

Francis Poulenc – Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence (1939)

- I. Timor et tremor
- II. Vineam meam elegit
- III. Tenebrae factae sunt
- IV. Tristis et anima mea

Poulenc's *Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence* date from 1938-39 three years after his return to Catholicism following his pilgrimage to visit the famous Black Virgin in Rocamadour (in Western France). They are short settings of texts from the Holy Week and show a remarkable balance of emotional restraint and expression along with textural and musical economy. They are generally sombre and serious in tone and are somewhat at odds with the public perception of Poulenc as a hedonistic dandy (though Critic Claude Rostand, in a July 1950 *Paris-Presse* article, described Poulenc as "half monk, half delinquent" ("le moine et le voyou"), a tag that was to be attached to his name for the rest of his career). The motets become gradually more complex and intense as they progress with the final one, *Tristis et anima mea* employing a variety of rhythmic and melodic gestures to depict Jesus being taken in the garden of Gethsemane.

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