

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

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| 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> | Apr 15 | (8:00 am) |

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

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| 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 – Apr 1 |
| 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 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, February 5, 2012 at 8:30am

J.S. Bach – The Keyboard Music

The Well-Tempered Clavier

Preludes & Fugues: No. 25 in C major

No. 26 in C minor

No. 27 in C-sharp major

No. 28 in C-sharp minor

French Suite No. 4 in E-flat major

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Gavotte I & II

Menuet

Air

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. 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, French Suites

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".

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

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

itches 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 French 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. The French Suites 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-tvos 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 extemporary embellishments to any repeats.

Notes by Howard Ferguson

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.