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Macquarie

PROGRAM

Vivaldi  Concerto for Strings in C major, RV 110
Vivaldi  Concerto in A minor, RV 356
Valentini  Concerto Grosso in A minor, Op. 7, No. 11
Tsintsadze  Six Miniatures on Georgian Folk Themes for Mandolin and Strings

Interval

Vivaldi  Mandolin Concerto in C major, RV 425
Paisiello  Mandolin Concerto in E-flat major
Vivaldi  Concerto in G minor, RV 315, Summer

Sydney
City Recital Hall
Wednesday 26 October, 7pm
Friday 28 October, 7pm
Saturday 29 October, 7pm
Wednesday 2 November, 7pm
Friday 4 November, 7pm
Matinee
Saturday 29 October, 2pm

Melbourne
Melbourne Recital Centre
Saturday 5 November, 7pm
Sunday 6 November, 5pm

Brisbane
Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Tuesday 8 November, 7:30pm

Chairman’s 11
Proudly supporting our guest artists.

The duration of this concert is approximately 2 hours including interval.
We kindly request that you switch off all electronic devices during the performance.

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On behalf of Macquarie Group, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to Avi Avital.

Music is a universal language with the ability to transcend barriers and connect people. The unique experience the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra showcases transports audiences to another place to enliven the sounds of both the past and present.

Macquarie appreciates the powerful impact music can have with the right support and we are delighted to continue our longstanding partnership with the Brandenburg. This year is Macquarie Group’s ninth year as principal partner and what makes this relationship so rewarding is our shared vision of infinite possibilities and commitment to the highest standards, underpinned by specialist skills and experience.

Paul Dyer has programmed a superb line-up of world-class performers in 2016. It is with great anticipation that we welcome back to the Brandenburg stage Avi Avital, after an extraordinary debut with the orchestra in 2014. Avi’s charisma, energy and passion are matched note for note by the Brandenburg.

It is a privilege to be a part of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra’s journey and we hope you enjoy the concert.

He’s back! I couldn’t wait to get Avi Avital, international Grammy Award-nominated superstar of the mandolin, back on the Brandenburg stage after such an amazing concert series in 2014. And this time we also head to Brisbane!

Avi is a phenomenal performer, he is generous, sensitive, charismatic, intense – and with a disarming musical depth that makes him the perfect fit with the Brandenburg.

When Avi plays the mandolin with its unique, distinct sound, he draws forth every nuance, wrings every emotion from each composition and the music carries throughout the concert hall and into the heart of all who listen. And this series, accompanied by a small orchestra of just nine, perfectly balances the beautiful sound of the mandolin.

In this series the orchestra will perform two compositions without Avi: Vivaldi’s Concerto for Strings in C Major and Valentini’s Concerto Grosso in C Major. The Vivaldi is an invigorating, spritely piece that will really set the mood and get the concert swinging! The Valentini is a rare jewel that I found in Italy and this will be the first time it has ever been heard in Australia.

I am thrilled to announce that we are joining Foxtel Arts as a broadcast partner. This collaboration will allow us to share our live concerts with audiences throughout Australia and complement the rich international orchestral content that is showcased every week on Foxtel Arts. Our partnership with Foxtel celebrates our shared commitment to musical excellence – nurturing talent, supporting innovation and making baroque music accessible to the widest possible audience.

As we near the end of another year of beautiful music and extraordinary concerts, I invite you to continue this discovery of music with me in 2017, as we explore all the joy and tragedy of heartbreak, passion, love and laughter the subscription year holds. If you haven’t yet received our 2017 subscription brochure, or if you are new to the Brandenburg, please contact our office and we will send one to you. The 2017 subscription season is also available on our website: www.brandenburg.com.au

We can’t wait to share these wonderful experiences with you; it’s set to be another year of beautiful music and extraordinary performances with great new artists from all over the world.

Now settle in and prepare for another unforgettable experience with Avi Avital and the Brandenburg.

Bill Marynissen
Head of Wealth Management, Banking and Financial Services

Paul Dyer AO
Artistic Director and Conductor
I am delighted to welcome you to the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra in this concert series with mandolin virtuoso Avi Avital.

Avital is famed for performing baroque and classical compositions on the mandolin, an instrument usually associated with folk music, but successfully re-positions the instrument as very much at home in the concert hall. His boundless energy and powerful engagement with both the audience and the orchestra is palpable.

