

The Sunrise & Masters Series Programs (2011-12)

Alan Murray, piano

Sunrise Series: Sundays at 8:30am (unless otherwise noted) at The First Unitarian Society of Westchester

Masters Series: Sundays at 3:00pm (unless otherwise noted) at Studio Hollywood (by reservation)

Programs, Notes, Composer Biographical Profiles & Reservation Info available at: www.Studio-Hollywood.com

Sunrise Series (2011-12): J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music

1) <i>Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue / Italian Concerto</i>	Sep 25	✓
2) <i>The Inventions</i>	Oct 2	✓
3) <i>The Sinfonias</i>	Oct 9	✓
4) <i>The English Suites – #1 / The Well-Tempered Clavier: Preludes & Fugues #1 & 2</i>	Oct 23	
5) English Suite #2 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #3 & 4	Oct 30	
6) English Suite #3 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #5 & 6	Nov 13	
7) English Suite #4 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #7 & 8	Nov 20	
8) English Suite #5 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #9 & 10	Dec 4	
9) English Suite #6 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #11 & 12	Dec 11	
10) <i>The French Suites – #1 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #13 - 16</i>	Jan 8	
11) French Suite #2 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #17 - 20	Jan 15	
12) French Suite #3 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #21 - 24	Jan 22	
13) French Suite #4 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #25 - 28	Feb 5	
14) French Suite #5 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #29 - 32	Feb 12	
15) French Suite #6 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #33 - 36	Feb 19	
16) <i>The Partitas – #1 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #37 & 38</i>	Feb 26	
17) Partita #2 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #39 & 40	Mar 4	
18) Partita #3 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #41 & 42	Mar 11	
19) Partita #4 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #43 & 44	Mar 25	
20) Partita #5 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #45 & 46	Apr 1	
21) Partita #6 / WTC: Preludes & Fugues #47 & 48	Apr 8	
22) <i>The Goldberg Variations</i>	(8:00 am) Apr 15	

Masters Series (2011-12): Masterpieces for the Piano (in 8 Series)

Chopin – The Piano Music (Series #1)	9 programs: Oct 2 – Dec 17
<u>the Etudes / Preludes / Polonaises / Ballades / Scherzos / Sonatas / Nocturnes / Fantasy / Impromptus / ...</u>	
Schumann – The Piano Music (Series #2)	6 programs: Nov 13 – Dec 18
<u>Fantasy / Carnaval / Kreisleriana / Toccata / Symphonic Etudes / the 3 Sonatas / Fantasy Pieces / Humoreske / ...</u>	
The French & Spanish Masters (Series #3)	7 programs: Jan 8 – Mar 4
Ravel – Gaspard de la Nuit / Jeux d'eau / Sonatine / Tombeau de Couperin / Miroir / Valses Nobles et Sent. / ...	
Debussy – the Etudes / Preludes / Images / l'Isle joyeuse / Estampes / Suite Bergamasque / Children's Corner	
Albéniz – <i>Iberia</i> , Navarra Granados – <i>Goyescas</i> , El Pelele	
Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas & Diabelli Var. (Ser. #4) One-week/8-Program Series	Mar 18–25
incl. 'Pathétique', 'Moonlight', 'Pastorale', 'Tempest', 'Waldstein', 'Appassionata', 'Les Adieux', 'Hammerklavier'	
J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (Series #5) One-week/8-Program Series	Apr 7 – 14
Chromatic Fantasy / Ital. Concerto / English & French Suites / Partitas / Well-Tempered Clavier / Goldberg Var.	
Brahms, Schubert & Liszt – The Major Works (Series #6)	7 programs: Apr 22 – May 20
Brahms – Handel & Paganini Variations, Sonata #3 / Schubert – Middle & Late Per. Sonatas, 'Wanderer' Fantasy	
Liszt – Sonata in B minor, Val. d'Obermann, Hungarian Rhapsodies, Mephisto Waltz, The Transcendental Etudes	
The Russian & E. European Masters – The Major Works (Series #7)	May 27 – Jun 3
Rachmaninoff – the Preludes, Etudes, Sonatas / Prokofiev & Scriabin – Sonatas / Stravinsky – Petrouchka / other	
American Masterpieces (Series #8)	Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue / Barber Sonata / others Jul 1 & 8

