

## 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, January 22, 2012 at 3:00pm

### Claude Debussy – The Piano Music

*l’Isle joyeuse*

**Estampes**

*Pagodes*

*Soirée dans Grenade*

*Jardins sous la pluie*

**Intermission**

**The Etudes**

- i. *pour les «cinq doigts»*
- ii. *pour les tierces*
- iii. *pour les quartes*
- iv. *pour les sixtes*
- v. *pour les octaves*
- vi. *pour les huit doigts*
- vii. *pour les degrés chromatiques*
- viii. *pour les agréments*
- ix. *pour les notes répétées*
- x. *pour les sonorités opposées*
- xi. *pour les arpèges composés*
- xii. *pour les accords*

**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: *l'Isle joyeuse*, *Estampes*, *The Etudes*

***l'Isle joyeuse***: *l'Isle joyeuse* (the Isle of Joy) is perhaps Debussy's best-known stand-alone work for piano and the most fully developed and virtuosic of all of his piano works. It is jubilant and apparently autobiographical: it is said to have been inspired by Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera*. But Cythera could just as well be Jersey, the island that Debussy visited with Emma Bardac. *l'Isle joyeuse* ends with a peroration both luminous and precise in the form of a sun-drenched apotheosis of breathtaking power that seems light-years removed from the uninhabited symbolism of other works, such as his *Preludes* and *Images*.

***Estampes*** Debussy liked composing sets of piano pieces in threes, as evidenced by the *Images oubliées* (1894), *Images*, Book I (1904–1905), *Images* Book II (1906–1907), and *Estampes* (1903). "When you don't have any money to go on holiday, you must make do by using your imagination," Debussy wrote, and the first two pieces in his triptych *Estampes* constitute an exotic travelogue; the third piece is stay-at-home music, watching the rain. "Estampes" means print or engraving, and these three pieces are musical depictions of particular moments at particular locales. They also represent an interior journey of sorts, a newly personal idiom for Debussy, who is now seemingly unconcerned with the conventions and expectations of the salon and the concert hall.

*Pagodes* (*Pagodas*) is the leadoff piece in Debussy's triptych *Estampes*. It shares certain similarities with another work in his output, *Cloches à travers les feuilles* (*Bells through the leaves*), the first piece in another triptych, *Images*, Book II. Both compositions imitate exotic, bell-like sonorities. Debussy was an admirer of the Gamelan, an ensemble of bell-like percussion instruments of Javanese and Siamese origin whose sounds he depicted here in *Pagodes*. In the later *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, he ostensibly evoked the sonorities of bells, but the same kind of exoticism in the piece associated with the Gamelan can be heard. *Pagodes* opens in an ethereal mood, its main theme a mixture of the soothing and the exotic, its upper-register writing ringing and chiming, its harmonies evoking Eastern images and flavors. Throughout, in fact, the mood remains gentle and exotic, though in an alternate guise the theme takes on a muscular demeanor, with belled sonorities loudly ringing out. The piece quietly ends and must be counted among the more successful exotic creations in the composer's keyboard output.

***Etudes***: Debussy's twelve *Etudes* – his last, and in many ways his most profoundly original, adventurous, inventive, pianistically advanced, and stylistically forward-looking piano works – were composed in during a brief period in 1915 and are broadly acknowledged as his late masterpieces. The *Etudes* arose out of the same final burst of creative energy that gave rise that same year to his "*En blanc et noir*" (In Black and White), the cello sonata and the sonata for flute viola and harp. Only the violin sonata, written in the early months of 1917 was still to come. The *Etudes* are the summation of a lifetime's experience as a composer of piano music, and they present formidable challenges to the performer. The composer, himself no mean player, confessed that some of the pieces were technically beyond him. "I shall be able to play you these *Studies* which strike fear into your fingers" he told the publisher and his friend, Durand in Sept, 1915. "You can be sure that mine come to a halt when faced with certain passages. I have to get my breath back... Truly, this music hovers on the limits of performance." More importantly, he noted their transcendental quality, writing that they "conceal a rigorous technique beneath the flowers of harmony".

