

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

Saturday, March 24, 2012 at 3:00pm

Ludwig van Beethoven – The Piano Sonatas

Sonata No. 16 in G Major, Op. 31 No. 1

Allegro vivace
Adagio grazioso
Rondo - Allegretto

Sonata No. 17 in D Minor (“Tempest”), Op. 31 No. 2

Largo; Allegro
Adagio
Allegretto

Intermission

Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31 No. 3

Allegro
Scherzo – Allegretto vivace
Menuetto – Moderato e grazioso
Presto con fuoco

Sonata No. 21 in C Major (“Waldstein”), Op. 53

Allegro con brio
Introduzione – Adagio molto
Rondo – Allegretto moderato; Prestissimo

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.

Ludwig van Beethoven: The Piano Sonatas (Op. 31 & 53)

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. 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 improvisation, lies at the heart of Beethoven's music.

The Opus 31 sonatas form a trilogy of middle-period sonatas similar in significance to his initial Opus 2 sonatas. Like the sonatas just preceding it, the ***Sonata in G major, Op. 31 No. 1*** again points to an increasingly symphonic character in Beethoven's piano works, consistent with the fact that he was increasingly dedicating his efforts to symphonic works. Nothing here can be called earth-shaking, but the work is characterized by a humorous first movement, with uncoordinated accents in the two hands, and a sleepy Adagio, and a genial rondo finale (well chosen by Schubert as the model for one of his own finales). Beethoven maintains anticipation in Op. 31 No. 1 for over forty-two bars, nearly half the length of the whole sonata exposition.

One of Beethoven's most original creations, the ***Sonata in D minor, Op. 31 No. 2*** ("***Tempest***") anticipates a famous work by Charles Ives. A low voice poses a diffident question, he means of a short upward arpeggio. A higher voice rejects it. The Questioner asks again; this time the Rejecter co-opts the question as a brawny sonata-form theme. In the development section, the Questioner asks again, repeatedly, with the same result. At the work's turning point the Questioner realizes that it must answer itself, in two heartbreaking recitatives. Enraged, the Rejecter continues predictably. The Unanswered Question is finally laid to rest by a marvelous low arpeggio at the start of the second movement – a rich inter-movement linkage carried on in the finale by arpeggios in both theme and the continuous accompaniment. The finale anticipates Schubert's Gretchen at her spinning wheel, except that Beethoven's girl knows of no romance, only foreboding, and her wheel turns in triplets. The question-rejection dynamic of Op. 31 No. 2 reappears playfully in the ***Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 31 No. 3***, with several new modifications. Then, in place of a slow movement, we get both a scherzo (actually sonata-form movement in duple meter) and a minuet, old-fashioned to the point of nostalgia – even its one little

flare-up at ancient-regime bowing and scraping passes quickly. The finale winds up the whole work as perfectly as in the '*Tempest*' and both works are particularly brilliant.

Beethoven faced up to the fact that he was going deaf in the years around 1800. This would soon have a decisive effect on the character of his art. In psychological terms, he would now explore an astonishing array of heroic stances mirroring his own heroic determination to survive as a deaf musician, and in practical terms, his career mutated from that of a pianist-composer to that of a composer increasingly removed from the practicalities of musical performance. The "Eroica" Symphony of 1803 was the watershed work (in Beethoven's career, as in the history of Western music.) Almost all his early music employs the piano – concertos, sonatas for piano without or with other instruments, trios, and smaller pieces like variation sets. After the "Eroica", two-thirds of his opuses are for other instruments; during his first decade in Vienna, Beethoven wrote twenty piano sonatas, and during his last quarter century only twelve.

Two years passed between Op. 31 and the next sonata publication, of the two 'student' sonatas of Op. 49, which had been composed years earlier and which are anomalous among his piano sonatas and incongruous with the neighboring opuses 31 and 53. The piano sonata took second or third place under the spell of the "Eroica". But in the same year, 1805, Beethoven also published the ***Sonata in C major, Op. 53*** ("***Waldstein***"), dedicated to Count von Waldstein: the first of two mighty works celebrating the symphonic ideal in the unlikely medium of the piano sonata.

Gone is the immediacy, the intimacy of even the loudest of the earlier sonatas. The treatment of register, in particular, gives the music a symphonic aspect, and the matter that seems spontaneous – cadenzas in both the first and last movements – recalls the C major Sonata, Op. 2 No. 3. There are only two movements. Beethoven having replaced a lengthy Andante he had already written with a half-improvisatory slow introduction to the finale, in the minor mode. The range and power of the rousing first movement comes through in the first four bars, the sheer scope of it in the first four pages. The short, slightly obsessive rondo theme of the finale, its vivid piano textures, and extreme directness of form make for exhilaration high even by Beethoven's standards. The "Waldstein" is Beethoven's sonata writing at its finest. (*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.