Business relationships are also about engagement; mutually beneficial, tinged with the frisson of Tsintsadze and the satisfying harmony of Valentini.

It is our privilege to support the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Their innovation, passion and dedication is something we also aspire to in our business.

Gary Wingrove
CEO, KPMG Australia
In January 2013 Paul Dyer AO was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his “distinguished service to the performing arts, particularly orchestral music as a director, conductor and musician, through the promotion of educational programs and support for emerging artists” in recognition of his achievements as Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir.

Paul Dyer is one of Australia’s leading specialists in period performance styles. He founded the Orchestra in 1990 and has been Artistic Director since that time. Paul has devoted his performing life to the harpsichord, fortepiano and the chamber organ as well as conducting the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir.

Paul completed postgraduate studies in solo performance with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatorium in the Hague, performed with many major European orchestras and undertook ensemble direction and orchestral studies with Sigiswald Kuijken and Frans Brüggen.

Paul appears as soloist, continuo player and conductor with many major ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Opera Australia, Australian Youth Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Vancouver, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London.

Paul has performed with many international soloists including Andreas Scholl, Sylvia Sjödin, Marc Destrubé, Christoph Prégardien, Hidemi Suzuki, Manfredo Kraemer, Andrew Manze, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky and many others. In 1998 he made his debut in Tokyo with countertenor Derek Lee Ragin, leading an ensemble of Brandenburg soloists, and in August 2001 Paul toured the orchestra to Europe with guest soloist Andreas Scholl. As a recitalist, he has toured Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States.

Paul is an inspiring teacher and has been a staff member at various Conservatories throughout the world. In 1995 he received a Churchill Fellowship and he has won numerous international and national awards for his CD recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir, including the 1998, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2010 ARIA Awards for Best Classical Album. Paul is Patron of St Gabriel’s School for Hearing Impaired Children. In 2003 Paul was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for his services to Australian society and the advancement of music. In 2010 Paul was awarded the Sydney University Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement.

The Orchestra’s name pays tribute to the Brandenburg Concertos of J.S. Bach, whose musical genius was central to the baroque area. Celebrating their 27th anniversary in 2016, the Brandenburg continues to deliver exhilarating performances.

The Brandenburg has collaborated with such acclaimed and dynamic virtuosi as Andreas Scholl, Philippe Jaroussky, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Emma Kirkby, Andreas Staier, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Genevieve Lacey, Andrew Manze and more. Through its annual subscription series in Sydney and Melbourne, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra performs before a live audience in excess of 51,000 people, and hundreds of thousands more through national broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. The Orchestra also has a regular commitment to performing in regional Australia. Since 2003 the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra has been a member of the Major Performing Arts Group, which comprises 28 flagship national arts organisations supported by the Australia Council for the Arts. The Orchestra began regular touring to Queensland in 2015.

Since its beginning, the Brandenburg has been popular with both audiences and critics. In 1998 The Age proclaimed the Brandenburg “had reached the ranks of the world’s best period instrument orchestras”. In 2010 the UK’s Gramophone Magazine declared “the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is Australia’s finest period-instrument ensemble. Under their inspiring musical director Paul Dyer, their vibrant concerts and recordings combine historical integrity with electrifying virtuosity and a passion for beauty”.

The Australian proclaimed that “a concert with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is like stepping back in time, as the sounds of period instruments resurrect baroque and classical works with reverence and authority”.

The Brandenburg’s 19 recordings with ABC Classics include five ARIA Award winners for Best Classical Album (1998, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2010). In 2015 the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra was the recipient of the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award and in 2016 the Helpmann Award for Best Chamber Concert.

Discover more at brandenburg.com.au

...What stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile and laugh... there’s a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance.”

Sydney morning Herald
Avi Avital

The first mandolin soloist to be nominated for a classical Grammy Award, Avi Avital is one of the foremost ambassadors for his instrument. Passionate and “explosively charismatic” (New York Times) in live performance, he is a driving force behind the reinvigoration of the mandolin repertoire. More than 90 contemporary compositions, 15 of them concertos, have been written for him, while his inspired reimaginings of music for other instruments include the arrangements heard on his 2015 ECHO Klassik Award-winning Deutsche Grammophon recording, Vivaldi. Enhanced by his infectious spirit of adventure and the warm rapport he fosters with his audience, Avital’s pathbreaking championship of his instrument is taking the mandolin center stage. “The exciting part of being a classical mandolin player,” he says, “is that it opens a wide field for creative freedom. When I commission new pieces and engage with different musical styles, I feel that I am bringing to light new faces of this unique instrument, uncovering what is hiding there.”

