

## 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, Blumenstück, Carnaval	Nov 13
Kreisleriana, Toccata, Novellettes, Symphonic Etudes	Nov 20
Faschingsschwank aus Wien (Carnival of Vienna), Kinderszenen (Scenes fr Childhood), Romances	Nov 27
Sonata #1 in F-sharp minor, Waldszene, Davidsbündlertänze	Dec 4
Sonata #2 in G minor, Papillons (“Butterflies”), Humoreske	Dec 11
Sonata #3 in F minor (“Concerto without Orchestra”), Fantasiestücke, Gesänge der Frühe	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 Feb 19 & Mar 4
<b>Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas &amp; Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 7:00pm; 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	
<i>a) Pathétique’ b) Moonlight’, Pastoral’ c) Tempest’, Waldstein’ d) Appassionata’, Les Adieux’ e) Hammerklavier’</i>	
<b>J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 7:00pm; 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, October 30, 2011 at 3:00pm

### Frédéric Chopin – The Piano Music

#### **Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20**

*Presto con fuoco – molto più lento – Tempo I*

#### **Four Mazurkas, Op. 30**

- No. 1 in C minor
- No. 2 in B minor
- No. 3 in D-flat major
- No. 4 in C-sharp minor

#### **Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 31**

*Presto – sostenuto – Tempo I*

Intermission

#### **Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39**

*Presto con fuoco – meno mosso – Tempo I*

#### **Two Nocturnes, Op. 37**

- No. 1 in G minor – *Andante sostenuto*
- No. 2 in G major – *Andantino*

#### **Scherzo No. 4 in E major, Op. 54**

*Presto – più lento – Tempo I*

**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.

### **Chopin: The Scherzos**

There are only two examples before Chopin of a self-contained composition for piano being called a “scherzo” (literally “joke”, in Italian), including one of Beethoven’s bagatelles (Op. 33) and two pieces by Schubert (D593). But none of these isolated precedents, or any of the scherzos which Beethoven and many others after him included in symphonies, sonatas or other multi-movement works compare in any way with the four extended pieces by Chopin.

Chopin’s share with the classical scherzo only the ‘*presto*’ tempo indication,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, and an *ABA* structure with a central trio, which Chopin in fact reinterprets each time he uses it. Although it was traditional to have a clear break between the outer parts and the central section, there was absolutely no precedent for the violent lacerations, the dramatic contrasts, which give each of Chopin’s first three Scherzos its own unmistakable imprint, while the Fourth exhibits a special, and no less remarkable, character. Their intensity of expression, poetical richness and astounding originality place the Scherzos among Chopin’s masterpieces. In them the technique of deriving themes from basic motifs reaches new heights of conscious refinement. Each has a different formal layout, yet Chopin achieves a perfect match between the internal logic of the constituent elements and the overall structural pattern.

The Scherzo No. 1, in B minor (composed in 1831-32, some say 1830-31) was started in Vienna and finished in Paris. There has been wide speculation that the origins of the piece are autobiographical, linked to Chopin’s reactions to the news of the Tsar’s repression of the Polish insurrection and the questions this raised about his life in Vienna. Yet the disturbingly violent emotions of the piece, its relentless, unremitting tension and the wrenching contrast of the central section make any autobiographical interpretation seem inadequate. The two opening seventh chords, in different registers, are laid out in such a way as to highlight their sharply dissonant character. The opening idea races on, with an initial rising thrust and incessant, whirling quavers (eighth-notes). It is linked subtly to the second, clearly contrasted idea, a sort of poetical reworking of a cadenza. The central trio, in B major, marked *molto più lento* (much slower), quotes the melody of a Christmas folksong from Mazovia, “Lulaj-ze Jezuniu”, an unreal, magical vision rendered more poignantly by the wonderful piano writing, where a repeated F-sharp in the upper register provides a hypnotic dominant pedal-note. When the melody has appeared three times, alternating with an original idea of Chopin’s, a seventh chord brusquely announces the return of the first part. The tension is incandescent. Following a somewhat embellished reprise of the opening material – a technique Chopin uses repeated in the scherzos – the coda culminates in fortissimo repetitions of a striking, even shocking, dissonance (a ninth chord built on E-sharp) before hurtling to its conclusion.

The richly varied material of the Scherzo No. 2, in B-flat minor (composed in 1837) offers contrasts of a different character from those in the First Scherzo, and the inclusion of a development section after the central trio makes for a more complex overall structure. The extraordinarily incisive elements of the first idea create a grimly disturbing tension, with chords answering dramatically the anxious questions posed by the mysterious *sotto voce*

thirds of the opening. There follows a long, cantabile in D-flat major of quivering intensity. The central trio presents two themes in uninterrupted succession: the first is peaceful, vaguely reminiscent of a chorale, while the waltz-like second theme in D-sharp minor brings with it a repeated, striking and restless five-note figures (two quavers and a triplet) in an inner part. Ever more urgent and feverish, this figure dominates the second part of the dramatic development section that follows and perhaps constitutes the expressive climax of the Scherzo. Following the reprise, a crescendo leads to the compact, racing and agitated coda.

With the Scherzo No. 3, in C-sharp minor (composed in 1839 on Majorca) the traditional layout seems still further away. After an introduction, there are two clearly contrasted themes, the second of which undergoes particularly complex changes. The 20-bar introduction provides an astonishing opening, with its incredibly daring uncertainties of rhythm and key. It gives way to the sharply etched first theme, with its double octaves creating a harsh and incisive, but dramatically exciting, profile. There is no transition to the second theme, a melody in D-flat major with the solemn pace of a chorale, its four phrases cast in organ-like sonorities, separated by airily descending arabesques of magical lightness, almost like iridescent glitter falling from above. A development section elaborates these ornamental figures and the chorales. The arrival of the reprise is announced by elements of the opening theme. The chorale returns in D major, falling back in a sadly brooding E minor. The coda – certainly one of Chopin’s most powerful – begins in hazy uncertainty, then builds to enormous tension through a soaring chordal arc before erupting in a sizzling release, the double octaves returning in the final measures to bring the work to a devastating conclusion.

In the Scherzo No. 4, in E major (composed in 1842) the classical *ABA* structure returns in a highly elaborate form. Diaphanous in coloring, elusive, variegated, the piece stands apart from its predecessors, as if it had passed through a magically purifying expressive filter. It seems to soar and hover above the clouds and there is an enormous richness of shading. The thematic material is multifaceted and interwoven, elaborated with remarkable subtlety and complexity. The first group offers a range of motifs, from the mysterious hints of the opening to a series of chords soaring airily on high. Another idea leads to the central trio in C-sharp minor – sweet and singable, with a delicate chiaroscuro shading. The reprise is skillfully varied, expanding the work’s radiance and highlighting a bird-song-like cadenza against a backdrop of trills, before the final ascending scale dissolves this magical vision.

*Notes by Paolo Petazzi (trans. C. Whyte; DG 431 623-2); edited and revised with additional text by A. Murray*

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