

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 17, 2012 at 3:00pm

Ludwig van Beethoven – The Piano Sonatas

Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2 No. 1

Allegro
Adagio
Menuetto - Allegretto
Prestissimo

Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2 No. 2

Allegro vivace
Largo appassionato
Scherzo - Allegretto
Rondo - Grazioso

Intermission

Sonata No. 3 in C Major, Op. 2 No. 3

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Scherzo - Allegro
Allegro assai

Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major, Op. 7

Allegro molto e con brio
Largo, con gran espressione
Allegro
Rondo – Poco allegretto e grazioso

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.

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Ludwig van Beethoven: The Piano Sonatas (Op. 2 & Op 7)

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. We know of occasions when Beethoven comforted unhappy women by sealing in quietly and just playing for them. It's doubtful he played the 'Moonlight' Sonata, as in the 1994 film 'Immortal Beloved'. More likely, he started out like the 'Moonlight' and advanced to soundscapes of fantasy we can never know.

So the feeling of improvisation permeates Beethoven's thirty-two sonatas for piano. Cadenzas or cadenza-like passages appear from the first sonata opus to the last. The "Moonlight" Sonata proclaims its improvisatory roots in its unusual title '*Sonata quasi una fantasia*': the fantasia was a genre ostensibly fixing extemporization in music notation. We can hear the frequent stops and starts in the sonatas, the *fermatas* and *ritardandos*, melodic ornaments, wayward modulations and the like, as links to the whims and wonders of improvisation. 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 piano improvisation, lies at the heart of Beethoven's music.

Few composers have launched their careers with such a splash as Beethoven with his Op. 1 and Op. 2. Published no more than eight months apart in 1795-96, three years after he had arrived in Vienna, these six very substantial piano trios and piano sonatas breathe ambition, dare one say arrogance (certainly Beethoven's contemporaries said it). The music bristles with passages planned for effect, which achieve with a force unknown up to that time. Nor is subtlety lacking, nor grace, wit, intellect, or emotion. In a stroke, Beethoven commandeered and aggrandized genres – the piano and the piano sonata – that in general had been taken less seriously than the symphony or the string quartet.

Sets of works published as a single opus usually included one in the minor mode, and in the ***Sonata in F minor, Op. 2 No. 1***, minor-mode inflection shadows both the second theme of the very terse opening movement, which inverts the first theme brilliantly, and the cadence theme. The trio in the minuet movement pays special homage to Haydn, the slow movement to Mozart. In its blustery *Prestissimo* finale, Op. 2 No. 1 recalls the minor-mode member of the Op. 1 trios, but it also looks ahead to the finale of

the 'Moonlight' Sonata, written almost a decade later.

The set's two other sonatas are far from terse. Except for their scherzos, a famous Beethoven trademark, all the movements take their time. In the *Allegro vivace* of the ***Sonata in A major, Op. 2 No. 2***, humor turns rough and contrasts often shock: thus in the bridge section (the transition from the first theme group and key area to the second), the improvisatory slowdown is as noteworthy as the frenetic rising passage that follows it, cut short by an almost brutal dissonance – dissolving into sweetness, glitter, and light. Very typical for this composer is the hymn-like melody of the *Largo appassionato*, provided here with a persistent left-hand accompaniment that sounds like a *pizzicato* cello. Beethoven evokes string-quartet and orchestral textures in the early sonatas as abundantly as he invents strikingly new pianistic textures. A crash near the end of the movement drives the cello up to the high register – doubled by the bassoons, it seems, even trombones.

Rondo form, used in half a dozen of the early sonatas, makes for a relaxed conclusion of the total work even when the opening tune is flashy as in the ***Sonata in C major, Op. 2 No. 3*** – the most ostentatiously brilliant member in this opus, indeed in the whole set of thirty-two. The first movement borrows features from the concerto (Beethoven's first two piano concertos date from this time), including a cadenza which practically demands a second cadenza in the rondo. Standing out from the bravura is a marvelous section of whispering (later roaring) texture, sighing figures, and wandering harmony in the slow movement. Again, as in the *Largo* of Op. 2 No. 2, there is an attention-grabbing crash near the end.

The "*Grande*" ***Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 7*** irons out the kinks in the monumental sonata ideal put forward in Op. 2. This is best seen in the fluent, strongly built, and altogether formidable first movement, less well in the slow movement, which feels rather pale after those in Op. 2 Nos. 2 and 3. Again, the finale is a rondo., and the third movement, marked neither 'minuet' nor 'scherzo', is an original, thoughtful *Allegretto* with a touch of the Romantic in the trio. (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 also own and operate *Galápagos Books*, focused on world languages and literature, children's and general-interest books, local authors, and multi-media materials.