

## 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, 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
<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 Mar 11 & Apr 1
<b>Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas &amp; Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 8:00pm; 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	
a) ‘Pathétique’ b) ‘Moonlight’, ‘Pastorale’ c) ‘Tempest’, ‘Waldstein’ d) ‘Appassionata’, ‘Les Adieux’ e) ‘Hammerklavier’	
<b>J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 8:00pm; 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>Scriabin</b> – Sonata No. 2 / Berg – Sonata / <b>Janacek</b> – Sonata 1X1905	Jun 17
<b>Prokofiev</b> – Sonata No. 7 / <b>Scriabin</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>	
<b>Gershwin</b> Rhapsody in Blue, <b>Barber</b> Sonata, ... - Jul 1   Works by <b>Ives</b> , <b>Copland</b> , <b>Carter</b> , <b>Bolcom</b> , others - Jul 8	

## The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, February 12, 2012 at 3:00pm

### Claude Debussy – The Piano Music

#### Children’s Corner

*Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum*

*Jimbo’s Lullaby*

*Serenade of the Doll*

*The Snow is Dancing*

*The Little Shepherd*

*Golliwogg’s Cakewalk*

#### Suite Bergamasque

*Prélude*

*Menuet*

*Clair de lune*

*Passepiéd*

#### Intermission

#### Images

*Book I*

*Reflets dans l’eau*

*Hommage à Rameau*

*Mouvement*

*Book II*

*Cloches à travers les feuilles*

*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*

*Poissons d’or*

**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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### **Claude Debussy: Images, Children's Corner, Suite Bergamasque**

Debussy's artistic creed, regarding breaking down or obscuring formal models, is captured in his statement (1907): "*I feel more and more that music, by its very essence, is not something that can be cast in a rigorous, traditional form. It consists of colors and of rhythmicized time.*"

**Images:** Even as early as 1903 Debussy had already drawn up a firm plan for his two volumes of **Images** and was able to write to his publisher Jacques Durand to inform him of their six titles. But it was only after he had replaced the first number, "**Reflets dans l'eau**" (**Reflections in the Water**) with a new one that he sent the first set to Durand in August 1905. "*I decided to write another, based on different ideas in accordance with the most recent discoveries of harmonic chemistry,*" he explained. Debussy's exploration of sonority and his individualized approach to tone color established a new type of piano writing that most contemporary listeners categorizes as "*impressionistic*". This was in fact a term that Debussy himself resisted as he was reluctant to apply the aesthetics and techniques of painting to music in general and to his own music in particular. "*I'm trying to write 'something else' – realities, in a manner of speaking – what imbeciles call 'impressionism', a term employed with the utmost inaccuracy, especially by art critics.*"

According to its performance marking, the second *Image*, "**Hommage à Rameau**" (**Homage to Rameau**), is to be played "in the style of a sarabande, but not too austerely". The piece is a tribute to the great 18<sup>th</sup>-century French composer with whom Debussy felt a particular affinity. A performance of *Castor et Pollux* at the Paris *Schola Cantorum* in 1903 inspired him to remark that if Rameau's major contribution to music was his ability to find "sensitivity" in his harmonic language: "*He succeeded in capturing effects of color and certain nuances that, before his time, musicians had not clearly understood.*" The three pieces that make up the second part of *Images* were dedicated to three of Debussy's friends, the artist Alexandre Charpentier (No. 1), the music critic Louis Laloy (No. 2) and the pianist Ricardo Viñes (No. 3). It was Viñes who gave the first performances of both sets of *Images* in Paris in 1906 and 1908. All three pieces from the second set were notated on three staves, allowing the various layers and tone colors to be captured with greater clarity and individuality. According to Laloy, the first *Image* – "**Cloches à travers les feuilles**" (**Bells through the Leaves**) – was inspired by a letter in which he told the composer about the "*affecting use of the funeral bell that tolls from Vespers on All Saints' Day until the Mass for the Dead on All Souls' Day, passing from village to village through fading forests in the evening silence*". From the first bar onwards a five-note motif based on a pentatonic scale determines the tonality of the piece, which is permeated by the sound of bells that range in volume from a gentle tinkling to a thunderous peal. In "*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*" (*And the Moon Descends on the Temple that Was*) Debussy uses a sequence of chords as a melody. Laloy admired this compositional idea for its ability to conjure up so intense a melody that it could dispense with every external support. "**Poissons d'or**" (**Goldfish**) is said to have been inspired a black lacquer panel in the composer's workroom that was inlaid with mother-of-pearl and gold.

**Children's Corner:** Completed in 1908, **Children's Corner** is dedicated to Debussy's daughter, Claude-Emma (known as "Chou-Chou"), who was three years old at the time. The pieces are not intended to be played by children; rather they are meant to be evocative of childhood. Emma-Claude was born on October 30, 1905 in Paris, and is described as a lively and friendly child who was adored by her father. She died of diphtheria on July 14, 1919, scarcely a year after her father's death. There are six pieces in the suite, each with an English-language title. This choice of language reflects Debussy's anglophilia, and may also be a nod towards Chou-Chou's English governess. The title of **Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum** alludes to Muzio Clementi's collection of instructional piano pieces *Gradus ad Parnassum* ("Steps to Parnassus"), which begins similarly to Bach's *Prelude in C major*, the initial piece from the Well-Tempered Clavier. Debussy's piece incorporates elementary piano techniques, such as the crossing of the hands. It starts in C major and makes brief forays into E minor, G minor, and B flat major as it modulates to a small middle section in D flat, then it returns back to the original theme in C. **Jimbo's Lullaby** maintains a gentle sense of humor and a peaceful and quiet atmosphere. In this lullaby the lowest registers of the piano are completely magnified. Debussy quotes the French lullaby "Do, do, l'enfant do," several times in the course of the piece and uses the interval of the major second, the sole melodic material of that lullaby, as an important accompanimental motive. **Serenade of the Doll** is a light and iridescent piece in triple meter. It is evocative of girls playing with their dolls. Debussy notes that the entire piece should be played with the soft pedal depressed except where the music is marked forte. **The Snow is Dancing** integrates precise staccato playing in both hands, which is meanwhile accompanied by delicate voicing. The piece is written in D minor, typically a somber key, and contains rather 'doubting' harmonies. The bell-like effects evoke the sounds of the gamelan that fascinated Debussy in the *Paris Exhibitions* of 1889 and 1900. **The Little Shepherd** is a witty piece in a pastorale style. It contains colorful harmonies, and alternates between monophony and polyphony. The monophonic passages bear a rhythmic and harmonic resemblance to the flute solo at the beginning of *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* which was composed 14 years prior to **Children's Corner**. **Golliwogg's Cakewalk** is a lively, ragtime-inspired piece in ternary form with a crisp, bouncing A section marked by extreme dynamic contrast and a consistent rhythmic structure. The B section of this cakewalk is interrupted on several occasions by quotations of the opening of Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, marked *avec une grande émotion* (with great feeling). Each quotation is followed by a sort of musical chuckle in staccato chords.

Notes by: Annette Nubbemeyer (Introduction, Images) / Wikipedia (Children's Corner)

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