

·B·L·O·S·S·O·M·
·F·E·S·T·I·V·A·L·
2010

Saturday evening, **July 17**, 2010, at 8:00 P.M.

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
NICHOLAS McGEGAN, *conductor*



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685-1759)

Concerto Grosso in G major
Opus 6 No. 1

1. A tempo giusto
2. Allegro
3. Adagio
4. Allegro
5. Allegro

ANTONIO VIVALDI
(1678-1741)

The Four Seasons
Violin Concertos, Opus 8 Nos. 1-4
PETER OTTO, *violin*

No. 1:

La Primavera (“Spring”) in E major

1. Allegro
2. Largo
3. Allegro

No. 2:

L'estate (“Summer”) in G minor

1. Allegro non molto — Allegro
2. Adagio — Presto — Adagio
3. Presto

I N T E R M I S S I O N

PROGRAM LISTING CONTINUES ►

VIVALDI
(1678-1741)

The Four Seasons
Violin Concertos, Opus 8

PETER OTTO, *violin*

No. 3:

L'autunno ("Autumn") in F major

1. Allegro
2. Adagio molto
3. Allegro

No. 4:

L'inverno ("Winter") in F minor

1. Allegro non molto
2. Largo
3. Allegro

HANDEL

Music for the Royal Fireworks

1. Overture
2. Bourrée
3. La Paix
4. La Réjouissance
5. Menuet I
6. Menuet II



*This concert is sponsored by **Eaton Corporation**,
a Cleveland Orchestra Partner in Excellence.*





A period illustration of a fireworks display for the Duke of Richmond along the River Thames in May 1749, just a month after a similar display was presented the same evening as the premiere of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*.

Introducing the Music Baroque Fireworks

THIS EVENING, The Cleveland Orchestra offers a perspective on the Baroque Era, with two composers of the early 1700s representing between them three nations.

Antonio Vivaldi was from Venice, and personified the light, nimble Italian approach to music of the time. For him, the particular purpose of music was to entertain and to earn an income, and his works readily achieved those goals. By contrast, George Frideric Handel was German born, and although he spent a few years early in his career in Italy networking in hopes of obtaining worthwhile job offers, the best offer came from a German nobleman who happened also to be heir to the English throne. Thus, Handel headed back to Germany and then on to London, where his most famous compositions came to life. He, too, understood the value of using music to entertain, but being German in his heart, tended to think bigger than did the Italians.

Of the two men, Vivaldi brought more effervescence to his works and Handel more drama. In either case, their music offers immediate pleasure to 21st-century audiences.

—BETSY SCHWARM

Betsy Schwarm spent twenty years as a classical radio announcer and producer. She currently teaches music at Metropolitan State College of Denver, writes program notes, and serves as recording engineer for Colorado's Central City Opera.

Concerto Grosso in G major, Opus 6 No. 1

composed 1739



BY
**George
Frideric
HANDEL**

BORN
February 23, 1685
Halle, Prussia

DIED
April 14, 1759
London

LONDONERS OF HANDEL'S TIME had a voracious appetite for music of all kinds, with grand vocal works being especially popular. Handel obliged this interest by composing many operas, oratorios, and odes, most all of them lengthy works of rather serious purpose, celebrating the lives of saints or the moral of a Biblical tale or a dramatic historic story. Such works were often glorious and sometimes uplifting, yet several hours of singing was generally considered tedious, even for lovers of the human voice. The custom of the period often included different kinds of entertainment during the course of an evening. Handel frequently provided some of his own instrumental concertos to be performed between acts. In addition to adding variety, these diversions also gave the singers a rest. Handel wrote a number of these concertos, often quite quickly.

Handel began one set of twelve concertos — each in a different key, apparently so that he could later choose whichever key best related to the work into which it would be inserted — late in September 1739. The set was completed in four weeks and published as Handel's Opus Six. In fact, by this year, Handel had published many more than six compositions, but there was no sense of rigorous numbering or cataloging of works in the 18th century; sets of similar works were often printed together, and many works were printed without assigning any number. The opus six concerto grossos (or *concerti grossi*) were premiered during a concert series given that winter, with each concerto inserted between acts of several large choral compositions.

Each of these twelve instrumental works is known as a “concerto grosso,” or a “big concerto.” During the Baroque era, a regular concerto was usually written in three movements for one or two soloists and an orchestra; the familiar “Four Seasons” concertos by Vivaldi exemplify this type of concerto. By contrast, a *concerto grosso* would have five or six movements, and several different instrumentalists would be highlighted in solos during the work. In some works, there would be so many “soloists” that the “spotlight” would appear to be more on the entire group, not just a few particular players. That is very much the case with the Concerto Grosso in G major being performed on tonight's concert. Instead of focusing on a few instruments, Handel decided to give his attention to the entire ensemble, maximizing the possible contrasts between sections. It shows him as a master of the genre.

—BETSY SCHWARM © 2010

Violin Concertos: The Four Seasons

Opus 8 Nos. 1-4

composed 1718-25



BY

**Antonio
VIVALDI**

BORN

March 4, 1678
Venice

DIED

July 28, 1741
Vienna

THEY CALLED HIM the “Red Priest.” He was Antonio Vivaldi — violinist, composer, teacher, charismatic personification of the Italian Baroque. Here was a man who, in addition to his priestly duties and fiery red hair, found time to write dozens of operas and over four hundred concertos, while continuing to tour actively as a violin soloist.