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He previously recorded for such labels as SONY Classical and Naxos, winning a first ECHO Klassik Award for his 2008 collaboration on the former label with the David Orlowsky Trio. Avital’s inspired music-making has electrified audiences throughout Israel, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Americas. Recent highlights include dates at Beijing’s National Centre for the Performing Arts, London’s Wigmore and Royal Albert Halls, the Berlin Philharmonie, Zurich’s Tonhalle, Barcelona’s Palau de la Música Catalana, the Paris Philharmonie, and, with a live telecast on Arte, the Palais de Versailles. In early 2016, Avital undertook an international tour with a program of arrangements for mandolin, accordion and percussion drawn primarily from Between Worlds. After more than 70 performances in Europe, Asia and South America, the extensive U.S. portion of the tour took him from coast to coast and was capped by appearances in Boston’s Celebrity Series, at the National Gallery in Washington, DC, and at Manhattan’s 92nd Street Y.

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Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Concerto for Strings in C major, RV 110

Allegro
Largo
Allegro

Unlike most other musicians in the first half of the eighteenth century, Vivaldi was never employed on a long-term basis by either a member of the nobility or the church, but in his home town of Venice he was hailed as a teacher and violin virtuoso, and his services as a composer were in constant demand. A regular source of income for much of his life was the Pio ospedale della pietà, one of four orphanages in Venice run by the church where girls ‘were trained solely to excel in music’. Vivaldi worked for the Pietà for about forty years, on and off, as violin teacher and leader and conductor of the orchestra, and under his guidance the Pietà’s orchestra became one of the finest and most versatile ensembles in all of Italy. Its fame spread throughout Europe, and it became a major tourist attraction. No traveller to Venice left without hearing it.

Even when work as an opera composer and entrepreneur took him away from Venice for long periods and he had ceased being directly employed by the Pietà, Vivaldi regularly provided new concertos for its brilliant all-female orchestra. What to listen for

To modern audiences, a concerto normally means a work for a solo instrument accompanied by the orchestra, however the earliest concertos were for string orchestra in four parts, without a separate part for a solo violinist. Vivaldi composed about forty concertos of this type, alongside hundreds more for string orchestra with one or more soloists. For the majority of Vivaldi’s vast number of concertos, we have no information about where or when they were composed, or for whom or for what purpose. This one, however, is thought to have been composed between 1720 and 1724, and was probably intended for the concerts of instrumental music which were played after the Mass at the Pietà. Vivaldi re-used the second movement and some of the first in his Concerto for two trumpets (RV 537).

The mandolin

The mandolin is a member of the lute family. Different types of mandolin are used for playing different styles of music, but the type most commonly used in classical music and in European traditional music is the Neapolitan mandolin, developed in the 1740s. It has four double courses (pairs) of strings, tuned in fifths, and is played by being plucked with a plectrum. Its tuning is the same as the violin, so any music composed for solo violin is readily transferrable to the mandolin. The mandolin’s distinctive sound is partly due to the use of tremolo, whereby the player plucks a single pair of strings in a series of rapid down-and up-strokes, in order to sustain the sound.

The instrument became popular in the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly among the French aristocracy. Many late eighteenth century operas featured a mandolin serenade, like that by Mozart in Don Giovanni, and well over one thousand works for mandolin were composed in this period.

Its popularity declined rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century, but it was still popular in the south of Italy, where it was played by street musicians, and it became fashionable again among the Italian middle and upper classes from the middle of the 1800s. Towards the end of the century most Italian towns had a mandolin orchestra, and by World War I it had become one of the most widely played instruments in northern Europe and the United States.

The mandolin has been used in works by many classical composers. Beethoven played the mandolin and composed pieces for it, and it was also used by Verdi, Massenet, Mahler, Schoenberg, Webern, and Stravinsky.

THE MANDOLIN

AVI AVITAL

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Allegro
Largo
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# AVI AVITAL

**Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)**

Concerto in A minor, Op. 3 No. 6, RV 356 from *L’estro armonico*, arranged for mandolin by Avi Avital

- Allegro
- Largo
- Presto

Vivaldi became famous throughout Europe with the publication in 1711 of his Opus 3, a collection of twelve concertos that he called *L’estro armonico* (which means ‘harmonic inspiration’). This seminal work provided the model for concerto composition that was followed and built on by other composers from France to Germany to Italy for years to come.

