

## The Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)

Sundays\* at 3:00pm, at Studio Hollywood (\*unless otherwise noted)

Programs, Notes & Seating charts for reservations available at: [www.studio-hollywood.com](http://www.studio-hollywood.com)

**Alan Murray, piano**

Program	Date
<b>Chopin – The Piano Music</b>	
the Etudes (& sel. Nocturnes & Mazurkas)	Oct 2   the Scherzos “ Oct 30
the Preludes “ “	Oct 9   the Sonatas “ Nov 6
the Polonaises “ “	Oct 16   the Impromptus “ Nov 19*
the Ballades “ “	Oct 23   the Waltzes “ Dec 3 *
Introduction & Rondo, Fantasy, Berceuse, Barcarolle, Andante Spianato & Grande Polonaise Dec 17 *	
<b>Schumann – The Piano Music</b>	
Fantasy, Arabeske, Blumenstück, Carnaval	Nov 13
Kreisleriana, Toccata, Novellettes, Symphonic Etudes	Nov 20
Faschingsschwank aus Wien (Carnival of Vienna), Kinderszenen (Scenes fr Childhood), Romances	Nov 27
Sonata #1 in F-sharp minor, Waldszene, Davidsbündlertänze	Dec 4
Sonata #2 in G minor, Papillons (“Butterflies”), Humoreske	Dec 11
Sonata #3 in F minor (“Concerto without Orchestra”), Fantasiestücke, Gesänge der Frühe	Dec 18
<b>The French &amp; Spanish Masters</b>	
<b>Ravel – The Piano Music</b>	
Gaspard de la Nuit, Jeux d’eau, Sonatine, Pavane, Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, ...	Jan 8
Le Tombeau de Couperin, Sérénade Grottesque, Menuet-Haydn, Menuet Antique, Miroirs, ...	Jan 15
<b>Debussy – The Piano Music</b>	
the Etudes, l’Isle joyeuse, Estampes, ...	Jan 22
the Preludes (Books I & II)	Feb 5
Images, Children’s Corner, Suite Bergamasque, Pour le Piano, Arabesques, Danse, Masques, ...	Feb 12
<b>Granados – Goyescas</b> , El Pelele	<b>Albéniz – Iberia</b> , Navarra Feb 19 & Mar 4
<b>Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas &amp; Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 7:00pm; S/S at 3:00)</b>	
(1) Sonatas #1-4 Mar 18   (5) Sonatas #22-26 (d) Mar 22	
(2) Sonatas #5-10 (a) Mar 19   (6) Sonatas #27-29 (e) Mar 23	
(3) Sonatas #11-15 (b) Mar 20   (7) Sonatas #30-32 Mar 24	
(4) Sonatas #16-21 (c) Mar 21   (8) Diabelli Variations Mar 25	
<i>a) Pathétique’ b) Moonlight’, Pastoral’ c) Tempest’, Waldstein’ d) Appassionata’, ‘Les Adieux’ e) Hammerklavier’</i>	
<b>J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 7:00pm; Sat/Sun at 3:00pm)</b>	
(1) Chromatic Fantasy/Ital. Concerto/Inventions Apr 7   (5) Engl & French Sts, Partita #4/WTC25-32 Apr 11	
(2) Engl & French Suites & Partita #1/WTC1-8 Apr 8   (6) Engl & French Sts & Partita #5/WTC33-40 Apr 12	
(3) Engl & French Suites & Partita #2/WTC9-16 Apr 9   (7) Engl & French Sts & Partita #6/WTC41-48 Apr 13	
(4) Engl & French Suites & Partita #3/WTC17-24 Apr 10   (8) The Goldberg Variations Apr 14	
<b>Brahms, Schubert &amp; Liszt – The Major Works</b>	
<b>Brahms</b> – Handel Variations & Fugue, Paganini Variations / <b>Schubert</b> – Sonata in A minor (D845)	Apr 22
<b>Brahms</b> – Sonata No. 3 in F minor / <b>Schubert</b> – Sonata in G, «Wanderer» Fantasy	Apr 29
<b>Schubert</b> – The Late Piano Sonatas: in C minor, A major, B-flat major (Op. Posth.)	May 6
<b>Liszt</b> – Sonata in B minor, S. del Petrarca, Vallée d’Obermann, Mephisto Waltz, Au bord d’une source	May 13
The Transcendental Etudes, Après une lecture de Dante, Hungarian & Spanish Rhapsodies, ...	May 20
<b>The Russian &amp; Eastern European Masters – The Major Works</b>	
<b>Rachmaninoff</b> – the Preludes	May 27
<b>Rachmaninoff</b> – the Etudes-Tableaux & Moments Musicaux / <b>Balakirev</b> – Islamey	Jun 3
<b>Rachmaninoff</b> – the Sonatas (No. 1 in D minor; No. 2 in B-flat minor) / <b>Szymanowski</b> – Metopes	Jun 10
<b>Prokofiev</b> – Sonata No. 6 / <b>Stravinsky</b> – Sonata No. 2 / Berg – Sonata / <b>Janacek</b> – Sonata 1X1905	Jun 17
<b>Prokofiev</b> – Sonata No. 7 / <b>Stravinsky</b> – Sonata Nos 4&5 / <b>Medtner</b> – Sonata / <b>Stravinsky</b> – Petrouchka	Jun 30*
<b>Prokofiev</b> – Sonata No. 8 / <b>Mussorgsky</b> – Pictures at an Exhibition / <b>Bartók</b> – Out of Doors	Jun 24
<b>American Masterpieces</b> Jul 1 & 8	
<b>Gershwin</b> Rhapsody in Blue, <b>Barber</b> Sonata, ... - Jul 1   Works by <b>Ives, Copland, Carter, Bolcom</b> , others - Jul 8	

