

London Philharmonic Orchestra



**GCSE
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Resources**

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Antonio Vivaldi

(1678–1741)

‘Winter’: Movement I The Four Seasons

(1718–1720)



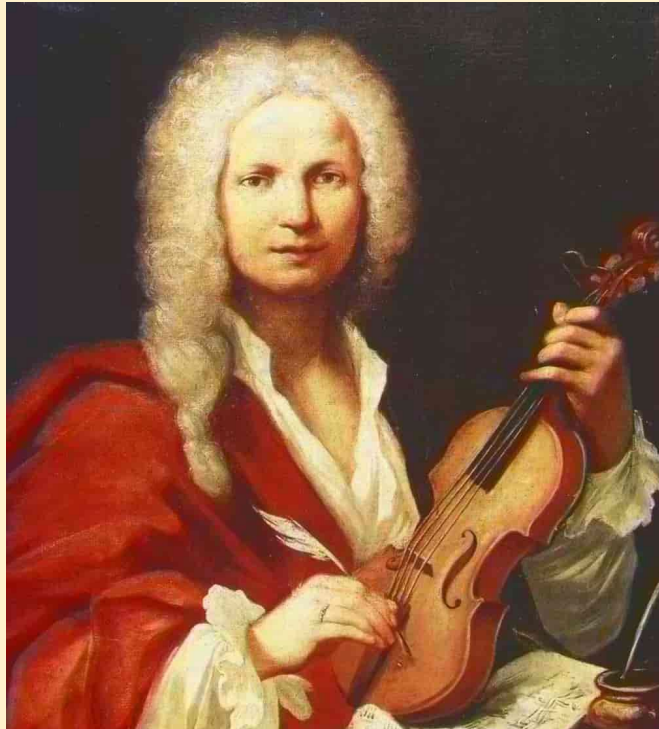
What is Baroque?

- ✦ Baroque is a style of art, architecture, music, dance and literature which was popular in c. 1600 – 1750
- ✦ It is characterised by exuberant colours, grandeur and flamboyance, and features lots of intricate ornamentation



An example of Baroque architecture

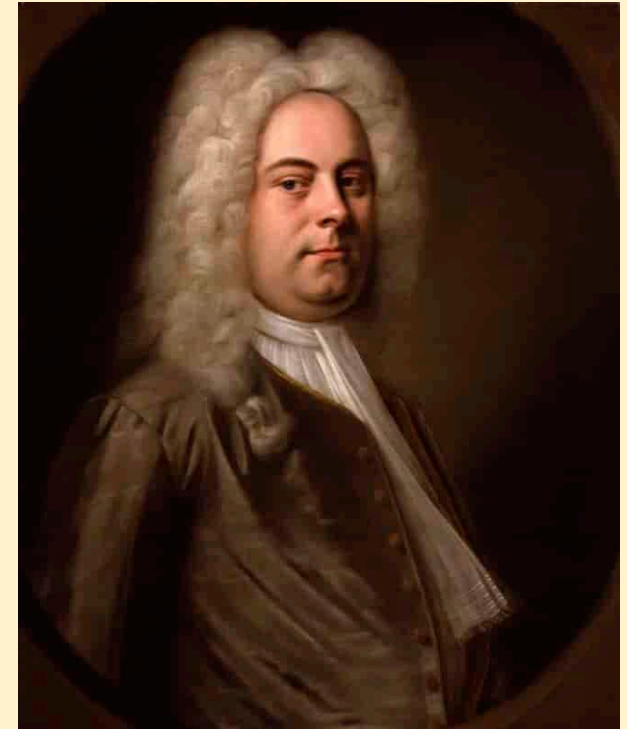
Some of the most important Baroque composers are...



Antonio Vivaldi
1678 – 1741
Italy



J.S. Bach
1685 – 1750
Germany



George Frideric Handel
1685 – 1759
England

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

- 🎻 Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678
- 🎻 Throughout his career, he pioneered developments in orchestration, violin technique and program music
- 🎻 He also consolidated the form of the concerto, and helped it gain wider popularity
- 🎻 He composed many concertos, as well as sacred choral works and operas
- 🎻 Many of his works were written for the music ensemble at the Ospedale della Pieta, a home for abandoned children
- 🎻 In 1740 he went to Vienna in the hope of gaining royal support from Emperor Charles VI, but died in poverty less than a year later

Key features of Baroque music:

- 🎵 Use of continuo
- 🎵 Baroque instruments, including the harpsichord
- 🎵 Frequent ornamentation, including trills, appoggiaturas (leaning note), mordents, turns, often improvised by the performer
- 🎵 Lots of repetition and sequences
- 🎵 Polyphonic textures are common

Continuo = improvised accompaniment of chords/harmony over bassline, played by harpsichord



Antonio Vivaldi

(1678–1741)

‘Winter’: Movement I The Four Seasons

(1718–1720)



The Four Seasons

(1718-1720)

