

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, Carnaval	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 Grotesque, 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 Feb 19 & Mar 4
Beethoven – The 32 Sonatas & Diabelli Variations (1wk Series; M-F at 8:00pm; S/S at 3:00)	
(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
a) ‘Pathétique’ b) ‘Moonlight’, ‘Pastorale’ c) ‘Tempest’, ‘Waldstein’ d) ‘Appassionata’, ‘Les Adieux’ e) ‘Hammerklavier’	
J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music (1-week Series, Apr 7-14; Mon-Fri at 8:00pm; 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	Jul 1 & 8
Works by Ives , Copland , Carter , Bolcom , others - Jul 8	

The Masters Series Concerts (2011/12)

at Studio Hollywood, Hastings-on-Hudson

Sunday, January 15, 2012 at 3:00pm

Maurice Ravel – The Piano Music

Sérénade Grotesque

Menuet sur le nom d’Haydn

Prélude

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Prélude

Fugue

Forlane

Rigaudon

Menuet

Toccata

Intermission

Menuet Antique

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Miroirs

Noctuelles (Night Moths)

Oiseaux tristes (Sad Birds)

Une barque sur l’océan (A Boat on the Ocean)

Alborada del gracioso (Dawn Song of the Jester)

La vallée des cloches (Valley of the Bells)

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, 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.

Ravel: Serenade, Tombeau, Menuet Antique, Pavane, Miroirs

Sérénade Grotesque: Ravel's friendship with the Catalán pianist Ricardo Viñes (who was later to give the first performances of most of the composer's piano works) was a crucial element of his early years. The influence of Viñes on Ravel was both intellectual and musical: through him Ravel discovered the Symbolist poets (including Aloysius Bertrand, on whose poem trilogy by the same name *Gaspard de la Nuit* is based), and the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, while as pianists the played through a great deal of music for four hands and for two pianos. Viñes introduces Ravel to music by Russian composers such as Balakirev, Glazunov and Borodin, and it was she who suggested in 1893 that Ravel should study with the Spanish pianist Santiago Riera. Ravel thus discovered the secrets of Spanish music – which, as we know, had a lasting effect on his own compositions. His new-found knowledge was put to immediate use in the **Sérénade Grotesque** (1893), dedicated to Ricardo Viñes, whose jerky chords already contain the seeds of *Alborada del Gracioso*, from *Miroirs*, one reason perhaps why Ravel refrained from have the earlier piece published.

Le Tombeau de Couperin – Three years later Ravel set to work on a new project, the piano suite **Le Tombeau de Couperin**, whose title is explained thus in the autobiographical sketch: “*Homage is paid not so much to Couperin alone as to eighteenth-century French music in general*”. For some decades there had been a renewal of interest in the French music of the 17th and 18th centuries. For example, the *Société des Instruments Anciens* gave regular concerts using viola da gamba, viola d'amore, hurdy-gurdy or harpsichord, and featuring music by Couperin, Rameau and Monsigny. This was the period, too, when Saint-Saëns finished his monumental complete Rameau edition for Durand, and the brilliant harpsichordist Louis Diéner published, also for Durand, Couperin's complete *Oeuvres de Clavecin*. This revival inspired different composers in different ways: Chausson's *Dances* (1896) contain a *Sarabande*, a *Forlane* and a *Pavane*. Debussy displayed his admiration in *Homage a Rameau*, in his first set of *Images* and Ravel followed suit.

The suite comprises six pieces: a highly ornamented **Prélude**, followed by a **Fugue** (a baroque combination) on four notes, whose span recalls 17th century architecture; in the **Forlane** appears the shadow of Couperin, and the lively character and square rhythm of the **Rigaudon** recall Chabrier's *Danse Villageoise*. The **Menuet** has a central *Musette* section which magically conjures up Watteau's *Embarquement pour Cythère*, and the suite closes with a **Toccata** in an almost Lisztian explosion of virtuosity. Each piece is dedicated to a friend who died in the First World War.