## The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 3:00pm

### Frédéric Chopin – The Piano Music

#### **Five Mazurkas, Op. 7**

- No. 1 in B-flat major
- No. 2 in A minor
- No. 3 in F minor
- No. 4 in A-flat major
- No. 5 in A-flat major

#### **Three Nocturnes, Op. 15**

- No. 1 in F major – *Andante cantabile*
- No. 2 in F-sharp major – *Larghetto*
- No. 3 in G minor – *Lento*

Intermission

#### **The Preludes, Op. 28**

- No. 1 in C major - *agitato*
- No. 2 In A minor - *lento*
- No. 3 in G major - *vivace*
- No. 4 in E minor - *largo*
- No. 5 in D major - *allegro molto*
- No. 6 in B minor - *lento assai*
- No. 7 in A major - *andantino*
- No. 8 in F-sharp minor - *molto agitato*
- No. 9 in E major - *largo*
- No. 10 in C-sharp minor - *allegro molto*
- No. 11 in B major - *vivace*
- No. 12 in G-sharp minor - *presto*
- No. 13 in F-sharp major - *lento*
- No. 14 in E-flat minor - *allegro*
- No. 15 in D-flat major (“Raindrop”) - *sostenuto*
- No. 16 in B-flat minor - *presto con fuoco*
- No. 17 in A-flat major - *allegretto*
- No. 18 in F minor - *allegro molto*
- No. 19 in E-flat major - *vivace*
- No. 20 in C minor - *largo*
- No. 21 in B-flat major - *cantabile*
- No. 22 in G minor - *molto agitato*
- No. 23 in F major - *moderato*
- No. 24 in D minor - *allegro appassionato*

**Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 45 - sostenuto**

**Alan Murray, piano**

## **The Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)**

The **Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)** comprise a series of approximately 50 mostly Sunday afternoon programs at *Studio Hollywood* ([www.studio-hollywood.com](http://www.studio-hollywood.com)), spanning the cycles of piano music of most of the great composers for the instrument, from Bach and the Classical and Romantic masters, to great composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The programs are intended to provide guests with 1-2 hours of quality weekly listening in a contemplative setting, surrounded by the natural beauty that is visible from the recital hall. The performances are intended to be informal but well-prepared offerings, as an interim step toward full concert preparation.

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### **Chopin: The Preludes**

Chopin's 24 Preludes, Op. 28, are a set of short pieces for the piano (certainly more diminutive and less complex, but no less varied and perhaps even more inventive, than his already completed monumental set of 24 Etudes), one in each of the twenty-four keys, presented sequentially. The preludes were published in 1839 and dedicated to Joseph Christoph Kessler, a composer of piano studies during Chopin's time. Ten years earlier, Kessler had dedicated his own set of 24 Preludes, Op. 31, to Chopin. Although the term *prelude* is generally used to describe an introductory piece, Chopin's preludes stand as self-contained units, each conveying a specific idea or emotion. The Op. 28 preludes were commissioned by the piano-maker and publisher Camille Pleyel. Chopin wrote them between 1835 and 1839, partly at Valldemossa, Majorca, where he spent the winter of 1838/39 and where he had fled with George Sand and her children to escape the damp Paris weather.

Due to their brevity and apparent lack of formal structure, the Op. 28 preludes caused some consternation among critics at the time of their publication. No prelude is longer than 90 measures (No. 17), and the shortest, No. 9, is a mere 12 measures. Robert Schumann wrote: "They are sketches, beginnings of études or, so to speak, ruins, individual eagle pinions, all disorder and wild confusion." Franz Liszt's opinion, however, was more positive: "Chopin's Preludes are compositions of an order entirely apart... they are poetic preludes, analogous to those of a great contemporary poet, who cradles the soul in golden dreams..." Since then, the preludes have become a staple of the concert repertoire, and a benchmark for clarity of pianistic expression and execution. One noted musicologist has written: "if all piano music in the world were to be destroyed, excepting one collection, my vote should be cast for Chopin's Preludes." And some pianists, listeners and musicologists would argue that as a single collective work the 24 Preludes ensure Chopin's immortality in the piano literature.

