

PROGRAM NOTES

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741): The Four Seasons (Le quattro stagioni)

The center of concerto composition shifted, on the death of Torelli, from Bologna to Venice, where Vivaldi brought the trend of the concerto grosso with a concertino of several instruments to one of a single instrument—that is—the solo concerto.

The concerto was the principal form of orchestral music in Vivaldi's time. There were two principal types. One, the concerto grosso, was based on the opposition of a large group (concerto grosso) to a small group (concertino). The other, the solo concerto, reduced the small group to a single instrument. The four concertos of Vivaldi's seasons are not pure examples of either type. Sometimes there is a concertino of two or three instruments and at other times the solo violin is featured, often in a virtuoso manner.

The four concertos of The Seasons are part of a collection of twelve concertos, The Strife between Harmony and Invention. Vivaldi's opus eight, was first published in 1730. They were written before this date as indicated in the dedication to Count Venceslao Morzin, which states that the Count had heard these pieces with approval long before.

The Seasons are frankly programmatic in a most direct and naive way. The score of each concerto is preceded by a descriptive sonnet, probably written by the composer, which describes what is being depicted in the music. The various lines of the poem are written above the appropriate places in the score.

The following is a free translation of the sonnets as placed in the score.

Spring

Allegro

Spring comes joyously
Hailed by birds in happy song.
The Zephyr's breezes play on the fountains
Which reply in murmuring sweet sounds
Soon the sky darkens
And Spring's heralds—lightning and thunder—come
The storm subsides and the birds
Renew their enchanting song.

Largo

On the verdant meadow
While the foliage rustles gently
The goatherd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him.

Allegro

To rustic pipes and their festive sounds
Nymphs and shepherds dance
Adorned in the brilliance of spring.

Summer

Allegro non molto

In the season of enervating heat
Man and beast and the trees alike all droop.
The cuckoo's call is soon joined
By the song of the turtledove and the finch.
Sweet zephyrs are rudely driven
By contending Northern winds.
The shepherd laments in dread
Of the havoc of the tempest.

Adagio

He is weary and knows no rest

Presto

Assailed by lightning and thunder
And by swarms of infuriated flies.

Autumn

Allegro

With song and dance, the peasants mark
The happy harvest time,
Drink deep from the cup of Bacchus
And end their joy in slumber.

Adagio molto

Now one by one they cease their sport
The mild and temperate season
Induce sleep in all.

Allegro

At dawn the hunter
With horn and hound
Flushes his prey. The chase is on.
The tiring and bewildered beast
Assailed by dogs and the din of guns
Falls fatigued, and wounded, dies.

Winter

Allegro non molto

Shivering amid mounds of snow
Pierced by cruel winds
We run and stamp our feet
And our teeth chatter from the cold.

Largo

We pass contented days by the fireside
While those outside are drenched by rain.

Allegro

We walk on the ice
Gently and timorously;
We adventure more bravely
And fall to the ground.
But we get up and run again.
The ice breaks, cracking wide open.
From behind closed doors we hear
The south-east wind, the northwind
And all the winds at war.
Such is winter, but it has its pleasures.

-Hoyle Carpenter

Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764): Concerto Op.7, No.5 for Violin, Strings and Continuo (c. 1737)

Born in Lyon in 1697, Jean-Marie Leclair quickly developed his skills on the violin and became a traveling virtuoso, performing in France, Germany and Italy. During his travels he met the foremost Italian violinist of the age, Pietro Locatelli, whose musical style influenced him greatly, as did the virtuoso Italian concertos of Arcangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi. Yet in spite of his virtuosity and deep familiarity with Italian music – even earning him the nickname “The Corelli of France,” Leclair remained French to the core.

The six concertos of Leclair’s Opus 7, dedicated to Locatelli, are clearly based on his famous Italian examples, but with a strong personal style that incorporates characteristic French airs and dance forms. The fifth in the set is especially representative of the composer’s practice of using the typical Italian style of three movements, alternating tutti and solo sections. They are adjusted in tempo to vary the moods and call for

refinement and precision without excessive ornamentation or flashiness. Although French inspiration can be heard in the lilting airs and gentle dances in many of Leclair's slow movements, the adagio of No. 5 is typically Italian, bearing the shadow of Corelli towards the end.

In spite of leading a cosmopolitan life and a prestigious post at the French royal court, Leclair lived a somewhat restless life. In 1758, after the break-up of his second marriage, he purchased a small house in a dangerous Parisian neighborhood, where he was murdered outside his front door in October, 1764. The official investigation of Leclair's suspicious death incriminated both his nephew and his second wife, Roussel (the couple had lived in separate households since the breakup), but neither was ever formally charged with his murder.

-Steve Siegel

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): Concerto in the Italian Style (BWV 971) (pub. 1735)

Fortunately we do not have to give definite answers to those who demand to be told who is the greatest poet, scientist, ball-player or whatever. If one is pressed to name the greatest composer, Bach will certainly be one of the most likely choices. His music flourishes in concert halls, churches and musical homes. He survives being switched-on, swingled, jazzed, boogied, synthesized and Stokowskied. After three hundred years, Bach is alive and well.

While genius may be ultimately unexplainable, there are some factors that helped Bach to his great achievement. He was born at exactly the right time, when the rising tide of harmony met the waning line of counterpoint. With Bach, these focuses are fused in perfect equilibrium. This interpenetration of musical forces has happened only once in music history. His melodies have tremendous linear energy while, at the same time, they imply cogent harmonic movement. Or to put it another way, his harmonies have powerful energy in chord progressions but are linear in all parts. His manner of writing absorbed the best of Germany, France and Italy into a convincing personal style that was made possible by the possession of a superb technical craftsmanship.

