

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

Alan Murray, piano

Program	Date
Chopin – The Piano Music	
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 *	
Schumann – The Piano Music	
Fantasy, Arabeske, Carnaval	Nov 13
Kreisleriana, Toccata, Blumenstück, Symphonic Etudes	Nov 20
Faschingsschwank aus Wien (Carnival of Vienna), Kinderszenen (Scenes fr Childhood), Romances	Nov 27
Sonata #1 in F-sharp minor, Novellette #1, Davidsbündlertänze	Dec 4
Sonata #2 in G minor, Waldszenen, Papillons (“Butterflies”), Humoreske	Dec 11
Sonata #3 in F minor (“Concerto w/o Orchestra”), Fantasiestücke, Gesänge der Frühe, Novellette #2	Dec 18
The French & Spanish Masters	
Ravel – The Piano Music	
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
Debussy – The Piano Music	
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
Granados – Goyescas , El Pelele	Albéniz – Iberia , Navarra Apr 15
Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas & Diabelli Variations (Sat & Sun at 3:00pm, Fri at 7:30pm)	
(1) Sonatas #1-4 Mar 17	(5) Sonatas #22-26 (d) Mar 25 (1:00pm)
(2) Sonatas #5-10 (a) Mar 18	(6) Sonatas #27-29 (e) Apr 1
(3) Sonatas #11-15 (b) Mar 23	(7) Sonatas #30-32 Apr 8 (1:00pm)
(4) Sonatas #16-21 (c) Mar 24	(8) Diabelli Variations Apr 14
<i>a) ‘Pathétique’ b) ‘Moonlight’, ‘Pastorale’ c) ‘Tempest’, ‘Waldstein’ d) ‘Appassionata’, ‘Les Adieux’ e) ‘Hammerklavier’</i>	
J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 7:30pm; Sat/Sun at 3:00pm)	
(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
Brahms, Schubert & Liszt – The Major Works	
Brahms – Handel Variations & Fugue, Paganini Variations / Schubert – Sonata in A minor (D845)	Apr 22
Brahms – Sonata No. 3 in F minor / Schubert – Sonata in G, «Wanderer» Fantasy	Apr 29
Schubert – The Late Piano Sonatas: in C minor, A major, B-flat major (Op. Posth.)	May 6
Liszt – 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
The Russian & Eastern European Masters – The Major Works	
Rachmaninoff – the Preludes	May 27
Rachmaninoff – the Etudes-Tableaux & Moments Musicaux / Balakirev – Islamey	Jun 3
Rachmaninoff – the Sonatas (No. 1 in D minor; No. 2 in B-flat minor) / Szymanowski - Metopes	Jun 10
Prokofiev – Sonata No. 6 / Scriabin – Sonata No. 2 / Berg – Sonata / Janacek – Sonata 1X1905	Jun 17
Prokofiev – Sonata No. 7 / Scriabin – Sonata Nos 4&5 / Medtner – Sonata / Stravinsky – Petrouchka	Jun 30 *
Prokofiev – Sonata No. 8 / Mussorgsky – Pictures at an Exhibition / Bartók – Out of Doors	Jun 24
American Masterpieces	
Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue, Barber Sonata, ... - Jul 1	Jul 1 & 8
Works by Ives , Copland , Carter , Bolcom , others - Jul 8	

The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, April 1, 2012 at 3:00pm

Ludwig van Beethoven – The Piano Sonatas

Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90

*Mit lebhaftigkeit un durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck
Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen*

Sonata No.28 in A Major, Op. 101

*Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung
Lebhaft. Marchmässig
Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll; Zeitmass des ersten Stuckes;
Geschwinde, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit*

Intermission

Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major (“Hammerklavier”), Op. 106

*Allegro
Scherzo: Assai vivace
Adagio sostenuto
Largo; Fuga; Allegro risoluto*

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), 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 20th 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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Ludwig van Beethoven: The Piano Sonatas (Op. 90, 101 & 106)

