Amelia Piscitelli & Joyce Saxon

Camerata Chicago would like to thank Joyce Saxon for her generous support of this recording project as the principal sponsor!
Camerata Chicago
Drostan Hall, Music Director
Amelia Piscitelli, violin
Steve Robinson, narrator
Drostan Hall, conductor

ANTONIO VIVALDI | THE FOUR SEASONS
EDUCATIONAL EDITION | DOUBLE DISC

Telling the story within the music. Vivaldi’s Poetry, seasonal elements and characters are presented here with descriptive narrative and musical examples as depicted in the score of this first piece of programmatic music ever written (Anno 1720).

Music recorded at Gary Methodist Church in Wheaton IL, USA on July 16th & November 19th, 2018. Voice over recorded at 98.7 WFMT on July 21st 2018.
Script: Drostan Hall
Engineer: Eric Arunas
Edited & mastered by Timothy Hollinger
Producer: Drostan Hall

Photographs of Drostan Hall, Amelia Piscitelli and Joyce Saxon by Luca Warren.
Front Cover painting: The Bacino di San Marco on Ascension Day c.1733-4 Venice G. A. Caneletto

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DISC ONE—Elements, Characters, Poetry & Music

1 INTRODUCTION: Historical Narrative..................3:56
2 SPRING: Elements & Characters.....................3:38
3 I Allegro............................................0:27
4 II Largo e pianissimo...............................2:11
5 Poesia.................................................0:11
6 III Allegro Pastorale.................................3:36
7 SUMMER: Elements & Characters....................4:23
8 I Allegro ma non molto..............................4:44
9 Poesia.................................................0:34
10 II Adagio............................................2:18
11 Poesia.................................................0:13
12 III Presto.............................................2:49
13 AUTUMN: Elements & Characters...................2:46
14 I Allegro.............................................4:52
15 Poesia.................................................0:16
16 II Adagio molto......................................1:52
17 Poesia.................................................0:21
18 III Allegro.............................................3:12
19 WINTER: Elements & Characters.....................4:27
20 I Allegro non molto.................................3:19
21 Poesia.................................................0:19
22 II Largo..............................................1:41
23 Poesia.................................................0:10
24 III Allegro.............................................2:58
25 Total Time..........................................60:00

DISC TWO—Music Only

1 I Allegro.............................................3:19
2 II Largo e pianissimo...............................2:11
3 III Allegro.............................................3:36
4 I Allegro ma non molto..............................4:44
5 II Adagio.............................................2:18
6 III Presto.............................................2:49
7 I Allegro.............................................4:52
8 II Adagio molto......................................1:52
9 III Allegro.............................................3:12
10 I Allegro non molto.................................3:19
11 II Largo.............................................1:41
12 III Allegro.............................................2:58
13 Total Time..........................................38:00

"For children and adults alike, this recording is a wonderful exploration into Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. The performance is first class from young violinist, Amelia Piscitelli and Camerata Chicago, led by Drostan Hall, while the narrative from Steve Robinson is highly informative and expertly delivered. I give this recording my highest recommendation."

Lady Valerie Solti
DISC ONE: Track 1
INTRODUCTION: Historical Narrative ......................................................... 3:56

Antonio Vivaldi! Vivaldi! The very name suggests words like Vital! Vivacious! Vigor! Vim! Antonio Vivaldi! Vivaldi was an Italian Baroque composer, virtuoso violinist and teacher. He was born in Venice in 1678 and died in Vienna at the age of sixty three in 1741. He became one of the most influential and famous musicians in Europe. He entered the holy orders at the age of twenty five and having vibrant red hair he became known as the Red Priest. Due to ill health he only said mass as a priest on a few occasions, although he was somehow inspired to make music on his violin and compose in spite of his delicate health.

In September 1703, Vivaldi became Maestro di Violino or Master of violin at a Venetian orphanage called the Ospedale della Pietà or Devout Hospital of Mercy. This orphanage was for abandoned girls and the Maestro gave them violin lessons. He composed his most famous violin concerti for the girls to play and many of these pieces are still studied by young violinists today. The girls gave numerous concerts under Vivaldi's direction in the famous church of Santa Maria della Pietà Venice.

Vivaldi's Pietà concerts became very famous and people came from all over Europe to hear their performances. A curious aspect of these concerts, is that the girls played from behind an iron grill so as to be hidden from view as it was considered to be immodest for the girls to be seen while playing in a church.

