

Why should you listen to Vivaldi's "Four Seasons"?

Task 1. Watch video.

<https://youtu.be/Xcpc8VDsv3c>

Task 2. Choose the correct answer.

1. Approximately when did Vivaldi compose his Four Seasons?

- Early 1600's
- Early 1700's
- Early 1800's
- Early 1900's

2. What is the featured solo instrument in The Four Seasons concertos?

- Flute
- Piano
- Guitar
- Violin

3. What is the term for instrumental music that has a story to tell?

- Opera
- Program music
- Sonata
- Song

4. What other superstar composer lived at the same time as Vivaldi?

- Tchaikovsky
- Mozart
- Bach
- Beethoven

5. In what country did Vivaldi live?

- France
- Italy
- Germany
- Poland

Task 3. Think and answer.

- ✓ In music, the term “key” refers to a particular set of notes that are emphasized, thereby giving a composition a particular mood. In the broader realm of music theory, there are many different keys, though the two that are most frequently used – and easiest to hear – are major keys and minor keys. Major keys tend to sound bright and happy; minor keys tend to sound dark and sad. Listening to Vivaldi’s music, try to notice when the music shifts from one of those keys to another. Do those shifts help you to keep track of what seasonal scene is being captured? (Note: just because something is played fast or loud doesn’t mean it’s necessarily happy; also, slow or quiet isn’t always sad.)
- ✓ In the lesson, there was a reference to “melodies that pop back up later in a piece to remind us of where we’ve been.” This is a compositional trick called “ritornello,” which Vivaldi especially liked to use in fast movements. Listen to a recording of one of the fast movements of one of The Four Seasons, and notice how the opening melodies tend to return. Vivaldi isn’t the only composer to use this trick; in fact, a lot of popular and traditional music even today does this at times. What other music can you think of that tends to repeat itself this way, and is there anything different about how that music does it, in comparison to Vivaldi?
- ✓ Vivaldi was composing at a time in history when there had been major improvements to the ways in which string instruments were made, allowing them to sound stronger and be capable of playing even more difficult music. In part for this reason, he chose to focus nearly all of his compositions on strings instruments, such as violins and cellos. In what other ways have technological developments brought new ideas into the music business, even in recent years?