It was not only these concertos’ originality in terms of musical form, but also the sheer energy and vigour of Vivaldi’s style expressed in forceful rhythms and endless variety that made them so fascinating. The writing for violin is dazzling, not surprising since Vivaldi was himself a virtuoso violinist.

**What to listen for**

Like many of Vivaldi’s concertos, the fast outer movements of this concerto are structured in what is called *ritornello* form. According to the Vivaldi scholar Michael Talbot, if one cannot say that Vivaldi invented *ritornello* form he was the first composer to fully develop it, most notably in his Opus 3 concertos. From the Italian ‘ritorno’, meaning ‘return’ or ‘refrain’, the movements are built around a refrain (*ritornello*) which is stated with variations by the full orchestra, alternating with episodes for the soloist which come out of the music the orchestra has just played, but taking it in another direction with different thematic material. The *ritornellos* and episodes are continually varied as they cycle through a number of different tonalities, giving the music its typical drive and energy.

Vivaldi concertos typically have very energetic outer movements separated by a lyrical slow movement, and this concerto follows that structure. The soloist dominates the second movement with the only moving part. One viola and three violin parts surround the solo violin with almost static chords, in what has been described as a ‘luminous aureole’. The concerto finishes with a short decisive final movement, featuring ever more bravura flourishes from the soloist.

**Giuseppe Valentini (1681 – 1753)**

Concerto Grosso in A Minor, Op. 7 No. 11

- Largo
- Allegro
- Grave
- Allegro

Like his contemporary Vivaldi, Valentini was a composer and virtuoso violinist. He was based in Rome for the whole of his career, which started early, as he was registered to work as a musician when he was just eleven years old. Despite making such an early start, he appears to have taken a long while to establish himself, and it was not until the publication of his Opus 7 collection of twelve concerti grossi in 1710, when he was about twenty-nine, that he began to receive steady work as a musician. He was taken up by two wealthy patrons, and at the peak of his career he was music director at eight churches (major churches in Italy in this period had their own orchestras). A mark of his success is that at one church he succeeded the great violinist and composer Corelli as director, although it was said by jealous colleagues that Valentini’s promotion hastened Corelli’s death!

Valentini published seven collections of instrumental music, and although he was employed as a composer for most of his working life these are his only compositions which survive apart from some cantatas. The music historian Charles Burney unkindly remarked in 1784 that his works ‘have been long since consigned to oblivion, without any loss to the public, or injustice to the author’, but performers and audiences rediscovering his music now would disagree.

**What to listen for**

The developments in concerto form pioneered by Vivaldi were not followed in Rome, where the concerto grosso form developed by Corelli was favoured. Instead of a single soloist, a concerto grosso featured a small group of solo instruments, which was set off in contrast against the rest of the orchestra.

Although Valentini inherited Corelli’s job, he did not model his composing style on that of Corelli. In the preface to the Opus 7 *concerti grossi* he commented that he ‘tried to write them in a new style, thinking that novelties do not usually displease’.

Although this work is labelled a *concerto grosso*, it is in fact a hybrid of the two prevailing forms of concerto. It demonstrates that in a time when there was an ongoing requirement for new music, the need to work with varying groups of instruments, players and situations gave composers scope to experiment and move away from conventions about how music should be composed.

This concerto grosso has six movements instead of the usual four, although in these concertos only the first four will be played. Valentini gives solo parts to all four violins and cello, dispensing with the distinction...
between solo group and larger orchestra in a way which was quite new and which must have influenced Vivaldi in his *L'estro armonico* concertos for four violins.

Often the first and second violins are paired, as are the third and fourth violins, which is the case in the opening slow movement. The second movement is a relentless allegro, marked by rushing ascending scales tossed about between the parts. It begins with the solo instruments, including the viola, entering in turn, imitating each other. One of Valentini's innovations was to include the viola in the solo group of instruments in a *concerto grosso*. Until the middle of the eighteenth century the viola was 'commonly regarded as of little importance in the musical establishment', as the music theorist Quantz put it in 1752, and it was relegated to a strictly accompanying role.

The third movement is essentially a series of slow chords, over which it was customary for the leader of the orchestra to improvise. This leads to another fast movement, which is a tour de force of bravura playing by each solo instrument in turn (though here the viola misses out), during which the other instruments drop back to accompanying chords. Its driving rhythm is very reminiscent of Vivaldi.