Written in 1720, Vivaldi's Four Seasons is a set of violin concerti. Each concerto depicts a season in nature and is one of the most famous pieces of music ever written. It is thought that he wrote these virtuoso violin concerti for himself to play or perhaps a star violin student at the Pietà as the music requires a very skilled violinist to play it. Today we might hear this piece of music in a grocery store, in an elevator, or perhaps a restaurant. Most people understand it to be just a pretty sounding piece of music that roughly depicts the seasons. While it is indeed a wonderful piece of music, it also makes history as one of the first pieces of programmatic music ever written. This means that Vivaldi is telling a story through the music. Vivaldi also wrote poetry to be read before each movement in the music to help the listener understand everything that is happening in the story. Additionally there are very specific references written into the score, almost phrase by phrase, that depict certain seasonal elements and characters such as "birds chirping," "thunder & lightning," "murmuring streams," "a barking dog" and "guns & dogs."

Most people have no idea of the depth of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, but when these characters and elements are demonstrated, followed by the descriptive poetry, the listener may enjoy a totally new experience offering a new understanding to this most famous piece of music.

Tragically, Vivaldi died in 1741 in complete poverty and his music fell into obscurity until two hundred years later when his music was rediscovered in the 1920's and with the advent of the Long Play recording in the 1950's it was the Four Seasons that truly led the way for Vivaldi's star to rise once again.
SPRING

Track 2  Elements & Characters.................................................................3:38

Each Musical Season is composed as a violin concerto in three separate movements.

In the first movement of spring we hear: Birds chirping...Trickling Streams...Thunder and Lightning....

In the second slower movement we hear three characters combined. Here they are played separately for you: The murmuring of the leaves and plants in a gentle breeze....A goat herder represented by the solo violin....The goat herder's trusty DOG barking played by the viola.

Movement three is a lively Spring peasant dance.....Here is the opening.....

Track 3  Poetry..................................................................................................................0:27

Spring has arrived merrily. The birds hail her with happy song, and mean while, at the breath of the Zephyrs, the streams flow with a sweet murmur: Thunder and lightning, chosen to proclaim her, come covering the sky with a black mantle, and then when these fall silent, the little birds return once more to their melodious incantation.

Track 4  I Allegro........................................................................................................3:19

Track 5  Poetry..............................................................................................................0:12

And so on the pleasant flowery meadow, to the welcome murmuring of fronds and trees. The goat herder sleeps with his trusty dog beside him.

Track 6  II Largo e pianissimo........................................................................................2:11

Track 7  Poetry...............................................................................................................0:11

To the festive sound of a shepherd's bagpipe, nymphs and shepherds dance beneath the beloved heavens at the joyful appearance of spring.

Track 8  III Allegro Pastorale.....................................................................................3:36

SUMMER

Track 9  Elements & Characters.................................................................................4:23

In the opening of the first movement of the summer season, Vivaldi gives us the impression of a hot hazy day. Perhaps someone is snoozing in a hammock....then suddenly we hear a Cuckoo...followed by a Goldfinch....Gentle South Winds....Violent North wind....A Village Boy who whines and com plains.

In the second movement we hear: the buzz of mosquitoes, flies & wasps played by the violins with the hair of their bows playing very close to the bridge, a string instrument technique known as pizzicato....then we hear he distant rumble of thunder....

The third movement opens with a torrent of violent weather. It's easy to imagine a thunder storm when you hear this.....

Track 10 Poetry...........................................................................................................0:34

SUMMER: Beneath the harsh season inflamed by the sun, man languishes, the flock languishes, and the pine tree burns; the cuckoo unleashes it's voice and as soon as it is heard, the turtledove sings and the Goldfinch too. Sweet Zephyrs blows, but Boreas suddenly opens a dispute with his neighbor, and the shepherd weeps, for he fears a fierce storm looming - and his destiny;

Track 11 I Allegro ma non mollo..................................................................................4:44

Track 12 Poetry.......................................................................................................0:12

the fear of lightning and fierce thunder and the furious swarm of flies and blowflies deprives his weary limbs of repose.

Track 13 II Adagio.....................................................................................................2:18

Track 14 Poetry.......................................................................................................0:13

Oh alas! His fears are only too true. The sky thunders, flares, and with hailstones severs the heads of the proud grain crops.

Track 15 III Presto..................................................................................................2:49
AUTUMN

Track 16 Elements & Characters.................................................................2:46

The opening [first] of the Autumn season concerto depicts:.....the peasant villages celebrating the harvest with dance and song....After the merriment everyone is overcome with sleep in the slow [second] movement.....It's nap time!.....