In his last years, Beethoven wrote his largest piano works, including the ‘Hammerklavier’ Sonata and the ‘Diabelli’ Variations, and the final six sonatas (#27-32) are generally regarded as his Late period sonatas. Following a remarkably productive first decade of the new century, the second, by contrast, is remarkable for how little music Beethoven composed. It was a difficult time in his life, one of massive personal crisis. 1812 was the year of his encounter with Antonie Brentano, the “Immortal Beloved,” the year of his last journey away from Vienna and its environs, and the year his hearing began its final, sharp decline. In 1815, with the death of his brother Karl, there began the ravaging litigation over the guardianship of Karl’s then nine-year-old son. But it was a useful fallow period in which Beethoven’s mind sought new things to say and new ways of saying them. His work of the next eight years includes his most rhetorical music and his most inward, his most public and his most esoteric, bigger pieces than any he had written before and ones more compressed, works at the summit of the virtuoso tradition and others that seem to ignore the physical limitations of fingers and lips and vocal chords, compositions that proclaim the inexhaustible possibilities of the sonata style and some that propose utterly new ways of articulating material, music reaching extremes of the centered and the bizarre. The Sonatas of Op. 90 and Op. 101 are from the middle of that difficult decade, and were written on the bridge to Beethoven’s last, great compositional period.

In the **Sonata in E minor, Op. 90**, lyricism holds full sway – in the passionate and tender themes of the opening movement, and in the lovely, proto-Schubertian melody of the finale. Op. 90 is the first sonata whose last movement (of two) moves more slowly than the first; there will be others.

Lyricism reaches its absolute peak in the **Sonata in A major, Op. 101**. The singing, of an unanticipated tenderness, goes on and on through an entire first movement cast as a minimal sonata form. Beethoven dedicated enough gentle sonatas to women he love to allow the suspicion that this music memorializes the one he love the most, the Immortal Beloved of 1812 (a bit late; but *An die ferne Geliebte*, his song-cycle about love at a distance – in space, and in time? – dates from the same year.) One hardly wants to quibble with those who associate this stunning work with later sonatas, from 1818 and 1821-22, as a transcendent group of ‘late sonatas’. The slow movement, with its powerfully curled melodic lines, is another anti-gravity piece, a blend of the impersonal and the poignant. It dissolves into meditative figurations. Only the first movement is gentle, not the slightly sinister march that follows or the effervescent finale – effervescent until a tough-minded four-part fugue completely takes over the development section, building up to a thumping augmentation in the lowest piano register. Like the ‘Waldstein’ Sonata, Op. 101 has an improvisatory slow introduction to the finale in the minor mode.

A few hesitant bars of the opening movement steal back during the transition, a sonorous memory of distant love. The finale brings a new charge of energy, and Beethoven moves into then finale – quick, risky, startling, dissonant, whimsical, learned, and, as Beethoven knew and acknowledged, very difficult.

For five years after the catastrophic ‘Immortal Beloved’ affair, Beethoven’s life went into a downspin and he composed only that number of important opuses – a drastic drop in productivity. It took him over a year to complete the **Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 106**. ‘Soft-loud’ in Italian becomes ‘hammer-keyboard/klavier’ in German, and the nickname certainly fits. The “Hammerklavier” Sonata feels like a break-through, not just as music, but as an act, a blow releasing unimagined new energies into a veritable outpouring of composition of the following five years, plus a few more. The piece is, first of all, truly symphonic, a return to the ‘Grande Sonata’ in four movements that turns the heroism of the ‘Eroica’ years into something apocalyptic. The length, intensity, and novel structuring principle of the first movement seem to require a vague replica in the second movement as a safety valve (as in the Ninth Symphony). It embraces both crowded polyphony and sweet cantabile, and is not especially long, but it seems huge, and is meant to. The Adagio sostenuto of Op. 106 is the biggest he wrote in any of his works, some say the most moving. It is an immense movement that speaks in the languages of hymn and rapturous operatic song. Patches of modal harmony enter like voices from another world. One of those visionary passages characteristic of late Beethoven carries us to the finale.

The finale is introduced by the ‘ghost of Bach’, which appears in diverse guises, beginning with a long, eerie improvisation. Finally the music explodes into a three-voice fugue, a texture he wanted to remove from its churchy and academic associations. This is fugal music with pounding accents, reckless leaps, fierce dissonance, ferocity, and shattering rhythmic dislocations. But even here there is room for cantabile and dolcezza, for an interlude as serene as any page Beethoven ever wrote. Following a return to the initial fugal material, the final sequences are spread across the barlines with terrific tension; not even the last two dominant and tonic chords sit squarely on downbeats.

(notes by Joseph Kerman, Michael Steinberg)

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 Nov/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 own and operate *Galápagos Books*, focused on world languages and literature, children’s and general-interest books, local authors, and multi-media educational materials.