

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’, ‘Pastorale’ 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 Jul 1 & 8	
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, October 16, 2011 at 3:00pm

This Program is Dedicated to the Loving Memory of Claire Lee

Frédéric Chopin – The Piano Music

Polonaise No. 1 in C-sharp minor, Op 26, No. 1

Allegro appassionato

Polonaise No. 2 in E-flat minor, Op 26, No. 2

Maestoso

Four Mazurkas, Op. 17

No. 1 in B-flat major

No. 2 in E minor

No. 3 in A-flat major

No. 4 in A minor

Polonaise No. 3 in A major, Op 40, No. 1 (“Military”)

Allegro con brio

Polonaise No. 4 in C minor, Op 40, No. 2

Allegro maestoso

Polonaise No. 5 in F-sharp minor, Op 44

Tempo di Polacca – Mazurka – Polacca

Intermission

Polonaise No. 6 in A-flat major, Op. 53 (“Heroic”)

Maestoso

Two Nocturnes, Op. 27

No. 1 in C-sharp minor – *Larghetto*

No. 2 in D-flat major – *Lento sostenuto*

Polonaise-Fantaisie, in A-flat major, Op. 61

Allegro maestoso

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 Polonaises

The *polonaise* is, by tradition, a stately Polish processional dance that had its roots in folk wedding dances, from which it separated and then entered the dance repertoire of the nobility. The Polish name of the dance, *polonez*, derives from the French term *polonaise* which was introduced in the 17th century. As this dance, among others, became popular among people of higher status, the music was transferred to the instrumentalists who accompanied court dances. In this form it was transformed into the most highbred expression of the Polish national spirit and became in the process the most representative of Polish dances throughout Europe.

During the period of the partitions when Russia occupied one-third of Poland, Russian composers were attracted to the form of the polonaise, which acquired a meaning of "dignity" and "royalty" and was often associated with the appearance of the Tsar, or in general, the rulers. It also appeared in Russian operas as a symbol of the Polish gentry (Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Tchaikovsky's *Onegin*). Moreover, the nostalgic polonaises of Michał Kleofas Ogiński, especially his "Farewell to the Homeland," became extremely popular in Russia and have been arranged for a variety of instrumental settings.

As the *polonaise* became chiefly instrumental, it underwent stylistic and formal changes. In particular, melodies became wider in range and more ornamental.



There are two characteristic rhythmic patterns that allow one to recognize the polonaise: (1) the succession of one eighth-note, two sixteenths and four eighth-notes at the opening of the dance (depicted at left, above), and (2) the cadential formula of four sixteenths followed by two quarter notes (depicted at left, below).

Although many composers (among them Bach, Brahms, Liszt and others) composed polonaises, it was Chopin who established himself, unequivocally, as the greatest composer of polonaises in classical music, and whose works for piano made this dance the musical symbol of Poland and Polishness. The series of seven Polonaises that were published – *with his authorization* – during his lifetime (another nine were published without his authorization, posthumously, and two were published during his youth by his father, but also without his authorization) set a new standard for music in the form, and were rooted in Chopin's desire to write something to celebrate Polish culture after the country had fallen into Russian control. Chopin's nationalism was a great influence and inspiration for many other composers, especially Eastern Europeans, and he was one of the first composers to clearly express nationalism through his music. Furthermore, he was the first composer to take a national form of music from his home country and transform it into a genre worthy of the general concert-going public. For Chopin, these compositions are the finest expression of his nostalgic grief with respect to the struggles of his homeland. Although Chopin began work on

the polonaises in his native Poland, it was only later, in Paris, that his genius matured and where he would master this compositional form and his creative style. Chopin's Polonaises are signature works, thrilling in their splendor, rancor, contrasts, and pianistic invention.

The two polonaises of Opus 26 were composed in 1834 and 1835. The opening polonaise, in C-sharp minor, is a tragic and grand proclamation, which quickly shifts as it reaches a more lyrical theme. A work of indecisive quality, it displays two main characters: an angry, frantic *Allegro appassionato*, as well as a tender and passionate *meno mosso*. The E-flat minor polonaise is a masterpiece of fire, color and variety. The suspenseful *Maestoso* beginning sets the mood for a most spectacular flash of vitality. The *Meno mosso* is a beautiful chordal statement. This polonaise is sometimes referred to as *The Siberian Revolt*. It is also said to be one of Chopin's most realistic compositions. The two polonaises of Opus 40 were composed in 1838. The A-major ("Military") is perhaps the best recognized, but also the shortest in duration of the seven. It is a majestic burst of chordal energy: *Allegro con brio* creates a mood of vibrant glory. Anton Rubinstein, the pianist and composer, saw in the C-minor polonaise a gloomy picture of Poland's downfall, whereas in the A major polonaise a portrait of its former greatness. The polonaise in F-sharp minor – perhaps the grandest of entire set – was composed in 1840 and 1841 and, according to Liszt, signified the "lurid hour that precedes a hurricane". Its melodies are powerful and are presented in octaves, first in the treble, followed by the bass. The middle section is a mazurka and is deceptive in its tranquility, which is altogether shattered with startling and sweeping figures that precede the return of the main theme and coda. The polonaise in A-flat major ("Heroic") ranks among Chopin's best-known works. Its opening octave and chromatic chordal progression sets the stage for what is perhaps Chopin's most fiery nationalistic work. The majestic octave sequence in E major, overlaid with a brass-like march – which comprises the middle section of this work – resounds with the hooves of a proud cavalry. Following is a gently melodic transition section, after which Chopin returns to the main section in a *tour de force* finale.

The "Polonaise-Fantaisie", the final of the seven, was composed just four years before Chopin's death (1845/46). Consistent with its title, this work breaks with precedent by moving away from a more strict march structure, to a more loosely structured fantasy based largely on the classic polonaise rhythms. Alternately proud, reflective, brooding, defiant, and ultimately triumphant, it is a masterpiece and stands among Chopin's most exalted creations.

Notes by PMCPolish Dance (usc.edu) and chopinmusic.net; edited, revised, w/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.