The final [third] movement of Autumn ushers in the hunt: Tally Ho!.....Here are the Guns & Dogs.....

Track 17 Poetry..........................................................................................0:14

The peasant celebrates in dance and song the sweet pleasure of the rich harvest and fired by Bacchus' liquor, many end their enjoyment in slumber

Track 18 I Allegro..........................................................................................4:52

Track 19 Poetry..........................................................................................0:16

The air, which, fresher now, lends contentment, and the season which invites so many to the great pleasure of sweetest slumber, make each one abandon dance and song.

Track 20 II Adagio molto.................................................................1:52

Track 21 Poetry..........................................................................................0:21

At the new dawn the hunters set out on the hunt with horns, guns and dogs. The wild beast flees, and they follow its track; already bewildered, and wearied by the great noise of the guns and the dogs, wounded, it threatens weakly to escape, but, overwhelmed, dies.

Track 22 III Allegro......................................................................................3:12

WINTER

Track 23 Elements & Characters.................................................................4:27

Movement One: What's the first thing you think of in winter? Well, I don't know about you, but Vivaldi thought of ice & sleet played with the bows by the bridge for chilling sound.....Now listen to some frightening winter wind played by the solo violin.....When it's cold outside we run and stamp our feet.....And our teeth start Chattering.......

Movement Two: Now we are inside by the fire in an arm chair but we hear: the rain drops out side played by the violins plucking their strings a string instrument technique known as pizzicato.

Movement Three: Now, imagine you are on the ice....you have to: tread slowly and carefully.....then you fall to the ground.....and the ice cracks.....winter and the entire FOUR SEASONS comes to an end with the freezing North Wind.....

Track 24 Poetry..........................................................................................0:19

To shiver, amid icy snows, at the harsh wind's chill breath; to run, stamping one's feet at every moment; with one teeth chattering on account of the excessive cold:

Track 25 I Allegro non molto......................................................................3:19

Track 26 Poetry..........................................................................................0:10

To pass the days of calm and contentment by the fireside while the rain outside drenches a hundred others;

Track 27 II Largo........................................................................................1:41

Track 28 Poetry..........................................................................................0:30

To walk on the ice, and with slow steps to move about cautiously for fear of falling: to go fast, slip, fall to the ground; to go on the ice again and run fast until the ice cracks and breaks open; to hear, as they sailly forth through the iron-clad gates. Stiroco, Boreas, and all the winds at war. This is winter, but of a kind to bring joy:

Track 29 III Allegro......................................................................................2:58
THE FOUR SEASONS
Le quattro stagioni

First published in Amsterdam in 1725 The Four Seasons, Vivaldi’s best known work, are part of a larger set of twelve concerti, Vivaldi’s Op. 8, entitled Il cimento dell’armonia e dell’invenzione (The Contest Between Harmony and Invention). Vivaldi dedicated their publication to a Bohemian patron, Count Václav Morzin who had the set performed in the Morzin Palace, Prague with his own orchestra.

Though three of the concerti are wholly original, the first, "Spring", borrows motifs from a Sinfonia in the first act of Vivaldi's contemporaneous opera Il Giustino. The inspiration for the concerti was probably the countryside around Mantua where Vivaldi was living at the time. Mentioned in the introduction of disc one of this recording, the concerti were a revolution in musical conception as they tell a story, and eventually this interesting conflation between story and instrumental music became known as programmatic.

An excerpt from the first edition of the first violin part to the Allegro of Vivaldi’s “Spring” concerto. First edition.
Note the descriptions in Italian: B: “Canto de gli Ucelli” - The singing of the birds

Vivaldi’s concept of a solo concerto; the arrangement of a solo violin with string quartet and basso continuo was seminal in the development of the modern concerto and was highly influential throughout Europe most particularly in Germany where Bach, the Colossus of the Baroque period, was living. Bach was a great admirer of Vivaldi and indeed wrote his own more developed violin concerti as a direct result of Vivaldi influence.