- ♫ A group of 4 violin concertos
- ♫ Each concerto represents a different season (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter)
- ♫ Inspired by the Italian countryside – Vivaldi wrote them when he was working in a chapel in Mantua
- ♫ Vivaldi wrote short poems describing the seasons, and then translated those poems into music
- ♫ An early example of **Program Music (music that tells a story or describes something)** – unusual in the Baroque period



Program Music

- 🎵 Program music is music that tells a story or describes something non-musical
- 🎵 It is unusual for program music to take the form of a concerto, as it does in Vivaldi's piece, and it is very unusual in Baroque music
- 🎵 Other examples of program music:
 - 🎵 [Symphonie fantastique by Hector Berlioz](#)
 - 🎵 [The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Paul Dukas](#)
 - 🎵 [The Planets by Gustav Holst](#)
 - 🎵 [Peter and the Wolf by Sergei Prokofiev](#)

What is a **concerto**?

- 🎻 **Concerto = a piece for soloist and orchestra**
- 🎻 In the Baroque period (c.1650–1750), there were two main types of concerto:
 - 🎻 Solo concerto = one soloist and orchestra
 - 🎻 Concerto grosso = small group of soloists (concertino) and accompanying group (ripieno)

Which type of concerto is Vivaldi's 'Winter'?



Solo concerto

The Four Seasons

(1718-1720)

- 🎻 Each concerto in 'The Four Seasons' has 3 movements
 - 🎻 Movement 1 – Fast
 - 🎻 Movement 2 – Slow
 - 🎻 Movement 3 – Fast
- 🎻 Each concerto is based on a poem, written by Vivaldi himself

L'inverno (Winter)

Frozen and trembling in the icy snow,
In the severe blast of the horrible wind,
As we run, we constantly stamp our feet,
And our teeth chatter in the cold.
To spend happy and quiet days near the fire,
While, outside, the rain soaks hundreds.
We walk on the ice with slow steps,
And tread carefully, for fear of falling.
If we go quickly, we slip and fall to the ground.
Again we run on the ice,
Until it cracks and opens.
We hear, from closed doors,
Sirocco, Boreas, and all the winds in battle.
This is winter, but it brings joy.

Aggiacciato tremar tra neri argenti
Al Severo Spirar d'orrido Vento,
Correr battendo i piedi ogni momento;
E pel Soverchio gel batter i denti;
Passar al foco i di quieti e contenti
Mentre la pioggia fuor bagna ben cento
Caminar Sopra 'l ghiaccio, e a passo lento
Per timor di cader gersene intenti;
Gir forte Sdruzziolar cader a terra
Di nuove ir Sopra 'l ghiaccio e corer forte
Sin ch'il ghiaccio si rompe, e si disserra;
Sentir uscir dale ferrate porte
Sirocco Borea, e tutti i Venti in guerra
Quest' é 'l verno, ma tal, che gioja apporte.

Ritornello

- In most of Vivaldi's concertos, including this one, solo sections alternate with orchestral ones, to show the contrast between the two sounds
- When the orchestra play, it's called the *Ritornello*, which means 'return' i.e. the return to the full sound of the orchestra
- The solo moments in between are called 'episodes'

Bars 1-11: "Frozen and trembling in the icy snow..."

F minor = 'cold' key

trills = 'shivers'

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Build up of texture/ chord

Short, staccato quavers

F pedal

The musical score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is F minor (three flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into four measures. In the first measure, the Violin I staff has a whole rest, while the other three staves play a series of short, staccato eighth notes. In the second measure, the Violin I staff has a whole rest, and the other three staves continue with the eighth-note pattern. In the third measure, the Violin I staff has a whole rest, and the other three staves continue with the eighth-note pattern. In the fourth measure, the Violin I staff has a trill, and the other three staves continue with the eighth-note pattern. Annotations include 'F minor = 'cold' key' pointing to the key signature, 'trills = 'shivers'' pointing to the trill in the Violin I staff, 'Build up of texture/ chord' and 'Short, staccato quavers' pointing to the eighth-note patterns in the Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello staves, and 'F pedal' pointing to a long horizontal line at the bottom of the score.

