

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
the Etudes / Preludes / Polonaises / Ballades / Scherzos / Sonatas / Nocturnes / Fantasy / Impromptus / ...	
Schumann – The Piano Music (Series #2)	6 programs: Nov 13 – Dec 18
Fantasy / Carnaval / Kreisleriana / Toccata / Symphonic Etudes / the 3 Sonatas / Fantasy Pieces / Humoreske / ...	
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 – Iberia, Navarra Granados – Goyescas, 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 30
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, September 25, 2011 at 8:30am

J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music

Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue

Italian Concerto

Allegro animato

Andante molto espressivo

Presto gioioso

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. The Bach cycle will be repeated as part of this year's Masters Series as a one-week, 8-program series in April. 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: A Perspective

It is harmonic intensity above all that sets Bach's music apart from that of his contemporaries. Bach had anything but a conventional musical mind. His work is always full of surprises: something unexpected, something that departs from the norm, something that only Bach could have dreamed from the material. In Bach's music a completely new harmonic language is forged, A superior harmonic sense is the mark of nearly all of the great composers, the one thing that sets them off from their more timid and less inventive contemporaries, Where most composers of his day would confine themselves to the rules, Bach *made* the rules. Even as a young man he was industriously investigating the harmonic potential of music, and for this he would be reproved. His listeners were not used to such daring. At Arnstadt, the twenty-one-year-old Bach was rebuked "for having hitherto made many curious variations in the chorale, and mingled many strange tones in it, and for the fact that the congregation has been confused by it." As he grew older, his harmonic adventurousness only became more and more pronounced. He was considered a contentious man, but also highly respected.

Taking the forms bequeathed to him, Bach was constantly expanding, refining, and improving them. His music for solo string instruments has never been surpassed for ingenuity, complexity, and difficulty. There is also no music in the literature that has Bach's kind of *rightness*, of inevitability, of intelligence, of logically organized sequences of notes. As regards style, if we know one thing about Bach, it is that he was a passionate man and a passionate performer. He undoubtedly played and conducted his own music with infinitely more dash, freedom and spontaneity than modern performance practice will generally admit. Bach himself told a pupil, one Johan Gotthilf Ziegler, that an organist should not merely play the notes. He should express the "affects", the meaning, and the emotional significance of the piece. In the forward to his "Honest Method" for learning the keyboard, he refers to the primacy of achieving a "cantabile style", and a prerequisite toward this end is that his music be taken not in a stifling or rigorously accented, but rather a lively, flowing rhythm. The tone should also not be stiff and uniform in quality but organically constructed and articulated, mobile, full of life, just as Bach himself, as amply testified by his contemporaries, "knew how to give such variety to his playing that in his hands every piece was as eloquent as speech".

Introduction: from The Lives of the Great Composers (Bach), by Harold C. Schonberg

Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue – The Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue was originally composed in Cöthen about 1720, and at least twice revised by Bach in the following years. It is one of his best loved works, and indeed one of his own favorites: the Fantasy begins with a short *toccata* culminating in extensive *arpeggiando* passages which lead to a long *recitative*; this is profoundly expressive, and with extraordinary modulations and enharmonic changes. But rapid, toccata-like roulades soon re-introduce themselves, and the Fantasy ends with a magnificent five-bar coda constructed over a massive chromatic scale of slowly descending crotchets, the whole superimposed upon a pedal bass-note. The style of the Fantasy is that of inspired improvisation. The three-part Fugue is of its nature more formal, but it exhibits many highly individual features and many adventurous departures from conventional fugue-writing. The cumulative tension and excitement of the whole fugue, and particularly of its last pages, culminate in a magnificently dramatic conclusion.

This work immediately created a strong impression on the public, and a mutual friend of Bach's son Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and Bach's first biographer, Forkel, penned a brief note enclosed with a copy of the score:

"There comes herewith (at your suggestion)
A little music from Sebastian,
Chromatic Fantasy entitled otherwise;
'Twill be admired by coming centuries"

Italian Concerto – The Italian Concerto and the French Overture were published together as the second part of Bach's *Clavierübung*, a series of publications of keyboard works. They are deliberately set out side by side to define the two most important national influences on German music. While the so-called French Suites show Bach's ability to blend different national styles, the second volume of the *Clavierübung* demonstrates that not only can Bach use the genres of other nationalities, he can make them completely his own. The idea of a concerto for a solo instrument without orchestra seems strange today, but it was not so unusual in Bach's time. Much earlier in his career, at Weimar, he had made arrangements of orchestral works by Vivaldi and others for the keyboard; but in the "Concerto in the Italian taste" he employs the Italian design for music that is distinctively his own and written with the keyboard in mind. This is clearly heard in the first movement in the thick chords of the opening as much as in the lighter episodes, which recall the counterpoint of the Two- and Three-part Inventions. Here, as elsewhere in the two works, Bach uses the markings *forte* and *piano* extensively, originally indicating a two-manual instrument.

Notes by George Malcolm (Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue) and Shane Fletcher (Italian Concerto)

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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.