

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), Davidsbündlertänze, Romances	Nov 27
Sonata #1 in F-sharp minor, Kinderszenen (Scenes fr Childhood)	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	
<i>a) Pathétique’ b) Moonlight’, Pastoral’ 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 7:00pm; 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 8	

The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, December 4, 2011 at 3:00pm

Robert Schumann – The Piano Music

Kinderszenen, Op. 15 (Scenes from Childhood)

Von fremden Ländern und Menschen (Of foreign lands and peoples)
Kuriose Geschichte (Curious story)
Haschemann (Blind man’s bluff)
Bittendes Kind (Pleading child)
Glückes genug (Happy enough)
Wichtige Begebenheit (Important event)
Träumerei (Dreaming)
Am Kamin (At the fireside)
Ritter vom Steckenpferd (Knight of the hobby-horse)
Fast zu ernst (Almost too serious)
Fürchtenmachen (Frightening)
Kind im Einschlummern (Child falling asleep)
Der Dichter spricht (The poet speaks)

Intermission

Sonata No. 1 In F-sharp minor, Op. 11

Introduzione (un poco Adagio) – Allegro vivace
Aria
Scherzo e Intermezzo: Allegro – Intermezzo – Tempo I
Finale: Allegro un poco maestoso – Presto – Più Allegro

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, surround-ded 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.

Schumann: Kinderszenen & Sonata No. 1 in F-sharp Minor

It is possible without exaggeration to describe Robert Schumann's early piano music as original, novel, poetic and, to a large extent, autobiographical. Many of these pieces have a personal character and owe their creation to personal experience. Many take as their subject Schumann's relationship with Clara Wieck, his passionate love for her, and actually turn this love into a theme, using it to give musical expression to experiences, longings, anxieties, hopes and expectations, visions, dreams and fantasy images. Schumann himself confirmed this in a letter of 5 September 1839 to his former teacher Heinrich Dorn: "Certainly my music contains some the struggles Clara has cost me, and certainly it can be understood by you as such. She was practically my sole motivation for writing the *Concerto* (w/o Orchestra; i.e. the Sonata #3) the *Sonata #2*, the *Dauidsbündlertänze*, the *Kreisleriana* and the *Novelletes*." The five works mentioned by Schumann were largely composed in the years 1836-38, a time of extraordinary emotional distress. All these works, as well as the *Fantasy* Op. 17 of 1836, were written for Clara: she is their addressee, even though each was dedicated to someone else.

Kinderscenen (Scenes from Childhood) – During the unhappy months when Friedrich Wieck's objections kept his daughter Clara and Robert apart, music was the chief means of communication between them. As Schumann wrote to her at Easter 1838: "*It's very curious, but if I write much to you, I can't compose. The music goes all to you.*" His *Kinderscenen* (Op. 15), like his *Kreisleriana* (Op. 16) which followed, was inspired by Clara, although they are very different in character. The *Kinderscenen* are tiny genre pieces suggested by a remark of Clara's that Schumann sometimes seemed to her like child. In this work, Schumann narrates his adult reminiscences of childhood. Schumann had originally written 30 movements for this work, but chose 13 for the final version. The *Kinderscenen* are so well known that the skill with which they are composed and linked into a series is easily overlooked. Schumann declared that the titles came to him after the music, indicating that musical ideas and contrasts were most important. No. 1 (***Of foreign lands and peoples***) conjures up the imaginative landscape – it is the story-teller's 'Once upon a time...' and only with the final piece (***The poet speaks***) does the author of these imaginings step forward. In between comes enchanting variety. Some, such as No.5 (***Happy enough***) briefly explore a single phrase and figuration. Others, like No.11 (***Frightening***) deal in succinct contrasts of mood and tempo. Some are playful without ever being arch, such as No.3 (***Blind man's bluff***) and No.9 (***Knight of the hobby-horse***) and about as many are reflective without ever being sentimental, like the most famous, ***Träumerei (Dreaming)***.

As Harold C. Schonberg would write of Schumann in his *The Lives of the Great Composers*: "He (viz. Schumann) himself often did not know what his music meant. Some of it was written in what amounted to a trance. First he wrote it. Then he looked it over, giving the work a title. That was his standard practice, and nearly all of his pieces were named after they were written. Schumann's rich, complicated harmony did indeed have a strong polyphonic texture, a fact not generally appreciated, and his careful indications of secondary and inner voices often pass largely unnoticed. The *Träumerei* is a classic example: far from being uncomplicated, as a casual listening might suggest, it is actually a strict piece of four-part writing, so rich in its polyphony that it "*could easily be given to a string quartet, or wind ensemble, or even to the four singing voices*" wrote Alban Berg decades later."

Sonata No. 1 in F-sharp minor – All three of Schumann's piano sonatas were begun in 1833, but were completed in various years from 1835-38. Thus, their creation is superimposed upon that of the *Fantasy* and Schumann's principal piano cycles during his first active phase. This means that he felt a need to confront the sonata "problem" during the same period in which he was exploring possibilities offered by alternative formal concepts. The sonata was a problem because "... it seems that the form has outlived its life-cycle. This is, of course, in the natural order of things: we ought not to repeat the same statements for centuries, but rather to think about the new as well. So let's write sonatas or fantasies (what's in a name?), but let's not forget about music..." wrote Schumann in 1839. This statement, however, didn't mean Schumann believed one should escape from the difficult task of measuring oneself against history. The Classical, problematic, "worn-out" sonata form required re-thinking and expansion; it needed to be bent to new expressive meanings.

The relationship between the *Introduction* and the *Allegro vivace* is not the only unusual aspect of the first movement. The *Allegro vivace* is dominated by its first theme, of which Schumann speaks in his diary: he defines it as a "fandango idea" and says that it came to him in a sudden inspiration on 30 May 1832 (It is preceded by a motive in the bass register, derived from Clara's juvenile "*Scène fantastique*", Op. 5). Despite Schumann's definition, the theme is not a "fandango idea", property speaking: it gives the impression, rather, of a restless, feverish dance, characterized by nervous tension but not categorizable according to any codified dance type; and it becomes calmer in some sections. The second theme is a lyrical subject. Its function seems to be to create a brief respite amid the incessant forward push of the predominant rhythm. The structure of the movement is a rethinking of the Classical sonata form. The second movement, denoted "*Aria*", is intensely lyrical and is written in a simple three-part form; its opening melody is related to the *Introduction* of the first movement. The formal plan of the "*Scherzo e Intermezzo*" is more complicated: an impetuous *Scherzo* with a restless Trio in the middle seems to be headed towards a normal conclusion when, suddenly, an *Intermezzo* breaks in at a slower tempo, accompanied by the indication "jokingly, but pompous" (*alla burla, ma pomposo*). The recitative-like cadenza, which serves as a bridge back to the final repetition of the *Scherzo*, seems to allude to the cello and double-bass recitative in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The extended *Finale* is written in a sweeping virtuoso style and in sonata-rondo form, without a development section. The long, extraordinarily rich exposition is followed by an altered repetition and a coda. In a compelling inventive outburst, Schumann bends the formal plan to permit a free flow of ideas and situations of great imagination variety.

Notes: M Struck (DG410653-2; Kinderscenen), P Petazzi (Sonata No. 1), edited with additional text 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, inception 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 at the First Unitarian Society of Westchester, 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 FUSW, 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.