The Sunrise Series Concerts (2011/12)

at The First Unitarian Society of Westchester

25 Old Jackson Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, October 23, 2011 at 8:30am

J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music

The Well-Tempered Clavier

Preludes & Fugues: No. 1 in C major

No. 2 in C minor

English Suite No. 1 in A major

Prelude

Allemande

Courante I & II

Sarabande

Bourée I & II

Gigue

Alan Murray, piano

The Sunrise Series Concerts (2011-12)

The **Sunrise Music Series**, in its second full season, is a series of Sunday morning musical offerings hosted by the First Unitarian Society of Westchester with the intention of providing members and visitors from the community with 30-45 minutes of quality weekly listening in a contemplative setting, surrounded by the natural beauty that is visible from the Society's sanctuary room. This year's Bach cycle - open to the public, with free admission - is intended to be a series of informal but well-prepared offerings, as an interim step toward final concert preparation. Last season's Sunrise Programs are being offered again this season as the **Masters Series Concerts (2011-12)** at Studio Hollywood in Hastings on Sunday afternoons. Weekly printed Programs and accompanying Notes will be provided along with brief introductory comments by the performer. (Downloadable links to Program & Notes files posted for both Sunrise and Masters Series on www.studio-hollywood.com).

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J.S. Bach: The Well-Tempered Clavier, English Suites

Notes by Howard Ferguson

The Well-Tempered Clavier — Just before he left Cöthen in 1723 Bach completed what we now know as the first book of a collection of 48 preludes and fugues which he entitles *Das wohltemperierte Clavier (The Well-Tempered Clavier)*. The Well-Tempered Clavier, dubbed 'the old testament' by Hans Bulow, is acknowledged to be one of the most significant works for the keyboard ever written. It consists of fugues, each preceded by its own prelude, in all twenty-four keys, twelve major and twelve minor.

The use of the adjective 'well-tempered' in the title implies a tuning whereby all the keys of the pieces in the collection would sound well. Some of the keys included in the WTC were used by Bach only in this work and even as late as 1728 Johann David Heinichen wrote that composers seldom ventured beyond keys such as A-flat and B major, and never wrote in F-sharp or C-sharp major. Bach's purpose in writing in all keys is a matter of speculation and touches on the nature of the tonal system itself.

One of the irregularities of the tonal system is the slight disparity between enharmonically equivalent notes (for example A-flat and G-sharp). This difference has significant consequences in that a tuning which favors one results in the other sounding out of tune. On the keyboard, enharmonically equivalent pitches cannot be distinguished since one key on the instrument represents both notes. This created problems for intonation on keyboard instruments: one can play in tune in a particular key but not necessarily in another unless one retunes the instrument. One solution to this inherent dilemma of intonation on instruments with fixed notes is 'equal temperament'. In equal temperament a compromise is made in which each note is tuned slightly impurely in relation to another. As a result there is an even, though minimal distribution of 'out-of-tuneness' between all notes in order that none of them should stick out obtrusively. It is generally believed, therefore, that Bach's WTC implies a tuning of the keyboard in equal temperament.

'Well-tempered' does not necessarily imply 'equal temperament', however, but rather an irregular tuning system in which all keys could be tolerated but some keys would be more 'in tune' than others. The idea behind this concept is that a remote key within a piece would sound more dissonant and thereby be given a unique 'character'.

The **Preludes** that precede the fugues in the WTC are not simply introductory pieces, but works which stand on their own. Though the prelude originated as an improvisation made while lutenists checked the tuning of their instruments, it gradually evolved into a separate, written-out piece. The first prelude of the WTC, with its arpeggiated chords, comes closest in style to the earlier type of improvisatory prelude. The preludes are extremely varied in form and character, giving color and contrast to the set, and may share or contrast in mood with the fugues.