AMELIA PISCITELLI

Amelia Piscitelli has been smiling to classical music since infancy and formally began playing violin at the age of four. From 2009-2014, she studied violin with Debbie Edwards, then in late Summer 2014, she began studying with Drostan Hall, her current teacher. At the time of this recording Amelia is a senior at Hammond Baptist High School. She greatly enjoys playing and teaching the violin as well as performing with her violin students at church. She relishes the chamber music opportunities afforded her at Sforzando String Camp for the last seven summers and has been privileged to be Concert Master of the Camerata Chicago Academy Orchestra since 2015. In 2016 Amelia performed on the prestigious WFMT show Introductions as well as making her professional solo debut performing the Romance by Svendsen with Camerata Chicago in October of the same year. In July of this year Amelia performed the Bach Double Violin Concerto with Ellen Maloney and the Camerata Chicago Summer Festival Orchestra. Most recently Amelia performed Vivaldi’s Four Seasons with Camerata Chicago for Sweetest Day in October of 2017. In July of 2017 Amelia recorded the aforementioned work with Camerata Chicago on the DMD Classics label for a special educational commercial release with Steve Robinson as narrator.

Amelia plays on a violin made by Luigi Rovati of Buenos Aires, Argentina.
STEVE ROBINSON

Steve Robinson has led WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network since 2000. Under his leadership, WFMT diversified its programming and increased its member base, and the Network became a leading producer and syndicator of music and spoken word programs. In 2002, Steve brought to the WFMT Radio Network a live broadcast of Princess Magogo, the first indigenous South African opera and the first with a libretto in the Zulu language. Steve hosted, and the opera was heard by more than four million listeners throughout the U.S. and Europe. Steve created Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin in 2003, a daily series heard by more than 400,000 listeners a week, and he also instituted a comprehensive subscription website. Other popular WFMT series and programs created during Steve’s tenure include Impromptu, a daytime showcase for local and visiting artists; Introductions, a unique weekly series that features promising young pre-college musician; and the Studs Terkel Radio Archive, which was launched in 2015 in partnership with Chicago History Museum. Last year, at Steve’s direction, the Network began exporting classical music radio concerts by American ensembles for broadcast in China and importing Chinese music performances for broadcast in the West, marking the first time a cultural exchange of this kind had happened between America and China.

In 2007, the Chicago Tribune named Steve a “Chicagoman of the Year” in the arts. His many other honors include two Peter Lisagor Awards for Exemplary Journalism; the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award; two Westbury Awards from the Red Cross of Greater Chicago for coordinating fundraising efforts among the city’s television and radio stations in the wake of the 2004 tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake; an Award of Excellence from the Chicago Sinfonietta; a special award from the Illinois Philharmonic; the first Champion Award from the Merit School of Music; and, with Bill McGlaughlin, Dushkin Award from the Music Institute of Chicago previous winners have included Sir George Solti, Daniel Barenboim, Placido Domingo, Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Leon Fleischer, Sir Andrew Davis, and Mstislav Rostropovich. The Camerata Chicago Associate Concert Master Chair was named after Steve Robinson in 2016.

Steve currently serves on the boards of Cedille Records, the Merit School of Music, the Chicago College of Performing Arts, and the Rush Hour Concerts. His past board service includes the Grant Park Orchestra, Chicago Children’s Choir, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Music in the Loft.

Previously, Steve worked at WBUR, WGBH, WCRB, KPFA, WVPR, WBGO, and Nebraska Public Radio. Steve left WFMT in Oct 2016 to form his own company, New Media Productions. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Beth Schenker.
DROSTAN HALL

Drostan Hall, Conductor, Music Director and Founder of Camerata Chicago, is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, where he studied violin with Yossi Zivoni and a graduate of Northern Illinois University where he studied with members of the Vermeer String Quartet including Shmuel Ashkenasi, Pierre Menard and Mathias Tacke.

In 2013, the tenth anniversary of Camerata Chicago, Drostan undertook a major European tour conducting Camerata Chicago and cellist Wendy Warner as soloist, performing six concerts in ten days.

In August 2013, Cedille Records released a recording of Haydn and Myslivecek cello concerti with Wendy Warner and Camerata Chicago conducted by Drostan Hall. The CD was nominated for an International Classical Music Award. Classic FM (UK) plays the CD regularly and it has been featured on 98.7 WFMT Chicago as well as WQXR New York, among many others.

Maestro Hall as Music Director of Camerata Chicago, has collaborated with distinguished artists such as Joffrey Ballet, Sylvia McNair, Wendy Warner, Peter Van De Graaf and Michelle Arezaga, Suzanne Hou, Caroline Goulding, Joshua Roman and Julian Schwarz. Drostan has had a particularly close relationship with the internationally acclaimed Vermeer String Quartet, collaborating with the quartet’s leader Shmuel Ashkenasi with whom he performed and recorded the 5th violin concerto of Mozart on the DMD Classics label. Mr. Ashkenasi subsequently became Artistic Advisor to Camerata Chicago in 2006.

