

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 Feb 19 & Mar 4
Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas & Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 7:00pm; S/S at 3:00)	
(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	
a) Pathétique’ b) Moonlight’, Pastoral’ c) Tempest’, Waldstein’ d) Appassionata’, Les Adieux’ e) Hammerklavier’	
J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 7:00pm; 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 Works by Ives, Copland, Carter, Bolcom , others - Jul	Jul 1 & 8

The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, October 2, 2011 at 3:00pm

Frédéric Chopin – The Piano Music

Four Mazurkas Op. 6

- No. 1 in F-sharp minor
- No. 2 in C-sharp minor
- No. 3 in E major
- No. 4 in E-flat minor

Three Nocturnes Op. 9

- No. 1 in B-flat minor
- No. 2 in E-flat major
- No. 3 in B major

Intermission

The Etudes

- Op. 10** No. 1 in C major - *allegro*
 No. 2 In A minor - *allegro*
 No. 3 in E major - *lento ma non troppo*
 No. 4 in C-sharp minor - *presto*
 No. 5 in G-flat major (“Black Key”) - *vivace*
 No. 6 in E-flat minor - *andante*
 No. 7 in C major - *vivace*
 No. 8 in F major - *allegro*
 No. 9 in F minor - *allegro molto agitato*
 No. 10 in A-flat major - *vivace assai*
 No. 11 in E-flat major - *allegretto*
 No. 12 in C minor (“Revolutionary”) - *allegro con fuoco*
- Op. 25** No. 13 in A-flat major (“Harp”) - *allegro sostenuto*
 No. 14 in F minor - *presto*
 No. 15 in F major - *allegro*
 No. 16 in A minor - *agitato*
 No. 17 in E minor - *vivace*
 No. 18 in G-sharp minor - *allegro*
 No. 19 in C-sharp minor - *lento*
 No. 20 in D-flat major - *vivace*
 No. 21 in G-flat major (“Butterfly”) - *allegro assai*
 No. 22 in B minor - *allegro con fuoco*
 No. 23 in A minor (“Winter Wind”) - *lento; allegro con brio*
 No. 24 in C minor - *allegro molto con fuoco*

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.

Chopin: The Etudes

In his 24 Etudes, Chopin set out to explore the furthest extremes of keyboard virtuosity – creating a Magna Carta of piano technique – while maintaining his customary and uniquely poetic sensibility. “Etude” means “study”, and every one of these studies addresses a specific technical concern. Yet they are much more than mere exercises; in fact, Chopin single-handedly transformed the etude into concert material. Arthur Rubinstein, who played Chopin the world over for three quarters of a century, found the etudes daunting, declaring late in his career: “To do them justice is a most difficult task, which I haven’t had the courage to attempt.” The musicologist Tovey observed: “No other composer has so nobly overcome the immense difficulty of writing works that systematize and exhibit...the extreme resource of the modern pianoforte, while at the same time remaining spontaneous music of a high order.”

Chopin was barely 23 years old when his first set of Twelve Grand Etudes (Op. 10) was published in June 1833 and proclaimed, in no uncertain terms, the sudden maturity of an extraordinary young composer. The etudes Op. 10 were dedicated to Franz Liszt, who was already recognized as the greatest pianist of his time, and who played them with a brilliance that the frail Chopin could not approximate. We can only imagine the impact that the opening etude (in C major) must have made on pianists and audiences alike at the time of its debut. Never before had there been piano music of such expansive sweep and muscular energy; it is as if Chopin had somehow managed to yoke a simple chorale melody to the rushing fury of a waterfall. The second etude (in A minor) couldn’t be more different: a soft chromatic exercise that sweeps quietly up and down the keyboard. Of such contrasts, heroic and intimate by turn, are these etudes made. Far and away the best known of the set is the tender and introspective No. 3 (in E major). Chopin himself confessed that he had never written another melody like it. The fourth (in C-sharp minor) shatters this tranquility altogether with a torrent of cascading scales and arpeggios. No. 5 (in G-flat major), almost entirely on the black keys, sustains the kinetic energy, but here with charm, sparkle and wit. No. 6 (in E-flat minor) sustains the alternating major/minor key pattern of the preceding etudes, but changes the character entirely, with a brooding accompaniment supporting a sorrowful song above it. Chopin favored song above all other art, and this work, along with No. 3, and Op. 25 No. 7 in C-sharp minor, constitute tributes to this ideal. Both No. 7 (in C major) and No. 8 (in F major) are proudly exuberant works that give their noble melodies to the left hand, while demanding filigree accompaniment from the right. No. 9 (in F minor) is marked ‘molto agitato’ and has a feverish intensity that ultimately releases its accumulated energy in a rapid octave repetition toward the end, before quietly subsiding. Etude No. 10, based on octave and sixth-intervals, is a study in varying shades, rhythms, textures, and touch, as well as harmonic modulations, all applied to a fundamentally unvarying underlying note pattern. No. 11 (in E-flat major) employs the arpeggio in a novel way, in comparison to No. 1, as well as Op. 25 Nos. 1 and 12. The last of the Op. 10 etudes (in C minor) was supposedly written in a fury in 1831 after Chopin learned that Warsaw had been seized by Russia. Whether or not this story is true, the etude is

a fiercely passionate work, concluding with a chord sequence that seems radical and brusque. By the time Chopin’s second set of etudes (Op. 25) was published in 1837, he was a celebrated figure, with a number of masterpieces behind him. And so the arrival of his new etudes did not – could not – have the same seismic impact of the original collection. Yet the music is at least as inspired and the demands no less challenging. Chopin’s friend and colleague Robert Schumann likened the opening etude in Op. 25 (in A-flat major) to an Aeolian harp. “Throughout all the harmonies one always heard in great tones a wondrous melody,” he wrote. “After the etude a feeling came over one as of having seen in a dream a beatific picture which when half awake one would gladly recall.” He went on to describe the second etude (in F minor) as “charming, dreamy and soft as the song of a child singing in its slumber.” (Schumann himself provided his own memorable musical depiction of a child drifting off to sleep in his *Kinderscenen*.) The following three etudes (in F major, A minor and E minor) each explore melodies set against – or woven into – repeated rhythmic figures, with the last of these enveloping a sublime intermezzo and ending with a sweeping arpeggio in E major that resonates as the work comes to a close. The etudes in G-sharp minor and D-flat major are based on intervals of thirds and sixths, the first with a left hand melodic accompaniment, and the second with the figure itself providing the melody. The etude in C-sharp minor is an operatic duet, into which Chopin weaves an elaborate accompaniment. The G-flat major etude, the shortest of the set, is a dizzying study in the alternation of legato and staccato. The final three etudes represent Chopin at his most affecting and ambitious. The B minor contrasts a brooding and raging double-octave tirade against a tender singing intermezzo in the parallel major key. The A-minor etude unleashes elemental ferocity. The four opening measures – the only moments of repose in the piece – were added to the score as an afterthought at the suggestion of a friend. It was a stroke of genius; the element of contrast endows this etude with an entirely new dimension. The final etude (as if more could be said after the seeming finality of the “Winter Wind”) seems to hearken back to the very first (Op. 10, No. 1). Both are studies in racing arpeggios, and both possess monumental energy and grandeur. Yet there is a world of difference: the C major is brilliant and sparkling as it embarks on the grand journey that is Chopin’s 24 Etudes, while the final utterance, in C minor, brings this journey to a close with a sense of tumultuous cataclysm; only in the final four measures do clouds part, coming back full circle to a resounding affirmation in C major.

Notes by Tim Page (SONY Classical, SK 61885), edited and revised, with additional commentary, 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.