

## 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), , Davidsbündlertänze, Romances	Nov 27
Sonata #1 in F-sharp minor, Kinderszenen (Scenes fr Childhood), Novellette #1	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 Feb 19 & Mar 4
<b>Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas &amp; Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 7:00pm; 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	
<i>a) ‘Pathétique’ b) ‘Moonlight’, ‘Pastorale’ c) ‘Tempest’, ‘Waldstein’ d) ‘Appassionata’, ‘Les Adieux’ e) ‘Hammerklavier’</i>	
<b>J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 7:00pm; 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
the Etudes-Tableaux & Moments Musicaux / <b>Balakirev</b> – Islamey	Jun 3
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

Saturday, December 17, 2011 at 3:00pm

### Frédéric Chopin – The Piano Music (conclusion)

**Introduction & Rondo, Op. 16**

**Berceuse, Op. 57**

**Fantasy, Op. 49**

Intermission

**Barcarolle, Op. 60**

**Andante Spianato & Grande Polonaise Brillante, Op. 22**

**Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1 (Op. Posth.) – Andante**

**Alan Murray, piano**

## **The Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)**

The **Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)** comprise a series of approximately 50 mostly weekend 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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## **Chopin: The Other Major Works**

**Introduction & Rondo** - Chopin's Introduction & Rondo is a work of aristocratic elegance from the composer's early Paris years. By the time it was published in 1834 he was enjoying fame and a degree of fortune. It is an early work, belonging, like the Andante Spianato & Grande Polonaise Brillante, to the period of *style brillant* that was fashionable at time in Paris, but also one of considerable musical substance, clearly guided by the hand of a master. The Introduction, in C-minor, provide a marvelous sense of expectancy: serene, stately, elegant, almost detached at first, then intensifying to an eruption full of passion and fire, and resolving into an almost mystical, prophetic transition. The Rondo (in E-flat major) enters with crystalline and joyous sparkle, its main theme highlighting Chopin's art of contrast and deft sense for color. A second theme, calmer but still lively, brings a stately air, supported by a leisurely triplet accompaniment. The work adheres to rondo form, with the main theme returning at the close. The thematic development is imaginative, and the keyboard writing supremely elegant, reminiscent of the finale from his first piano concerto.

**Berceuse** - The Berceuse (in D-flat major) is one of Chopin's most unusual and extraordinary works. It dates from the late years in his output (1844-45). This short composition is a lyrical masterpiece. The origins of the Berceuse are probably linked to Chopin's enchantment with the eighteen-month-old daughter of his friend, singer Pauline Viardot. The little Louise won the hearts of Chopin and George Sand at Nohant in 1843: "Chopin adores her and spends his time kissing her on the hands", wrote Sand in a letter. And those moments spent playing with this charming infant may well have inspired the composer to write a lullaby-style piece. He produced a work that not only ideally fulfills the requirements of the genre, but is also composed in an exceptionally refined and masterful way. The work is based on a four-bar theme, which is followed by a series of sixteen 'variants' that transition from one another in a nearly imperceptible manner: not variations in the traditional sense, but rather a melody in a constant state of 'becoming'. Throughout virtually the whole of the piece, the right-hand part is accompanied by a fixed bass formula in the left. Though purposely static and monotonous, the listener feels not the slightest monotony, as the right-hand part elaborates with inexhaustible inventiveness a succession of ornamental figural transformations of the theme. These create a gentle and enchanted, transparent and trance-like, almost hypnotic, effect with their shifting forms, all in varying grades of piano and pianissimo dynamics. The arabesque-like ornamental devices and complex figures create unusual and innovative coloristic and tonal-harmonic effects, at times prefiguring musical impressionism.

**Fantasy** - The Fantasy (in F minor, completed and published in 1841) is one of the pinnacles of Chopin's creative art. Expansively constructed, it belongs to the sphere of such epic-dramatic genres as the ballades and the scherzos, yet it occupies a distinctive, exceptional place among them. From Chopin's letters, we know that he employed the name 'fantasy' to describe works that, like the Polonaise-Fantaisie, reflected a freedom from artistic rules and a peculiar, romantic expression. In its construction, we find elements of various forms (e.g. sonata and cyclical). Yet despite its rigorous logic of construction, defining the F-minor Fantasy's form is no easy task: it possesses moments that are very precisely formed and others of a looser character, akin to improvisation. In general terms, the flow of the work consists of an introduction with two march themes, a transitional and suspenseful arpeggio refrain that leads, in slightly varying form, first to an exposition of rich thematic material that concludes with yet another march theme, then to a reprise of the exposition

a whole step below, and a third time to a middle section (lyrical, at a slow tempo, in the key of B major); the arpeggio figure reappears a fourth time to introduce the exposition and march in yet another key, and finally in the coda, reminiscent of the middle section.

**Barcarolle** - In the Barcarolle (in F-sharp major, from 1845-46) Chopin refers to the convention of the *barcarola*: a song of the Venetian gondoliers which inspired many outstanding composers of the nineteenth century. Yet it is hard to find a barcarolle that would compare with Chopin's work for beauty and compositional artistry. The Barcarolle has a clear affinity with the nocturnes, and also with the Berceuse, proceeding in a moderate tempo, in 12/8 meter. The basis for its development is the tuneful melodic line, reminiscent in style of Italian bel canto. The melody, accompanied by a repeated bass-line figure, leads in characteristic doublings, primarily in thirds and sixths. The ornamentation of the melody, including double trills, contributes to an exceptional expressive and coloristic richness. The work's original and daring harmonies make it one of Chopin's most amazingly prophetic works. The 'pre-impressionist' blending of harmonic colors reaches its culmination in the admirable coda. It is not surprising that Debussy and Ravel and should have loved the Barcarolle, and Ravel in fact wrote of the work with astonished admiration: "this theme... is constantly clothed in dazzling harmonies. The melodic line is continuous. For a moment a melody emerges, is left hanging, then falls limply, drawn down by magical chords. The intensity mounts. A new, stupendously lyrical theme breaks out... A swift, shivering motif rises from the depths and hovers above precious and tender harmonies. Like the dream of some mysterious apotheosis..."

**Andante Spianato & Grande Polonaise Brillante** - The Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante in E-flat major, Op. 22, was composed between 1830 and 1834. The Polonaise, originally set for piano and orchestra, was written first, in 1830-31. In 1834, Chopin wrote an Andante Spianato in G major for piano solo, which he joined with the Polonaise with a fanfare-like sequence. The combined work was published in 1836. The Andante begins with an enchanting theme of romantic bent in the upper register. But there is a tinge of sadness in its beauty, which could perhaps be interpreted as the exiled Chopin's homesickness for his country and family. The quiet rippling effect of the introductory Andante (*spianato* means 'even' or 'smooth') are realized in a gentle 6/8 meter. The serene middle section complements the overall texture of the movement. The polonaise opens with fanfare, and evolves into an ebullient and fearless dance from of which Chopin was an unparalleled master. Unexpected and brief excursions ensue, with almost 'electric' shocks of surprise and alarm, and the sweep and sheer poetic gusto was astonishing and at the time unequalled. As in the case with the Introduction & Rondo, but here even more so, the virtuoso *brilliant style* – marked by the sparkle and bravura of the piano writing – is exemplary, while at the same time the individuality of Chopin resounds in every bar. These works are filled with flashes of the genius that would soon carry Chopin to the supreme heights.

*Notes from The Fryderyk Chopin Institute by Artur Bielecki*

**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.