THE FOUR SEASONS

ANTONIO VIVALDI ARRANGED BY JUSTIN BIRD



FOUR VIOLIN CONCERTI ARRANGED FOR PIANO

FEATURING ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
OF SONNETS AND CAPTIONS

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Self-Published November 2016 Contact justin@justinbirdmusic.com for information. \sim www.justinbirdmusic.com \sim

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Preface

Apart from some incomplete arrangements of select movements, and many recorded versions, there are two complete piano versions printed prior to this one. A recent one by Roberto Novegno, and an older one by Guido Farina published by Ricordi in 1956. Pierre Gouin's organ arrangement also deserves acknowledgement for being a wonderful arrangement accurately representing Vivaldi's work. Farina's version is also a worthy attempt, but rewrites passages too often, often under-representing or over-shooting the pianist's ability. Other solutions to logistical problems result in distasteful octave displacements and un-pianistic writing. This edition does not take such liberties nor make such detrimental sacrifices.

The Four Seasons have a lot of opportunity for failure as an arrangement. The autograph does not exist, and the two copies that do have some differences. The current full scores disagree on what one should play, and even my survey of around 50 of the major recordings are still divided, with up to five different versions for one passage. Most solutions have been settled with a majority ruling from the vast discography for this work, and often are not what our modern ears are used to tonally. This may be reason why there is such disparity in the first place. Overlapping string parts, with second violins sometimes higher than firsts, ornaments, stringed instrument articulation, are all traps other arrangers fall in, but in the present arrangement, much has been done to achieve the important balance between representing the original version, and still being a convincing and playable solo piano work.

Prior arrangements are sometimes tempted with filling out empty textures, but this version holds dearly the sparse and stark fragility of the soloist's texture, enabling the full contrast of the concertare. Some markings are intended more for strings or winds rather than piano, and have been adapted accordingly. Some examples are portarto – a slur with staccato notes – repeated notes without changing the bow direction resulting in a gentle, lightly detached, semi-legato. Long sustained notes played by strings are replayed on the piano because of their decay. Fast repeated notes are easy for a stringed instrument, and playing alternative octaves in a tremolo style on the piano is the best way to imitate the sound.

In the original edition published in 1725, Vivaldi's score follows four sonnetto dimostrativo, illustrative poems written possibly by Vivaldi himself. As well as accurate letter references to these sonnets, there are also additional captions Vivaldi provided in the scores, both of which you will find in the present edition. The cycle is concerned with humankind's relationship with nature. United in celebration is the nature-centered idealism in Spring and Autumn, and danger dominates the people-centered Summer and Winter. I hope you enjoy getting to know this exciting marriage of music and text on the piano as much as I have.

Justin Bird November 2016

Austin But

La Primavera - Spring

I. Allegro

- A. Spring has arrived merrily
- B. the birds hail her with happy song
- C. and, meanwhile, at the breath of the Zephyrs the streams flow with a sweet murmur:
- D. thunder and lightning, chosen to proclaim her, come covering the sky with a black mantle,
- E. and then, when these fall silent, the little birds return once more to their melodious incantation:

II. Largo e pianissimo sempre

F. and so, on the pleasant, flowery meadow, to the welcome murmuring of fronds and trees, the goatherd sleeps with his trusty dog beside him.

III. Allegro

G. To the festive sound of a shepherd's bagpipe, nymphs and shepherds dance beneath the beloved roof at the joyful appearance of spring.

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Concerto No. 1 from The Four Seasons

La Primavera - Spring - I

Op. 8 No. 1, RV 269

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird







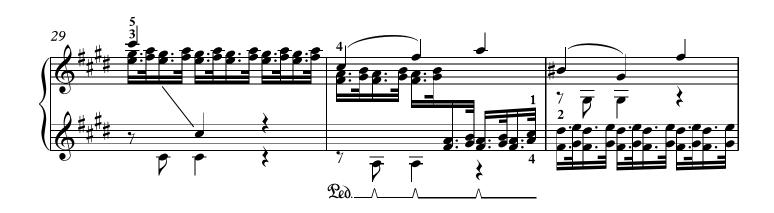




La Primavera - Spring - II









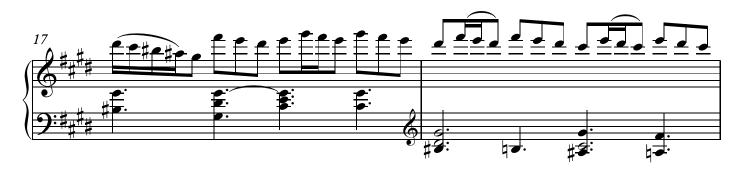




La Primavera - Spring - III





















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L'Estate - Summer

I. Allegro non moto

- A. Beneath the harsh season inflamed by the sun,

 Man languishes, the flock languishes, and the pine tree burns;
- B. the cuckoo unleashes its voice and, as soon as it is heard,
- C. the turtle dove sings and the goldfinch too.
- D. Sweet Zephyrus blows, but Boreas suddenly opens a dispute with his neighbor,
- E. and the shepherd weeps, for he fears a fierce storm looming and his destiny;

II. Adagio

F. the fear of lightning and fierce thunder and the furious swarm of flies and blowflies deprives his weary limbs of repose.

