

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 Apr 15
Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas & Diabelli Variations (Sat & Sun at 3:00pm, Fri at 7:30pm)	
(1) Sonatas #1-4 Mar 17 (5) Sonatas #22-26 (d) Mar 25	
(2) Sonatas #5-10 (a) Mar 18 (6) Sonatas #27-29 (e) Mar 31	
(3) Sonatas #11-15 (b) Mar 23 (7) Sonatas #30-32 Apr 1	
(4) Sonatas #16-21 (c) Mar 24 (8) Diabelli Variations Apr 14	
<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 7:30pm; 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

Friday, March 23, 2012 at 7:30pm

Ludwig van Beethoven – The Piano Sonatas

Sonata No. 11 in B-flat Major, Op. 22

Allegro con brio
Adagio con molta espressione
 Menuetto
 Rondo: *Allegretto*

Sonata No. 12 in A-flat Major, Op. 26

Andante con Variazioni
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Marcia funebre (sulla morte d’un Eroo)
Allegro

Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp Minor (“Moonlight”), Op. 27 No. 2

Adagio sostenuto
Allegretto
Presto agitato

Intermission

Sonata No. 13 in E-flat Major, Op. 27 No. 1 (quasi una fantasia)

Andante; Allegro; Andante
Allegro molto vivace
Adagio con espressione
Allegro vivace

Sonata No. 15 in D Major (“Pastorale”), Op. 28

Allegro
Andante
Scherzo – Allegro vivace
Rondo – Allegro ma non troppo

Alan Murray, piano

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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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Ludwig van Beethoven: The Piano Sonatas (Op. 22, 26, 27, 28)

Beethoven was a pianist, so of course nothing came more naturally to him than the piano sonata – except (perhaps) for one thing: extemporization. The young pianist-composer made his way with the Viennese aristocracy in the 1790s not only by composing, but by improvising and winning improvisation contests, which had an immediacy that the deliberate process of publication did not. While still a child, he is said to have exasperated his father by rambling away at the piano making things up instead of practicing. We know of occasions when Beethoven comforted unhappy women by sealing in quietly and just playing for them. It's doubtful he played the 'Moonlight' Sonata, as in the 1994 film 'Immortal Beloved'. More likely, he started out like the 'Moonlight' and advanced to soundscapes of fantasy we can never know. So the feeling of improvisation permeates Beethoven's thirty-two sonatas for piano. We hear such things in his other works too – because Beethoven found ways to make even his symphonies sound improvisatory. A pervasive sense of spontaneity, stemming ultimately from piano improvisation, lies at the heart of Beethoven's music.

The **Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 22** is another 'Grande Sonata' and is best seen as a work of consolidation. Somewhat ominously, Donald Tovey, the musicologist, chose this four-movement work to demonstrate the 'freedom' of even the most formalistic of Beethoven composition; the subtleties he adduces can escape attention. But no one will miss superb pages in the seemingly vapid slow movement. The minuet is almost too simple, yet also somehow haunting, and among Beethoven's 'amiable' rondos, in a similar spirit as that of an earlier 'Grande Sonata', No. 4 in E-flat.

Opus 22 marked some kind of terminus, and Beethoven now experimented with the shape of the sonata more freely than in Op. 10 and Op. 14, with their aberrant middle movements. Three movements (fast – slow – fast) was the Classical norm, but he also remembered many exceptions among Mozart's compositions, in particular.

The **Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 26** opens with a gentle set of variations (not the traditional energetic movement in sonata form). It features a movement with a strong mimetic cast, analogous to Mozart's '*Rondo alla turca*', though the two pieces could hardly differ more. Beethoven's being a funeral march, complete with snare-drum rolls and volleys. He now begins developing a new type of up-tempo finale – sometimes a rondo, sometimes not, but always bustling with semiquavers and witty innovations. The finale of Op. 26, virtually a *perpetuum mobile*, makes a cheeky response to the utterly somber *Marcia funebre*. 'Unity' seems to have mattered less here than a series of highly-colored cameos, and as such the A-flat Sonata became a great favorite.

The first '*sonata quasi una fantasia*', the **Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27 No. 1** is an eccentric piece which we can do little more than outline here. It's movements and sections all run together without pause. Improvisatory indeed, and a long way from the simple fast – slow – fast formula. The bustling finale, with a mock-fugue in the middle, makes one regret that this sonata must always dwell in the shadow of its companion '*sonata quasi una fantasia*', the '*Moonlight Sonata in C-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2*'. The first movement of the '*Moonlight*' is like nothing else in Beethoven; it must record one of his special modes of extemporization, but if he hadn't written down this exemplar (and doubtless tidies it up) we would never have known. The great brooding nocturne runs into a mild Allegretto in the major mode, more like a breathing space than a real statement of its own, perhaps a 'valley of edelweiss' between two mountain peaks, as some have referred to it. Now the deluge. Prior to Op. 26, all his sonatas open with substantial sonata-form movements, but here sonata form comes at the end, not the beginning – sonata form with a difference. Beethoven's opening sonata movements are often brilliant, sometimes fiery, but never frightening. Flamboyant improvisatory gestures punctuate this formidable work's last pages.

In a letter of 1802, Beethoven speaks in an off-hand way about composing in 'a new way'. With the Symphony No. 3 ('Eroica') of 1803, it is tempting to see a 'new way' in the important Op. 31 sonatas of 1802. But much was already new in the **Sonata in D major, Op. 28**, composed a year earlier. Beethoven here writes a (mostly) peaceful sonata. He minimizes contrasts in the first movement, while devising amazing swatches of sound-color that point ahead to the Symphony No. 6 ("Pastorale"). He provides no slow movement, instead a simple, songlike Andante and a very clever scherzo. The rondo complements the opening movement more beautifully than in any earlier sonata. Its (mostly) gentle bagpipe theme, has given this work, too, the name 'Pastorale'. Another new feature points ahead to the Symphony No. 5: the fragmentation passage in the first movement, where a melody of 15 notes gradually gets whittled down to 6, 4, 3, and finally just one note, which pulsates with a kind of mysterious tranquility for sixteen bars. This could hardly be more systematic, more 'composed' – but it is by dipping into his bag of tricks as an improviser that Beethoven dispels the mystery. (*notes by Joseph Kerman*)

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