Solo concerto – Baroque Period

Vivaldi – *Spring (from The Four Seasons)*

Vivaldi composed more than 400 concertos. *The Four Seasons* consists of four solo concertos for violin, string orchestra and continuo. These are descriptive works based on poems describing the seasons of the year. Vivaldi breaks up each poem into sections and prints them throughout the score, indicating those points were the music vividly illustrates the ideas in the poem. Here is a listening guide to the first movement of *Spring*. The overall form of this movement is **ritornello**.

Watch the movement here:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Solo concerto – Baroque Period

Vivaldi – *Spring (from The Four Seasons)*

First movement: *Allegro*

Tutti 1 *Joyful Spring is here . . .*

RITORNELLO

The poem's opening words are perfectly matched by Vivaldi's joyful, rhythmic ritornello theme (in the tonic key, E major):



EPISODE

Solo 1 *Birds merrily greet it with their happy songs.*
The solo violin is joined by two others from the ripieno group, their trills and decorations imitating birdsong.

RITORNELLO

Tutti 2 A lengthy tutti in four sections:
a) Part *x* of the ritornello theme, in the tonic key;
b) *Streams murmur sweetly, caressed by gentle breezes.*
c) Part *x* of the ritornello, in the dominant key (B major);
d) *The sky darkens as thunder and lightning announce a storm.*

EPISODE

Solo 2 Agitated semiquaver triplets on the solo violin; the ripieno instruments play shuddering *tremolos*.

RITORNELLO

Tutti 3 Part *x* of the ritornello, in the relative minor (C♯ minor).

EPISODE

Solo 3 *When all is quiet once more, the birds*
Again take up their melodious songs.

RITORNELLO

Tutti 4 The opening of the ritornello theme – clearly recognizable in rhythm, though the melody is altered.

EPISODE

Solo 4 Solo violin and continuo only.

RITORNELLO

Tutti 5 The last half of the ritornello theme, in the tonic key.

Now complete the following worksheet on this movement

LIVEWORKSHEETS