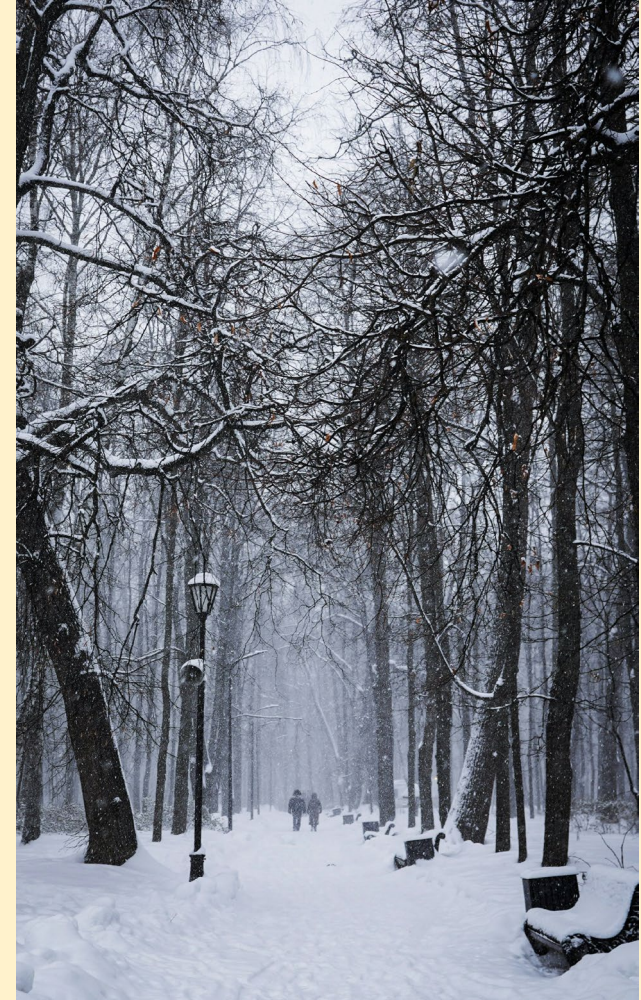
Bars 12-18: “In the severe blast of the horrible wind...”

The image shows a musical score for a solo violin, starting at bar 12. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The score consists of eight measures. The first four measures feature demisemiquaver arpeggios, and the last four measures feature demisemiquaver scales. The notes are written on a single staff in treble clef. The tempo is marked with a long arrow above the staff, indicating a sustained or accelerating feel. The text 'Solo Vln.' is written to the left of the staff. The text 'Demisemiquavers' is written above the first four measures, 'Arpeggios' is written above the first two measures, and 'Scales' is written above the last two measures. The text 'Dominant chord C minor' is written below the first measure.

- First entrance of the solo violin, playing demisemiquaver arpeggios and scales
- Each entry is higher than the last, so it is a sequence
- Dominant chord of C minor

Bars 19-25: “As we run, we constantly stamp our feet...”

- Second Ritornello section
- Repeated semiquavers
- F minor
- Moves through cycle of fifths



Bars 26-35:

- Second solo Episode
- Demisemiquaver scales
- Another cycle of keys

The musical score for bars 26-35 is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff, marked with the number 26, features a complex melodic line with demisemiquaver (eighth-note) scales. The subsequent staves include a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A soloist's part is indicated by the notation '(1 Solo*)' in the bass clef staff, showing a melodic line with slurs. The score is set in a key signature of three flats (E-flat major or C minor) and a 4/4 time signature.

Bars 33-38:

- Rapid alteration between soloist and orchestra leads to...



Bars 39-43:

- Third Ritornello section
- Returns to the original 'stabbing' chords from the beginning
- Eb major

The image displays a musical score for bars 39-43, marked as the third Ritornello section. The score is written in E-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features five staves: two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and a grand staff at the bottom. The first four staves (treble and bass) contain rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The grand staff at the bottom shows chordal accompaniment with figured bass notation (5 4 3, 6 5, 7b, 7 3b) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The number 40 is written above the first staff of the first system.

Bars 44-46:

- Third Episode, beginning with a rising sequence

The image displays a musical score for three staves. The top staff shows a rising sequence of notes with slurs, starting at bar 45. The middle staff features a solo section labeled "(1 Solo)" with a forte dynamic marking. The bottom staff shows a bass line with chords and notes. The score is set in a key signature of one flat (Bb major/C minor) and a 2/4 time signature.

- Another cycle of keys, moving from Eb major to C minor

Bars 47-55: “And our teeth chatter in the cold...”

Bars 56-59:

- Repeat of Ritornello 2
- F minor (moves through cycle of fifths)



Bars 60-end: Coda

- **Coda** = ending section
- Perfect cadence:
chord IV – V – I (twice) in
home key of F minor
- **Cadence** = final two
chords of a phrase or
section

The image displays a musical score for the Coda section, consisting of six staves. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one flat (F minor). The score is divided into three measures, each corresponding to a chord: IV, V, and I. The first measure (IV) features a bass line with a descending eighth-note pattern and a treble line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The second measure (V) features a bass line with a descending eighth-note pattern and a treble line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The third measure (I) features a bass line with a descending eighth-note pattern and a treble line with a descending eighth-note pattern. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

IV V I

Further Listening: Baroque

- 🎻 [*The Four Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi](#)
- 🎻 ['Badinerie' from Suite No. 2 by J.S. Bach](#)
- 🎻 [Songs - Purcell's 'Music for a While' and Handel's 'Rejoice Greatly'](#)
- 🎻 [George Frideric Handel's Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 5](#)
- 🎻 [Bach's 'Brandenburg' Concerto No. 5](#)