

1396. Vivaldi: Der Sturm

Backgrounds Of S. Radic

The Four Seasons (Italian: *Le quattro stagioni*) is probably the most famous work by Antonio Vivaldi. It consists of four violin concertos with extra-musical programmes; each concert portrays a season. The individual concerts are preceded by a sonnet - presumably written by Vivaldi himself - and continuous letters in front of the individual lines and at the appropriate places in the score assign the verbal description of the music. "Vivaldi had already repeatedly experimented with extra-musical programmes, which are often reflected in his titles, but the precise interpretation of individual passages in the score is unusual for him. His experience as a virtuoso violinist gave him access to particularly effective playing techniques; as an opera composer he had developed a strong sense for effects - both benefited him here. "As the title suggests, it is above all natural phenomena that are imitated - gentle winds, violent storms and thunderstorms are elements that appear in all four concertos. In addition, there are various bird sounds and even a dog, other human activities such as hunting, a peasant dance, ice skating including stumbling and falling down to the heavy sleep of a drunk.

The work dates from 1725 and is preserved in two printed editions, which apparently appeared more or less simultaneously in Amsterdam and Paris.

Vivaldi published these four concertos in 1725 at the beginning of his collection, Op. 8, under the title *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (then spelling, today: *invenzione*, "The Venture of Harmony and Invention"). Other concertos in this collection also contain poetic programmes, including those with numbers 5 (*La tempesta di mare*, "The Storm on the Sea"), 6 (*Il piacere*, "The Pleasure") and 10 (*La caccia*, "The Hunt").

By this time, its concert form had already become standardised into three movements. The charm of



the Four Seasons also lies in the contradiction between a dramatic, extra-musical programme on the one hand and the purely musical demands of proportion and balance on the other; Vivaldi comes to very different solutions in the twelve individual movements. "Der Sturm is the third movement of the concerto "Sommer". The tone painting of the thunderstorm in the last movement consists on a purely musical level only of virtuosic scales, chord breaks and tone repetitions, which only coagulate once in the middle into something similar to a theme, but which immediately disintegrates again. (Source: Wikipedia)

Here we play the original score, which is based on the CD sound examples of two very distinctive versions: The "Amadeus Electric String Quartet", four young ladies from Romania with a lot of temperament - and two cello players from Croatia "2Cellos", who are currently mixing up the cello scene. And then I even found a midi recording of JOEL MARTINEZ, a studio musician from California, which I finally put on the MWP list! The verse 2 is the original in G minor - and very hard to play (serves more as a study object) - and a very simplified verse 1 in A minor for keyboard and organ - with a very curious style program (see style info)!



3/4-Disco-Beat-Special, T=150

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The top two staves are Trem. Str. and Driv. Gt., both in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The third staff is Dist. Gt. in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The fourth staff is Bass in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The fifth staff is Drums in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The score is divided into two main sections: Main 1 (measures 1-4) and Main 2 (measures 5-8). In Main 1, the drums play a 4/4 disco beat pattern. In Main 2, the drums play a different pattern, including a 'small crash' in measure 7. A graphic below the drum staff indicates the 4/4-Disco-Beat pattern used in Main 1.

Programming instruction

Unusual compositions demand "unusual" solutions regarding style formation! This is also the case in this devilish violin work by Vivaldi: The basic rhythm, or metre, of the title is 3/4 time. What, a waltz? No, no - far from it! The tempo is 150 km/h - and the style rhythm is of course a disco beat. In 3/4 time? No, this is also a mistake - even if the beat order with the indication 3/4 seems to be in order at first. But: Look at the small graphic note at the beginning of the drum line in Main1! Aha! That's the unusual one! This is the unusual solution: You write unswervingly 3/4 time - but you change the pre- and post-beat as in a 4/4 time, whereby this of course does not conform to the 3/4 time - but: only in the score! Outside in the loudspeaker this is a really great 4/4 disco drums accompaniment, so that you don't realize right away that the basic rhythm is a 3/4 beat. In Main 2, however, only one rhythm effect is played for a certain part of the score - Main 1 is the main rhythm!