III. Presto

G. Oh alas! his fears are only too true

The sky thunders, flares, and with hailstones severs the heads of the proud grain crops.

Concerto No. 2 from The Four Seasons

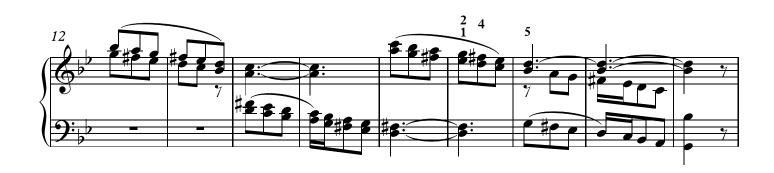
L'Estate - Summer - I

Op. 8 No. 2, RV 315

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird

Allegro non molto







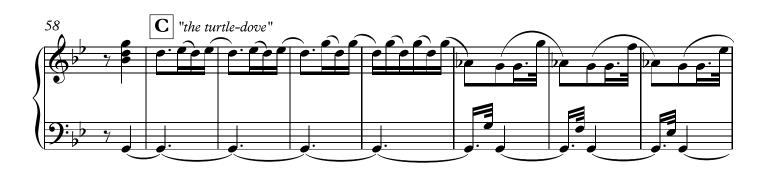






























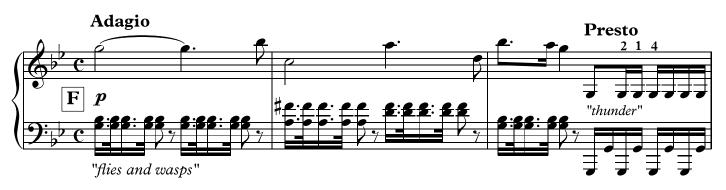




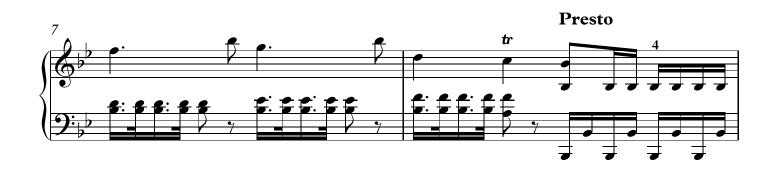


L'Estate - Summer - II

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird











L'Estate - Summer - III

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird **Presto** "violent summer weather"













L'Autunno - Autumn

I. Allegro

- A. The peasant celebrates in dance and song the sweet pleasure of the rich harvest
- B. and, fired by Bacchus' liquor
- C. many end their enjoyment in slumber.

II. Adagio molto

D. The air, which, fresher now, lends contentment, and the season which invites so many to the great pleasure of sweetest slumber, make each one abandon dance and song.

III. Allegro

- E. At the new dawn the hunters set out on the hunt with horns, guns and dogs.
- F. The wild beast flees, and they follow its track;
- G. already bewildered, and wearied by the great noise of the guns and dogs, wounded,
- H. it threatens weakly to escape, but, overwhelmed, dies.

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Concerto No. 3 from The Four Seasons

L' Autunno - Autumn - I















L' Autunno - Autumn - II

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird











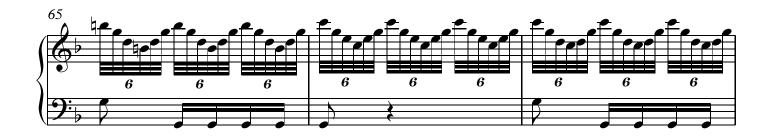
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L' Autunno - Autumn - III

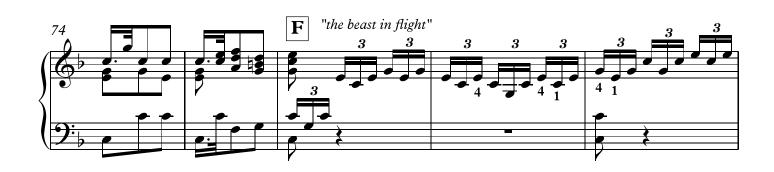
Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird



















L'Inverno - Winter

I. Allegro non molto

- A. To shiver, frozen, amid icy snows,
- B. at the harsh wind's chill breath;
- C. to run, stamping one's feet at every moment;
- D. with one's teeth chattering on account of the excessive cold;

II. Largo

E. to pass the days of calm and contentment by the fireside while the rain outside drenches a hundred others:

III. Allegro

- F. to walk on the ice, and with slow steps
- G. to move about cautiously for fear of falling;
- H. to go fast, slip, fall to the ground;
- I. to go on the ice again and run fast
- J. until the ice cracks and breaks open;
- K. to hear, as they sally forth through the iron-clad gates,
- L. Sirocco, Boreas, and all the winds at war. This is winter, but of a kind to bring joy.

Concerto No. 4 from The Four Seasons L'Inverno - Winter - I

Op. 8 No. 2, RV 297

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird



























L'Inverno - Winter - II

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) Arranged by Justin Bird E Largo



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L'Inverno - Winter - III

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)