The **Fugues** consists of a principal theme (subject) and an immediate repetition in another voice (answer). The subjects vary enormously. The successive presentation of the principal melodic idea of a fugue is called the 'initial exposition'. There are essentially three types of fugal 'procedure': the first - in which the subject is stated at various times in each of the voices accompanied by free counterpoint; the second - in which the subject is combined with a statement of itself in another voice; and the third - and most frequent procedure in Bach's fugues - in which a distinct theme appears in counterpoint with the subject or its answer throughout the course of the fugue.

The English Suites — Bach wrote three major sets of keyboard suites, with six works in each set: the so-called 'English' Suites, the French Suites and the Partitas. Of these the English Suites are probably the earliest, and though their date remains uncertain, these are known to have been completed by 1725, and were quite possibly written a decade before that, during the same period as most of the organ works. The origin of the title 'English' is obscure, for no autograph has survived, and in contemporary manuscripts the individual works are called either *Grande-Suite* or *Suite avec Prelude*. On the title-page of a manuscript copy of Suite No. 1, however, someone has added the words '*Fait pour les Anglois*', and this may have led Bach's first biographer, J. N. Forkel (1749-1818), to assume that they were composed 'for an Englishman of rank'. Recently it has been shown that the opening two bars of Suite No.1 are a virtual quotation of the beginning of the Gigue of the Suite No. 4 by the Frenchman Gaspard Le Rous (c. 1660-1707), which was also transformed by Charles Dieupart (died c. 1740) into the Gigue of his own Suite No. 1. Dieupart lived in England, and Bach knew and copied out some of his work, which may explain the designation 'English'.

The Preludes - Each of the English Suites begins with a Prelude, all but the first of which are in ritornello form. This large-scale type of structure resembles the opening movement of a Baroque concerto, which in itself was based on the Italian operative aria. In the latter, and orchestral paragraph of ritornello state the principal thematic material in the home key. The soloist then entered with either a shortened version of the same material or an entirely fresh idea. The orchestra responded with part of the ritornello, thus encouraging the soloist to take a longer flight. Thereafter the two alternative or combined, with the orchestral ritornello re-appearing in various keys to act as pillars supporting the whole. Finally the home key was reached once more, and a restatement of the ritornello, either complete or in part, rounded off the movement. In each of the present Preludes, the ritornello is written in fugal style, and the first solo beings with fresh materials. Such a scheme was admirably suited to the two-manual harpsichord, for its powerful lower manual could represent the orchestra and its weaker upper manual the soloist - as Bach himself indicated by the 'forte' and 'piano' markings in his Italian Concerto for harpsichord solo.

The Dance Movements - The Baroque suite consists basically of four national dances: an *Allemande* (German, as the name implies); either a *Courante* (French) or a *Corrente* (Italian); a *Sarabande* (Spanish); and a *Gigue* (from the English 'jig'). In an *Allemande*, four slow-ish beats underlie more or less continuous flowing movement. A French *Courant* is rhythmically more complex, for its six brisk beats can be grouped as either 3-twos or 2-threes, thus introducing a teasing rhythmic ambiguity. (The Italian *Corrente* with three brisk beats, does not appear in the English Suites.) A *Sarabande*, in statement triple time, provides the suite's slow movement, while a fugal-type gigue rounds it off brilliantly. Other dances may be added to the basic four, generally preceding the gigue, and known as *Galanterien* (literally 'courtesies'). Those found in the English Suites are: *Gavottes*, *Bourées*, *Menuets* and *Passepieds*. Any dance can have a twin, either a variation of itself (*double* or *agrément*) or a contrast (*alternative*). An alternative pair is treated like a classical 'minuet and trio' (and the *alternative* may introduce a minor key for contrast): for example Gavotte I - II - I (the second time without repeats.) With a double pair, the most likely of several possibilities is that each half of the dance is followed by the corresponding half of its double, just as a contemporary player would add extemporaneous embellishments to any repeats.

Alan Murray studied piano with Frances Wazeter, Allen Weiss and Robert Preston, and 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 the University's award for distinguished piano soloist. A specialist in the Financial Institutions capital markets group at Moody's, where he focuses on U.S., 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 and diverse world musical traditions. Alan resides with his wife Amada and daughter Celia in Hastings, where they also own and operate *Galápagos Books*, a specialty bookstore focused on world languages and literature, children's books, and multi-media educational materials.