

Wind Trio shines up French treasures

By CHRISTOPHER HYDE

The Portland Wind Trio, consisting of Alison Hale, flute, Arndt Keef, bassoon, and Thomas Parchman, clarinet, with

piano accompaniments by Mark Lionfrido, provided an amusing, technically impressive and musically satisfying opening to the season of USM faculty concerts.

Friday night's concert was billed as "Stolen Jewels: An Evening of French Treasures," and it lived up to the advance notice. The pieces played were "stolen" in the sense that they were written for combinations of

REVIEW

Portland Wind Trio

WHERE: Cortell Hall, USM

Gorham

WHEN: Sept. 30

instruments other than the wind trio's, but the pleasures were anything but guilty. In fact, some of the transcriptions sounded better than the originals, and all were infused by the warm tonal colors of the instruments.

The more I hear Poulenc, the more kindly I am disposed to pharmaceutical companies (of which he was an heir). His music

is delightfully new and different sounding, without resort to Germanic compositional systems and seemingly without direct influences other than jazz. The trio played three of his works, an allegretto malinconico from the

Sonata for Flute and Piano (played on the clarinet), a Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, with the flute substituting for the oboe, and a Serenade for Violoncello and Piano, on the bassoon.

All were marvelous - lyrical, frenzied and witty in turn - but I was most impressed by the serenade. The bassoon generally has

a reputation as the clown of instruments, most serious as a bass accompaniment. Keef's interpretation of the cello part showed that the instrument could sing as well.

The program opened with Cinq pieces en trio, for Flute, Oboe and Bassoon, by Jacques Ibert, a light-hearted piece with graceful interweaving of parts ending in a rapid dance form. The final work on the program, a Concert Suite for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon, by Ange Flegier, while not on the same level musically, was similar in effect and equally charming.

The other French composers stolen from were Couperin, "Les Nations-L'Impertal" for two flutes and continuo, and Gabriel Faure, the allegro from his Sonata in A Major (Opus 13) for violin and piano. The first was a dance suite, reminiscent of Purcell. The second demonstrated how the modern flute, at least in the hands of a master, can easily substitute for a stringed instrument, without any loss in nuance.

Christopher Hyde's Classical Beat column appears in the Maine Sunday Telegram.