Ravel started work on the suite in 1914 and completed it at the end of 1917. It was published by Durand in 1918 and first performed by Marguerite Long (who by then had become his preferred premier pianist, after some dis-satisfaction with Ricardo Viñes) at a concert of the *Société Musicale Indépendante* on April 11, 1919. In contrast to the *Valses* the premier of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was so successful that it had to be repeated in its entirety as an encore.

Menuet Antique – In 1895-99 Ravel wrote two pieces with a neo-classical inspiration, blending the archaic and the modern. One of these, the **Menuet Antique** (1895) could be seen as an homage to Chabrier, whose *Pièces pittoresques* include a *Menuet pompeux*.

Pavane pour une infante défunte: Between 1895 and 1899 Ravel wrote two pieces with a neo-classical inspiration, blending the archaic and the modern: *Menuet antique* (1895) and the **Pavane pour une infante défunte** (*Pavane for a deceased infant*; 1899), dedicated to the Princess de

Polignac. Today, the *Pavane* is usually heard in the composer's orchestral transcription, but it was originally composed for the piano. The *Pavane*, as its name implies, is a stately dance, extremely poignant in its sensibility, and is marked by rather adventurous uses of dissonance and parallel harmonic progressions.

Miroirs: In 1905, Ravel was invited by Alfred Edwards, the millionaire owner of the newspaper *Le Matin*, to come on a cruise along the canals of the Low Countries. Ravel's letters record his delight in the new impressions opened up to him. Most of the **Miroirs** (Mirrors) completed in October of that year, display a new sensitivity to the aural and visual sensations of the 'real' world. Published by Demets in 1906, the five pieces of *Miroirs* reflect the magic and variety of Ravel's musical landscapes. The set was first performed on January 6, 1906 by Ricardo Viñes as part of a *Société Nationale* concert, and met with an enthusiastic response, audience insisting he play *Alborada del gracioso* again as an encore.

The writing in the first piece (but the last to be composed), **Noctuelles**, provides a perfect illustration (according to Viñes) of Debussy's conception of modern music – a conception which he also believed to have been shared by Ravel. Debussy's ideal was '*music so free in form that it seems improvised*', as if it were '*torn from a sketchbook*'. Of the second piece of the set (but the first to be written), **Oiseaux tristes**, Ravel wrote '*[Here, I evoke] birds loss in the torpor of the dark forest in the hottest hours of the day*'. *Oiseaux tristes* is dedicated to Ricardo Viñes, who noted in his diary that when Ravel first played it at Delage's home, '*I was the only one to like this new piano piece*'.

The next piece, but the second to be written, is **Une barque sur l'océan**, dedicated to the painter Paul Sordes. This is a magical evocation of the sea – at times placid, at times turbulent, and occasionally violent – soaked in arpeggios, and climaxing with high trills. The next piece in the set, **Alborada del gracioso**, is dedicated to the music critic Michel Calvocoressi and bears witness to one of the predominant influences on French music at the turn of the century: Spain. Ravel was not immune to the Spanish fever gripping French composers – the syndrome described by an irritated Manuel de Falla as '*music of dreams and lies*'. Arpeggios marked *sec*, *trés serrés* (dry, very serrated) in an unchanging, implacable tempo are followed by a recitative which combines Spanish lyricism and the grotesque.

Concluding the set is **La Vallée des cloches**, composed fourth, which Ravel dedicated to his composer friend, Maurice Delage. Robert Casadesus claimed that the idea for the piece came to Ravel from the sound of midday bells in Paris. Written on three staves, as the second set of Debussy's *Images* were to be, the piece opens with repeated G-sharps over a semiquaver *ostinato* motif, imitating six sets of bells. Only in the middle section does Ravel give rein to his unrivalled melodic gift. Notes: Denis Herlin (London 433 515-2), Roger Nichols (Nimbus 7713/4), Alan Blyth (DG 2530 540)

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