

# SPRING

Read the following information then answer the questions in your jotter.  
You must write in full sentences.

The Four Seasons is a set of four violin concertos by Antonio Vivaldi. Composed in 1723, The Four Seasons is Vivaldi's best known work, and is among the most popular pieces of music from the Baroque period.

The Four Seasons are an example of programme music. Programme music is music which tells a story or paints a picture in sound. Each concerto in The Four Seasons is named after a season. The texture of each concerto is varied, each resembling its respective season. For example, 'Winter' is peppered with silvery pizzicato notes from the high strings, calling to mind icy rain, whereas 'Summer' evokes a thunderstorm in its final movement, which is why the movement is often dubbed 'Storm'.

At the time of writing The Four Seasons, the modern concerto had not yet been defined. Vivaldi's original arrangement for solo violin with string quartet accompaniment helped to define the form. A concerto is now known to be a solo instrument and accompanying orchestra.

Each concerto ('Spring', 'Summer', 'Autumn' and 'Winter') is in three movements, with a slow movement between two faster ones. We call the speed of music the 'tempo'. Below is the opening line of music from the first movement of Spring.



Notice the word Allegro above the first bar. This is the tempo. Allegro means 'lively' and tells the performer that they should be playing the piece of music quite fast. In the 'Spring' concerto both the first and third movements are Allegro and the second movement is Largo. Largo means broadly and tells the performer to play slowly.

Take another look at the line of music above. Notice the *f* symbol below the first note. This is a dynamic marking. Dynamics tell the performer how loud or how quiet to play. *f* means 'forte' which tells the performer to play loudly. Other dynamic markings are *p* (piano) quietly, *mp* (mezzo piano) moderately quiet, *mf* (mezzo forte) moderately loud.

Take a close look at the first note of the music, what do you notice? This is called an anacrusis. An anacrusis is a note which happens before the first full bar of music. It sounds like an upbeat.

- Q1) Who composed The Four Seasons?
- Q2) When was The Four Seasons composed? Which musical period was this?
- Q3) The Four Seasons is an example of programme music, what is programme music?
- Q4) How does Vivaldi paint the picture of 'Winter' and 'Summer' through sound?
- Q5) In class you listened to the first movement of 'Spring', how did Vivaldi paint the picture of Spring through his music?
- Q6) What is a modern concerto?
- Q7) What does tempo mean?
- Q8) Allegro and Largo are two types of tempo, what do these mean?
- Q9) Each concerto has three movements, describe the difference in tempo of each movement.
- Q10) What are dynamics?
- Q11) Name four types of dynamics.
- Q12) Put the following dynamic marking in order from quietest to loudest: *mf p f mp*
- Q13) What is unique about the first note in the music?
- Q14) What is an anacrusis and what does an anacrusis sound like?