Despite the lack of formal thematic structure, motives do appear in more than one prelude, and there are many parallels to the Etudes. Individually, they are fine pieces in their own right. But – as with the Etudes – when presented as a single collective work, it quickly becomes apparent that the fabric of the work rests not simply on the pieces themselves, but also on their positioning alongside one another, in the intended order. The Chopin preludes are at once twenty-four small pieces and one large one. As is evident at the start of each piece, connections to and contrasts with the previous one add further dimension to the work.

In his preludes, Chopin explores unprecedented depths of introspection and lets his eyes rest on unfathomable gulfs, while employing a remarkable economy of expression. Alongside several very brief preludes, concentrated with a minimum of gestures and a maximum of intensity (e.g. Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 20) stand others more extended in length that are clearly 'studies', or sketches for studies (e.g. Nos. 3, 8, 12, 16, 19, 23, 24), or else in the nature of nocturnes, though without florid ornamentation (e.g. Nos. 13, 15, 17, 21). No. 7 has a mazurka gait; in Nos. 10 and 22 it is possible to recognize an affinity to Paganini's Caprices; and the hint of improvisation in No. 18 seems to suggest a dramatic setting.

No. 14 (in E-flat minor) bears striking similarities, with its tight triplet figuration and haunting chromaticism, to the finale of Chopin's ("Funeral March") Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, and No. 22 (in G minor) reveals similarities to the first and second movements of that same work.

The subdivision could be carried further, no doubt; but these short indications are enough to explain Schumann's judgment, which emphasizes the extreme variety of the Preludes and the presence in them of musical intuitions of a febrile nature, that communicate the very essence of extremely diverse states of mind. Chopin's harmony, too, has an originality of genius and some of the greatest examples of this are found in the Preludes.

There is still another aspect of the Preludes to which attention should be drawn, and one to which Schumann alludes, namely the organic unity of the work as a whole. In contrast to the many diverse, "centrifugal" characteristics of the preludes there is a rigorous overall organization reflecting a clear purpose present also in the Etudes (particularly in Op. 10) but not as completely realized as here. The scheme comprises all twenty-four keys, major alternating with relative minor, ascending by sharp keys as far as No. 13 (in F-sharp major) and descending by flat keys from No. 14 (in E-flat minor). Also essential is the importance of the principle of contrast, the steady alternation in expressive attitudes. Furthermore, analysis reveals internal links between motivic cells which recur throughout; and these facts serve as clear evidence of an underlying unity of design forming a link with the tradition of the prelude as an educational piece forming part of a systematically organized collection.

Chopin is known to have been a great admirer of J.S. Bach, and the sequential traversal of the 24 major and minor keys, not to mention the striking similarity of the opening prelude – with its C-major based arpeggiated chord pattern and modulations – to Bach's are clearly direct tributes to Bach's masterpiece, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. In fact, the apparent paradox between a systematically organized underlying unity and an extreme diversity of music intuitions constitutes one of the most significant elements in the experimental boldness that marks the Preludes: not a simple link with the musical past, but the creation of a microcosm in which the logic of the internal structure is used to unfold new ideas of form.

The Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 45 was composed in 1841 and dedicated to Princess E. Czernicheff. This piece, which also serves as a fitting encore to the Op. 28 set – as a tranquil denouement to the cataclysmic finality of No. 24 – features widely extending basses and highly expressive and effective chromatic modulations over a rather uniform thematic basis.

*Notes by Wikipedia (Chopin), Paolo Petazzi (trans:Martin Cooper;DG 413796-2), edited and revised by A. Murray*

**Alan Murray** has appeared as a concerto soloist with orchestras in Westchester and in solo and chamber music recitals. He holds a degree in physics and languages from Cornell, where he also received a special University award for distinguished piano soloist. The **Masters Series Concerts** represent a continuation of the **Sunrise Music Series** programs, incepted in the Sept 2010–June 2011 season. In addition to this year's **Masters Series**, Alan continues the **Sunrise Series** programs Sundays at 8:30am, with the 2011-12 series devoted to the cycle of keyboard music of J.S. Bach, which also appears in this year's **Masters Series** in April. The 2010-11 **Sunrise Series** was the subject of a Dec/2010 feature article in *The Rivertown's Enterprise*. His future plans include performances of the **Masters Series** at universities and other cultural centers here and abroad in the coming years. A specialist in the Financial Institutions capital markets group at Moody's, where he focuses on U.S., major Latin American and worldwide developing markets, Alan also provides music at the early Sunday morning services of the First Unitarian Society of Westchester, where he enjoys blending classical music with diverse world musical traditions. Alan resides in Hastings with his wife Amada and daughter Celia, where they also own and operate *Galápagos Books*, focused on world languages and literature, children's and general-interest books, local authors, and multi-media educational materials.