**Sulkhan Tsintsadze (1925 – 1991)**

*Six Miniatures on Georgian Folk Themes for Mandolin and Strings*

- Shepherd's Dance
- Suliko
- Indi-Mindi
- Lied
- Sachidao
- Dance Tune

Tsintsadze was a leading Georgian composer and teacher who is best known for his string quartets, although he also wrote operas, ballets, and symphonies. Georgia is a small country sandwiched between Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia and the Black Sea, and is often described as the crossroads between Europe and Asia. This has given it a rich cultural heritage, with Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Iranian and Russian influences.

Georgia's traditional music is based around vocal polyphony (music in which the melodic parts move independently) with a unique tuning system.

**What to listen for**

These short pieces come from several sets of miniatures which Tsintsadze composed between 1945 and 1955. Georgian folk themes formed part of his musical language, and some of these pieces include his transcriptions of Georgian folk melodies integrated with his own original material. The pieces retain the names of the particular folk songs that he used: ‘Suliko’ is a Georgian term of endearment and the piece is a love song. In ‘Sachidao’, which relates to the popular Georgian sport of wrestling, Tsintsadze uses strings to imitate the sound of Georgian folk instruments.

**INTERVAL**

**Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)**

*Mandolin Concerto in C major, RV 425*

- Allegro
- Largo
- Allegro

The Pietà was known for its early adoption of new instruments and playing techniques. According to the French diarist Charles de Brosse who heard the musicians of the Pietà in 1739, 'they sing like angels and play the violin, the flute, the organ, the oboe, the cello, and the bassoon; in short there is no instrument, however great it may be, that can daunt them'. Vivaldi’s oratorio *Juditha triumphans*, which he composed for the Pietà, contains an aria accompanied by mandolin, and he featured it in three of his concertos, including this one, all probably intended for the Pietà.

**What to listen for**

Vivaldi was a virtuoso violin player, and his compositions reflect an expectation of virtuosity from all solo players, regardless of the type of instrument. This concerto is justly one of the most famous pieces for mandolin, which Vivaldi treats much like a violin in its figuration. He is very sensitive to the mandolin's soft sound: in many of the solo passages in the first movement the viola is supported only by solo cello, while in the second movement *pizzicato* (plucked) strings echo the mandolin's sound.

**Giovanni Paisiello (1740 – 1816)**

*Mandolin Concerto in E flat Major*

- Allegro maestoso
- Larghetto grazioso
- Allegretto

Paisiello was a contemporary of Haydn and one of the most successful opera composers of the late eighteenth century. He was extremely prolific, writing over one hundred operas and a large amount of sacred vocal music.
Paisiello was educated at one of the conservatories in Naples, and produced a number of highly successful operas there, until he moved to St Petersburg in 1776 to become the music director for Catherine the Great. Italian opera was popular amongst the nobility in Russia in the eighteenth century, and Catherine maintained a small Italian opera company, not because she was fond of opera, but for its prestige value. She offered Paisiello a contract for three years but he ended up staying there for seven, during which he composed his comic opera The Barber of Seville (twenty-four years before Rossini’s much better known version). Catherine renewed his contract and increased his salary, but unbeknown to her he had been campaigning vigorously for the position of chief opera composer for the Neapolitan court. When he received news that he had the position in December 1783, he left Russia, pleading his wife’s ill health, and although he had been given a year’s paid leave, he never returned. Once he was back home other prestigious favours and appointments followed, which made him the most favoured musician in Naples.

The government of Naples was very unstable, and it changed hands a number of times between the Spanish and French around the turn of the century. Somehow, Paisiello was able to remain in favour with whichever side was in power. He was invited to Paris by Napoleon in 1802, and given a large salary, use of a carriage, and housing, in return for composing two operas a year and a military march each month. Although Paisiello returned to Naples after only two years in Paris and without fulfilling his side of the agreement, Napoleon made him a member of the Légion d’Honneur and gave him an annual pension.

What to listen for

Paisiello belongs to the Classical, rather than Baroque period, and his music is more akin to that of Mozart and Haydn, than to Vivaldi. His best works are considered to be his comic operas, which show a lightness of touch, with simple melodies and harmonies propelled by a strong sense of rhythm.

