

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, Carnival	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	
<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, November 20, 2011 at 3:00pm

Robert Schumann – The Piano Music

Blumenstück (Flower Piece), Op. 19

Kreisleriana, Op. 16

Ausserst bewegt

Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch – Intermezzo I & II – Erstes Tempo

Sehr aufgeregt

Sehr langsam

Sehr lebhaft

Sehr langsam

Sehr rasch

Schnell und spielend

Intermission

Toccata, Op. 7

Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13

Tema - *Andante*

I. *Un poco più vivo*

II. *Marcato il canto – espressivo*

III. *Vivace*

IV.

V. *Scherzando*

VI. *Agitato*

VII. *Allegro molto*

VIII. *Sempre marcatisissimo*

IX. *Presto possibile*

X. *Con energia sempre*

XI. *Sotto voce, ma marcato*

Finale - *Allegro brillante*

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.

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Schumann:Kreiseriana,Toccata,Blumenstück,Symphonic Etudes

Blumenstück (Flower Piece) – *Blumenstück*, Op. 19, is a series of short, connected and thematically related episodes, of which the second forms a recurring refrain while undergoing changes in both key and mood. It is considered to reflect the amorous human activities with which flowers are associated, rather than as depictions of flowers themselves. Schumann wrote the piece while in Vienna in January 1839; its companion piece, the *Arabeske*, Op. 18, was written in December 1838. *Blumenstück* features a falling four-note motif that Schumann had previously used to refer to Clara in *Carnaval*. It was offered, along with the song cycle *Myrthen*, Op. 25, of 1840, as a bridal gift.

Kreiseriana – The *Kreiseriana*, Op. 16, dating from 1838 and one of Schumann's most famous works, must be understood in a literary context as well as an autobiographical one. The title directs the listener's imagination to the famous, eccentric, amazing, droll and inwardly tormented Kapellmeister Kreisler, a character from the tales of E. T. A. Hoffman. Typically for Schumann, the sequence of eight pieces comprising the cycle, which he thought of as "fantasias", constantly alternates movements of a lively and agitated character with others that are quiet and serene. And within nearly every one there are also surprising, rapid shifts of mood, inevitably prompting thoughts of Schumann's two imaginary characters, Florestan and Eusebius. The emotional message of this work is indescribable, as are the imagination behind its conception (the fourth piece, for example, has recitative-like features), the marvelous polyphonic textures and, indeed, the enormous sophistication of the musical structure.

It was clear to Schumann when he created it in 1838 that *Kreiseriana* represented a new step in his compositional development. As he wrote to Clara: "My music now seems even to me to be so wonderfully intricate in spite of all the simplicity, so eloquent and from the heart. And that's the way it affects everyone for whom I play it." In another letter to her he even alluded to the work's autobiographical basis: "Do play my *Kreiseriana* sometime! There is a positively wild love contained in some of the movements, and your life and mine are found there, and some of your glances."

Indeed, Schumann considered the work to be one of his masterpieces. Among its many unsettling aspects are an incredible variety and intensity of expression, including pain and sorrow: "Utterly new worlds are being disclosed to me", Schumann writes in his diary, where he also mentions that he composed *Kreiseriana* in four days. There are many details worth noting. In the first piece a feverish impetus prevails at the outset, giving way to a flowing, almost rippling calm middle section in the relative major key before a reprise. The second piece is constructed as a distant analogy with the classical minuet and trio (here, two trios), although the music is searching and personal, far removed from the minuet's courtly graces. Numbers four and six are among the strangest pieces Schumann wrote, deeply introspective and almost suggesting opera in their use of a quasi-recitative opening and a more sustained lyrical sequel. This lyricism is abruptly shattered by the violent passion of the seventh fantasia, a freely conceived fugato episode which settles down to lyrical tenderness in the surprising, unorthodox ending. This is followed by the mysterious eighth, an endless, ghostly ride, obsessively permeated by an unchanging rhythmic motif, with a sequence of shifting chords and expressive moods ranging from controlled humor to soaring lyricism to the

desperation that breaks out at "mit aller Kraft" ("with full force"). At the end, the music descends in a pianissimo to the depths of the low register, before disappearing altogether.

Toccata – Robert Schumann would surely have gone on to become an outstanding piano virtuoso had he not, early in his career, injured his hand in a bungled attempt to develop a method of finger training. One is tempted to say that the concert hall's loss was music's gain. As a young man, in any event, he was a brilliant pianist, and by the age of 20 was already appearing with great success in the salons of Heidelberg, where he had ostensibly gone to further his law studies. In 1830 in Frankfurt he heard Paganini and was so taken with the great violinist that he began to take an especially lively interest in developing the technical aspects of piano playing. Among his early works the *Toccata*, in particular, pays homage to the ideal of virtuosity. After revising the work several times and transposing it, first into D major and then into C major, he finally entrusted it to publication in 1834. The *Toccata* was to remain an isolated example among his other works. In it can be seen reflected the purely technical preoccupations of a young musician proud to proclaim in writing: "that it doubtless represented one of the most difficult pieces that have ever been written for the piano."

Symphonic Etudes – Ernestine von Fricken was the adopted daughter of a rich baron and came to take lessons from Friedrich Wieck in 1834. Wieck was delighted to be able to make use of her to draw Schumann away from Clara. For her part, Ernestine was clearly prepared to do anything for Schumann, by this time a composer with a growing reputation and the brilliant editor for a new magazine, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. An engagement was announced. Baron von Fricken, himself an amateur composer, came to inspect his future son-in-law and took advantage of the occasion to show him a theme and variations for flute. Schumann found himself illustrating his criticisms by simplifying the theme and writing variations himself. These were destined to become the *Symphonic Etudes*.

This work is almost an article of faith. It is a protest, much in the same vain as the *Carnaval*, against the degradation by fashionable virtuosos (these being among the 'Philistines') of variations and studies, forms good enough for Beethoven and the young genius, Chopin. Schumann was well aware of his aims. When studying with Wieck, he had to learn, as a necessary part of his training as a pianist, numerous sets of such things. He hated them; and later, when reviewing in his magazine, slated them in terms little short of libelous. The *Symphonic Etudes* were therefore written with great care: they took him the best part of two years to complete. And towards the end of his life he revised them, providing a new title "Etudes in the form of Variations", which indicated explicitly his combination of the two forms.

Notes:Petazzi/C.Floros(*Kreiseriana*),H.Gil-Marchex(*Toccata*),I.Kemp(*SymphonicEtudes*),Wikipedia(*Blumenstück*)

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–June2011 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 educational materials.