Writing in 1773, C.P.E. Bach, one of J.S.B.'s musical sons said this: "No master of music was apt to pass through this place (Leipzig) without making my father's acquaintance and letting himself be heard by him. The greatness that was my father's in composition, in organ and clavier playing, was far too well-known for a musician of reputation to let the opportunity slip of making the closer acquaintance of this great man if it was at all possible."

Musicians of the eighteenth century were interested in the differences in national styles. Bach, who readily assimilated any style, took care to treat them separately rather than unite them as Couperin did and indicated as "les goûts réunis." Bach, always one to proceed according to a planned logical procedure, portrays two national styles in his Clavier Übung II, which contains two compositions, the Italian Concerto and the French Overture. In addition to depicting these two styles, he adapts to the harpsichord two genres that were traditionally reserved for orchestral performance.

Johann Scheibe, a younger contemporary of Bach writes: "Finally, I must mention that concertos are also written for one instrument alone...In such pieces the basic structure is kept the same as in concertos for many instruments...Pre-eminent among published musical works is a clavier concerto of which the author is the famous Bach in Leipzig...Since this piece is arranged in the best possible fashion for this kind of work...who is there who will not admit at once that this clavier concerto is to be regarded as a perfect model for a well-designed solo concerto?"

Baroque concerto style was built around "terrace dynamics"—that is, the contrast between large and small groups, which, in turn, means contrast between loud and soft. A concerto for solo harpsichord makes use of the two keyboards, one loud and one soft. In the first and last movements of the Italian Concerto, they answer each other. In the middle movement, there is a long ornate melody on one manual supported by accompaniment on the other.

-Hoyle Carpenter

Musicians:

Cyrus Beroukhim, violin – His performances of Bach and Vivaldi Concerti with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields were heralded as "flawless and sensitive" by the Zeitung im Espace Mittelland (Switzerland). Mr. Beroukhim has

been a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra since 2009 where he has performed as soloist in the Stravinsky Concerto. He also plays regularly with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, New York Symphonic Ensemble, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and several Baroque and chamber orchestras throughout the United States. He has performed as a member of the Zukovsky Quartet, the Rose Quartet and America's Dream Chamber Artists. He holds the doctorate from The Juilliard School and is Steinhardt Associate Professor of Violin at New York University.

Katie Hyun, violin – Katie has performed as soloist with the Houston Symphony, Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the Columbia Festival Orchestra as well as the Busan Sinfonietta and Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra in South Korea. She is founder and director of the Quodlibet Ensemble and founding member of the award-winning Amphion String Quartet which was a member of Lincoln Center's CMS Two. On Baroque violin, she frequently appears with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians and New York Baroque. She holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, SUNY Stonybrook and the Yale School of Music.

Elizabeth Pitcairn, violin – As a soloist, Elizabeth Pitcairn has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra and orchestras across the country and abroad in Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria, also in China, Brazil, Mexico, Canada. She has performed recitals in many of the same countries. During the summers Elizabeth performs chamber music at the Luzerne Music Center in upstate New York where she directs the summer music camp and festival. A graduate of the U. of Southern CA, she served as Concertmaster of the New West Symphony and taught at both U.S.C and the Colburn School.

William Hakim, viola – William Hakim has performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. He is a member of the String Orchestra of New York City (SONYC), the New York Symphonic Ensemble and performs with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, Sonos Chamber Orchestra, Orion Music Ensemble and Metropolis Ensemble. As a jazz player, he has performed at the Jazz Standard, Le Poisson Rouge and the Iridium. He is currently a doctoral candidate at City University of New York.

Alberto Parrini, cello - Born in Italy, Alberto Parrini has been principal cellist of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic since 2007 and a member of the American Symphony since 2010; he also performs regularly with the New York Philharmonic and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. In 2008, 2010 and 2011 he toured Japan as principal cellist of the New York Symphonic Ensemble. He performed throughout the U.S. with the American Chamber Players and with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. He toured with the White Oak Dance Project and performed with Continuum, Proteus Ensemble, New Jersey Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra and Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra. He teaches at Princeton University.

Motomi Igarashi, bass – Motomi has appeared as a double bass, lirone, violone, and viola da gamba player, not only in the United States, but also in Japan and Europe. She currently plays with The American Classical Orchestra, the BEMF Orchestra, Concert Royal, Foundling Baroque Orchestra, Philomel, the New York Collegium, and Bach Collegium Japan. After graduating from the Juilliard School in 1992, she spent several years in France, intensive studying Baroque style and the viola da gamba, and playing with Marianne Muller, Wieland Kuijken, and Paolo Pandolfo, among others. She also attended Accademia d'amore in Bremen and has studied lirone with Erin Headley. She plays the viola da gamba and Lirone as a member of Anima.

Lionel Party, harpsichord – A native of Santiago, Chile, Lionel Party studied with Elena Waiss at the Escuela Moderna de Musica, graduating in 1965. In 1966 he was awarded a Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst scholarship by the West German government to study piano with Rosl Schmid and harpsichord with Hedwig Bilgram at the Musikhochschule of Munich. In 1970 Mr. Party came to The Juilliard School to study harpsichord with Albert Fuller first as a Fulbright scholar and then as recipient of a Juilliard Alumni grant. He obtained his doctor of musical arts from Juilliard in 1976. Mr. Party has played solo recitals in New York City's major concert halls including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Frick Collection, Alice Tully Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 92nd St. Y – as well as Boston, Washington and other U.S. cities. He has made numerous appearances with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Waverly Consort, Solisti New York, among other ensembles.

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