In 2008 Drostan was pleased to appoint Mathias Tacke, second violinist of the quartet, to the concertmaster chair and since then has recorded well known Bach violin concerti with him. Vermeer Cellist Marc Johnson soloed with Drostan in 2008. In the US Drostan has guest conducted at well known festivals such as the Utah Music Festival and the Woodstock Mozart Festival and Lacrosse Symphony Orchestra, WI.

His work with Camerata Chicago has been very fruitful including numerous live radio broadcasts on Chicago’s radio station WFMT and compact disc releases on the Centaur and DMD classics labels. Conducting Camerata Chicago, he has appeared at the Artist Series at Wheaton College, Art Institute of Chicago, The Harris Theater, Chicago Cultural Center, Northeastern Illinois University, North Park University, College Church, and St. Michael’s Catholic Church, Wheaton. Drostan collaborated with Michelle Arezaga conducting the world premiere of Tenderness Songs by Gwyneth Walker. Drostan lives in Wheaton with his wife Ariane and four children.
Camerata Chicago has had a particularly close relationship with the internationally acclaimed Vermeer String Quartet, collaborating with the quartet’s leader Shmuel Ashkenasi who performed and recorded the 5th violin concerto of Mozart with Camerata Chicago. Mr. Ashkenasi subsequently became Artistic Advisor to the orchestra in 2006. In 2008 Mathias Tacke, second violinist of the Vermeer quartet was appointed concertmaster and since then has performed and recorded well known Bach concerti with Camerata Chicago. Vermeer cellist Marc Johnson performed Haydn’s D major Cello Concerto in 2008. Camerata Chicago makes regular guest appearances on the Artist Series at Wheaton College and most recently enjoyed a collaboration with Joffrey Ballet Academy.

Camerata Chicago has recorded cello concerti by Haydn and Myslivecek with Wendy Warner for the globally distinguished Chicago label Cedille Records. This much anticipated recording has received rave reviews and was nominated for The International Classical Music Award. In 2013 Camerata Chicago, under the leadership of Maestro Drostan Hall, undertook a major European tour. Internationally acclaimed cellist Wendy Warner, a native Chicagoan, accompanied Camerata Chicago as soloist. The orchestra commissioned Chicago composer Mischa Zupko, to write the work Pilatus especially for the tour which received its world premier in Chicago shortly before the orchestra left for Europe.
A NOTE FROM DROSTAN HALL

The Four Seasons by Vivaldi was the work I had chosen for Camerata Chicago’s Autumn concert series in 2017 to celebrate that season’s holiday known as Sweetest Day. Replete with sonnets and ubiquitous popularity it seemed an appropriate choice especially since I had invited my private student Amelia Piscitelli, a young American violinist of Italian descent with exceptional gifts, as the soloist. It is also clear from eighteenth century records that Amelia aged seventeen at the time of this recording, is of a similar age and ability of at least one or two of the girls that Vivaldi taught at the Pietà in Venice in the early seventeen hundreds for whom he wrote many of his concerti. This made Amelia a perfect choice of soloist for this exciting project. At the last moment I decided to include musical demonstrations and explanations of Vivaldi’s seasonal phenomena and characters. At the reception after the concert the orchestra and I were greeted with rapturous enthusiasm by audience members, thrilled to have gleaned new insight into the deeper meaning of the work and the precise musical elements that Vivaldi uses to depict the elements within the seasons; the poetry had been completely unknown to most. It was the aforementioned enthusiasm which inspired the creation of this educational recording project of this much loved work.

Camerata Chicago’s mission is to inspire the next generation of musicians and concert goers. I hope that you will enjoy listening and learning about this famous work, as much as I did studying and conducting it.

Camerata Chicago
Drostan Hall, Music Director
Bartholomew Hall, Operations Director
Mathias Tacke, Concert Master

Violin
Songhea Sackrider, Acting Concert Master
Kathleen Carter
Alin Cernaianu
Heather Hempel
Ellen Maloney
Michael McGuan
Talia Pavia
Danielle Ray

Viola
Aimee Biasiello
Istvan Loga
Rose Armbrust

Continuo
William Phemister, harpsichord
Christopher Ferrer, cello

Bass
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Mission Statement
Camerata Chicago is a world-class chamber orchestra serving Chicago and its surrounding communities with performances of great music featuring musicians of global distinction. Camerata Chicago is committed to providing an incomparable concert experience which enriches the community and inspires the next generation of musicians and concert-goers.

Camerata Chicago
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DMD-03152019 (DMD Classics)

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