The *Etudes* – which are dedicated to Chopin, whom Debussy greatly admired and whose works he was editing in 1915, for Durand – are, like Chopin's *Etudes*, both revolutionary and as much studies in composition as in keyboard technique. Debussy knew that they occupied a special place

among his works. His late works generally fell into neglect after his death in 1918, but it was Olivier Messiaen – struck by Debussy's extraordinary love of tone color, and by the formal boldness, complexity and modernism of the *Etudes*, among Debussy's *Etudes* and other late works – who drew the attention of post-war musician to them in his legendary classis in analysis at the Paris Conservatoire. Like Chopin's *Etudes*, their wealth of musical invention goes far beyond their apparent pedagogical value. The materials, as well as the moods and expression, juxtapose kaleidoscopically, to produce forms that are continually self-renewing, iridescent and mercurial. Tempos are rarely fixed. Rubato is often specified or implied, although the performer must always relate each etude to a basic tempo as a reference, so that the deviations are sensed by the listener.

Book I (*Etudes* I-VI) begins with a 'five-finger' exercise ("*d'après Monsieur Czerny*", as marked in the score) and concludes with a four-finger one, with double-note studies in increasing intervals (thirds, fourths, sixths and octaves) comprising the other four. Book II (*Etudes* VII-XII) is concerned primarily with pianistic problems related to musical figurations. The published edition is prefaced by a note by Debussy explaining the lack of fingering indications, in which he acknowledges that each person's hand is different and that fingering appropriate for one player would not necessarily suit another. His note concludes, "Let us each search for our own fingerings! C.D." Ravel, too, rarely indicated piano fingerings, even for his most virtuosic works, but with Ravel the pianist is never in doubt as to fingerings, for the music is conceived directly for the hand and lies comfortably. In Debussy's case, the music seems to be conceived more abstractly: certain configurations are prompted primarily by compositional demands, and in some cases even the most logical fingers prove awkward.

*Etude* I (**for the 'five fingers'**) begins with the musical direction '*sagement*' (well-behaved); a wrong note mischievously intrudes upon the child's (no doubt his daughter Chouchou's) dutiful practicing and transforms the five-finger exercise into a lively and marvelously inventive *gigue*. *Etude* II (**for thirds**) provides ever-shifting colors and sonorities ('unheard-of effects' wrote Debussy) in a harmonically complex study, ending with unexpected passion and violence. *Etude* III (**for fourths**) is perhaps the most radical of the set; believing the interval of the fourth to be inherently uninteresting, Debussy invented a study in which the materials are constantly changing. *Etude* IV (**for sixths**) is addressed by a note from Debussy to Durand, "*the use of sixths long gave me the impression of pretentious demoiselles wearily doing needlework, while envying the scandalous laughter of crazy ninths!... yet I am writing this study... and it's not ugly!*". *Etude* V (**for octaves**) has a tempo indication of "joyous and transported, freely rhythmic" and is the most extroverted of the twelve *Etudes*. *Etude* VI (**for the eight fingers**) is written almost entirely in patterns of four notes played alternately by each hand, and is meant to be played without the use of the thumb. *Etude* VII (**for chromatic degrees**) is a fantastical piece in which slithering chromatic scales provide a continual backdrop for dancing melodic fragments. *Etude* VIII (**for ornaments**) was the last finished and is one of the longest and most complex of the set. Structurally, it satisfies Pierre Boulez's description of some of his own music, which he liked to an aquarium '*where the fish are sometimes motionless and sometimes regrouping themselves in nervous bursts of energy*'. Debussy said of this etude, "*It borrows the form of a barcarolle, on a somewhat Italian sea.*" *Etude* IX (**for repeated notes**) is a dance-like piece whose changing scales and chromatic movement barely suggest a key center. *Etude* X (**for opposed sonorities**) is a mysterious piece that is a study in opposing emotions or moods. The distant horn call, marked 'clear and joyous', reappears at the end in another context. The final chord seems like a stab of pain. *Etude* XI (**for composite arpeggios**) is the sweetest, most flirtatious and Puck-like of the set. The finale, *Etude* XII (**for chords**) is perhaps the most Liszt-like: a bold, but rhythmically ambiguous three-part piece whose first and last sections are in triple meter, but with constant regroupings of value that displace the principal beat. In the quiet middle section – the meter's ambiguity gives the music a floating, timeless quality.

Notes by: Laurent Barthel (*l'Isle joyeuse*); Annette Nubbemeyer/ Paul Jacobs/Misha Donata (*Etudes*)