Antonio Vivaldi and the "Four Seasons" explained

Autor: Ángeles Saavedra

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi (Venice, 4 of March of 1678 – Vienna, 28 of 1741 July) was a composer and late Baroque musician, one of the pinnacles of the Baroque, of Western and universal music, his skills are reflected in having laid the concert’s foundations the most important of his time.

Vivaldi was nicknamed *il prete rosso* (“the reddish priest”) for being a catholic priest and red-haired. He composed 770 works, between which 477 concerts and 46 operas are told.

Vivaldi loved the life intensely, so to perpetuate the deep emotion that the transformation of the nature woke up on him, he created the concerts for violin called the Four Seasons, leaving in writing in the original of the score the description of the most beautiful scenes of the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, each of these concerts consists of three movements, two fast ones separated in contrast to a slow one and expressive, the most descriptive scenes are the movements.

**The Four Seasons (Musical Work) explained:**
Spring

After a long winter in which the snow covers in white the great landscape, the spring arises like a colorful explosion, the flowers, the butterflies and the song of the birds initiates with a joy hymn whereupon this beautiful station is received.

The birds add themselves to the general joy with their trills and warblings (three solo violins). Afar the smooth murmur of a water little stream singsong is listened to, also in spring there are terrible heavy downpours announced with the lightning and the thunderclap.

The second movement draws a scene where a little shepherd has remained slept, the smooth wind produces a beautiful murmur and the violin solo describes the sweet and calm dream of the little shepherd. In the third movement a popular celebration is described with jubilant songs and dances because of the Spring’s arrival.

Summer

It is the heat’s season, Vivaldi tells us that the high temperatures affect men and animals alike with a slowness sensation and doze that it describes musically this way, also describes to us how the cucu in the warm nights of summer sings rhythmically, we also listen to the languid song of a lark in the warm summer sunset.

In the second movement a farmer has returned home, after an arduous day of work, tired tries to sleep but a thunderclap in the sky announces a storm that interrupts his dream, this scene repeats itself several times and it is united to the third movement that describes the forces of the nature untied in a terrible storm.

Autumn

The Autumn is a concert full of joy because the time speaks about the harvest time, and when sowing good seed obtains good fruits and this is reason for great happiness.

Suddenly all the joy is interrupted and changes the rhythm of music and one quiet melody is heard. In the celebrations always there is somebody who eats and drinks too much and soon it looks for a place to take a nap calmly.

In the Autumn the leaves of the trees get dry little by little and when they are very dry, impelled by the caress of the wind, give off and fall to form a crisp carpet when being stepped on. The harpsichord interprets a melody that makes us imagine the capricious fall of the dry leaves.

Third movement. To go hunting was the favorite sport on Vivaldi’s time. A cheer and playful melody speaks to us about the hunters who gather in the dawn between laughter and jokes and get
ready to initiate the great hunting. The violin solo, accompanied by the first hoop of the orchestra, imitates the sound of the hunting horn and thus a series of dialogues between the violinist and the orchestra follows one another, describing the adventure to find, persecute and to reach a prey.

**Winter**

The first notes describe with a smooth and persistent rhythm the slow fall of the snowflakes and the fast trill of the violins describe the teeth chattering caused by the intense cold. We now listen to a gust of wind that shakes the fall of the snowflakes in the first violin solo. Little by little it increases the force of music to end with a great theme.

The second movement is called Rain. It speaks to us of a man who is happy, safe from the intense cold next to the heat of his chimney while he observes as the crystals of their window are struck by little drops of a winter rain, we listen to the rhythmical falling, beside this rhythm the violin solo sings a beautiful melody that describes the happiness and the heat of home.

Third movement: After a first violin solo, the orchestra appears imitating a smooth burst of wind that grows little by little until reaching great force; when finishing, the terrible winter storm arrives because of the shock of the Mediterranean winds and the snow-drifts of the North are interpreted by the violin solo and the orchestra, finishing in a beautiful ending.

“So it is the winter, but it also has great beauties”. With these words Antonio Vivaldi finishes his great creation, the cycle of the Four Seasons.

**Video: Vivaldi's Four Seasons Musical Work**

**Notes:**


*Imagen de OwlGem via Flickr*