His instrumental works formed a very small section of his output, and it is possible that this concerto may in fact not be by Paisiello at all. It exists as a manuscript copy in the Paris National Library, and its title page states that its composer is unknown. It was attributed to him by an Italian mandolin player in the 1970s, but as Paisiello has not been well studied, more information may emerge which will decide the authorship more definitively. Most of Paisiello’s surviving instrumental music was for aristocratic employers, and requires no great technical facility. This concerto, however, requires a high technical ability in playing the mandolin, and is more likely to have been composed by a master player, which as far as we know Paisiello was not, although he did compose a mandolin serenade for his opera The Barber of Seville.

The first and third movements are elegant and cheerful. The second movement is a graceful largo in a minor key. In all movements the orchestra drops away to enable the soft-edged sounds of the mandolin to dominate.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Concerto in G minor, L’estate (Summer), RV 315, arranged for mandolin by Avi Avital

| Allegro non molto | Adagio | Presto |

The four concertos that make up The Four Seasons, along with eight other concertos, were published in 1725 as part of Vivaldi’s Opus 8, although he had actually composed them some time earlier, probably around 1718–20. It is not known for whom they were originally composed, but as this was a period of Vivaldi’s life when he was absent from Venice, it seems unlikely that they were for the girls at the Pietà. The concertos were instantly popular, but interest in Vivaldi’s works died with him and The Four Seasons concertos were more or less forgotten until the Vivaldi revival in the early decades of the twentieth century. They are now among the most popular pieces of classical music in the world.

What to listen for

While composers both before and since have attempted to describe the changes of the seasons in music, Vivaldi achieves this in astonishingly vivid and original detail. The concertos are a tour de force in the composition of representational music, that is, music which depicts scenes or sounds, most often those found in nature (known also as ‘programme music’). But Vivaldi was not just writing music that was purely descriptive: he was conforming to the baroque aesthetic that said that music should ‘not only please the ear, but … strike the Imagination, affect the Mind, and command the Passions’. So in the second movement we hear the buzzing of flies and mosquitoes but also feel the weariness of the shepherd, and hear the fury of the storm but shudder at its potential for destruction in the third. Vivaldi’s method of delivering both description and emotional content is brilliantly simple: in the fast movements he uses recurring ritornellos (refrains) played by the full orchestra which provide the scene or backdrop, while individual, transient events or sounds are portrayed in short musical episodes, usually by the solo violin.

Vivaldi was not content to leave the interpretation of the concertos to the listener’s imagination, indeed quite the contrary. When the concertos were first published, a sonnet entitled Sonetto Dimostrativo (literally ‘Demonstrative Sonnet’) was printed at the beginning of each concerto. The sonnets, probably written either by Vivaldi himself or one of his opera librettists, narrate the changing aspects of the seasons and each one consists of three main ideas which are reflected by the three movements of each concerto. Vivaldi clearly marked the scores to indicate which musical passages represent which verse, or in some places which line, of the sonnet.
I Allegro non molto

Languezza per il caldo

Sotto dura stagion dal sole accesa
Languir l’huom, langue le gregge, ed arde il pino;
Sciogli il cucco la voce,
e tosto intesa canta la Tortorella e il gardelino.

Zeffiretti dolci

Zeffiro dolce spira,
ma è contesa
muove Borea improvvisi al suo vicino;
E piange il Pastorel, perché sospesa
T Em fiera borasca, e il suo destino.

Langor do to the heat

Beneath a hard season burnt by the sun
man languishes, flocks languish, and the pine tree
is scorched;
the cuckoo lets loose its voice,
and at once the turtle dove and the finch sing in harmony.

Soft breezes

The soft breeze sighs,
but is confronted
by the sudden movement of the north wind nearby;
and the shepherd weeps, because unsettled, he fears
the fierce looming storm and his fate.

Il Adagio

Mosche e mossoni

Toglie alle membra lasse il suo riposo
Il timore de’ Lampi, e tuoni fieri
E de mosche, e mossoni il stuol furioso!

Flies and blowflies

Depriving his weary limbs of rest are
the fear of lightning and proud thunder,
and the furious swarm of flies and blowflies!

III Presto

Tempo impetuoso d’estate

Ah che purtroppo i suoi timor sono veri,
Tuona e fulmina il ciel e grandinoso
Tronca il capo alle spiche e ai grani alteri.

Stormy summer weather

Ah, unfortunately his worst fears are true,
the heavens thunder and flash, and hailstones
strike the heads off the stalks of the tall wheat.
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