section; very diatonic functional harmony with a 'wrong' note at beginning of bar 4; regular 4+4 phrasing
9-17	Idea A2	G major, with hints of minor; irregular and stuttering rhythm and meter with lots of weak perfect cadences as time signature shifts. Horn marked louder than trumpet melody.
18-21	Idea A3	G major; back to regular phrasing (2+2)
22-25	Codetta	Turns from G major to G minor (helps prepare for tonality of next section) Rhythmic augmentation as opening motif is passed around; comically exaggerated effect.
<b>Section B</b>		
26-29	Idea B1	Eb major (but always pushing sharpwards to Bb – see A naturals); melody passes from trumpet to horn; much more legato than A section, with arpeggiated accompaniment.
30-33	Idea B1	
34-35	Idea B1	As first two bars of B section.
36-39		Modulates to Bb, landing on V7 with simple cadenza-like link in trumpet.
Bridge to back to Section A		
40-47	Idea A1'	Bb major (pushing towards F); simplified version of A1 ends with modulation to F major
48-53 <sup>3</sup>	Idea A4	On F (as V of Bb); new idea on trumpet a bit like A3.
53 <sup>4</sup> -54 <sup>3</sup>		Dominant seventh of Bb major
54 <sup>4</sup> -55 <sup>3</sup>		Dominant seventh of Db major
55 <sup>4</sup> -57		Starts with fragment of Db scale but then the horn plays equivalent fragment of G major scale, crudely modulating for return of A section proper.
<b>Section A'</b>		
58-65	Idea A1	G major as beginning.
66-72	Idea A4	From bridging section; starts in G major but ends on dominant seventh of G minor
73-81	Idea A2	Same basic idea as before, but Horn and Trombone have exchanged roles. Start much more strongly in G minor than in first section.
82-85	Idea A3	As before (bb 18-21).
86-end	Coda	Very suddenly and incongruously chromatic. Mock mysterious before ending on augmentation of initial idea from beginning, very quiet and a bit slower. As with codetta, this is playing with our expectations in an exaggerated and comical way.