Of his hundreds of concertos, Vivaldi’s best known are *The Four Seasons*, published in 1725, nearly a century before orchestral compositions with a story became popular. In Vivaldi’s time, composers were expected to master rules and structures, not express feelings and paint musical landscapes. That he managed to do both simultaneously may be why his *Four Seasons* have been so popular for nearly three hundred years.

These four violin concertos are the first of a set of twelve known collectively as *The Contest Between Harmony and Invention* — that is, between structure and creativity, between formal rules and more daring poetic license. (The other eight concertos in the published set have nothing to do with seasons, although three of them are also musical portraits, of “A Storm at Sea,” “Pleasure,” and “The Hunt.”)

Some of Vivaldi’s contemporaries were dismissive of his compositions, claiming that he played violin better than he composed (praise of a sort, even so). Yet his fame likely encouraged an element of jealousy, and the fact remains that his concertos have often served as models of ideal compositional form. In the Baroque Era, composers tended to write very structured music following rules about how the work should be assembled. The most popular such form, called “ritornello,” was one at which Vivaldi excelled, and is featured in the first and third movements of each concerto in *The Four Seasons*. In a ritornello, one main melodic idea alternates with various other melodic ideas, returning after each diversion to remind listeners where they had been. Vivaldi brings the idea to fruition in these pictorial concertos, using the returning ritornello theme to represent the main ideas of his story — such as the joy of springtime — while the intervening melodies represent the passing scenes, such as a thunderstorm. So well-known was

At a Glance

Vivaldi's four violin concertos titled Le quattro stagioni ("The Four Seasons") were first published in 1725 as part of a collection of twelve concertos called Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione ("The Contest Between Harmony and Invention").

These four concertos together run about 40 minutes in performance. The published score calls for a string orchestra, harpsichord continuo, and solo violin.

The Cleveland Orchestra has presented individual concertos from Vivaldi's The Four Seasons at concerts at Severance Hall, and has previously presented them as a group at Blossom Festivals in 1994 (with violinists Emilio Llinas, Yoko Moore, Mark Dumm, and Martin Chalifour performing one concerto each), and in 1997 and 2002 with William Preucil as soloist. Preucil was also the soloist in the Orchestra's most recent performances of the set, at Severance Hall in February 2007 with guest conductor Nicholas McGegan.

Vivaldi for this technique that even Bach acquired and studied copies of some of his concertos to better understand how the effect had been achieved.

To be certain that listeners to *The Four Seasons* — and, indeed, the performers as well — knew exactly what he envisioned with each season, Vivaldi provided for each concerto a sonnet describing the scenes he portrayed. He even had the lines of the sonnets copied into the musical score so as to draw unmistakable parallels between words and sounds. (English translations of these texts, divided out for each movement, are provided on the following pages.)

Historians are uncertain as to whether or not the composer penned these poems himself, yet the music lies astonishingly close to the words. Listen, in “**Spring**,” as three violins entwine in birdsong, as violas stand in for a barking dog, as drawn-out undertones evoke the drone of a bagpipe. Marvel, in “**Summer**,” as the cuckoo and the turtle dove (in Italian, “tortorella”) sing to the rhythm of their names, as the rumbles of low strings provide the buzzing of flies, as the strident themes of a summer hailstorm flatten the cornfields. Observe, in “**Autumn**,” the unsteady footsteps of a drunken reveler at a harvest celebration and, later, the prancing themes of bold hunters and their steeds in pursuit of their unlucky prey. Shiver with Vivaldi through a frosty “**Winter**” as a weary traveller warms his feet by the fire while others, less fortunate, slip and fall on the ice. Of all the musical landscapes painted over the centuries, few have gone to such extremes to evoke tiny details of daily human interaction with nature.

—BETSY SCHWARM © 2010



Welcome to Blossom

In appreciation of their support, The Cleveland Orchestra and Blossom Festival warmly welcome guests of the organizations listed below, who are enjoying a special evening at tonight's concert.

**Westlake Reed Leskosky
Brush Engineered Materials**

The Four Seasons

by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Vivaldi had the following sonnets, originally written in Italian, copied into the published score of The Four Seasons. The numbered sections correspond to the three movements of each concerto.

La primavera (“Spring”)

1. Spring has arrived, and joyously the birds
now welcome her return with happy song,
and streamlets, by soft airs caressed, are heard
to murmur sweetly as they course along.
2. Casting their inky mantle over heaven,
thunderstorms, her chosen heralds, roar;
when they have died away to silence, then
the birds take up their charming songs once more.
And now, upon the flower-strewn grass subsiding,
with leafy branches rustling overhead,
the goatherd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him.
3. By festive sound of rustic bagpipes led,
nymphs and shepherds dance beneath the shining
canopy of spring with sprightly tread.

L'estate (“Summer”)

1. Beneath the blazing sun's relentless heat
men and flocks are sweltering, pines are seared;
the cuckoo's voice is raised, and soon the sweet
songs of the turtle dove and finch are heard.
Soft breezes stir the air, but the contentious
north wind sweeps them suddenly aside;
the weeping shepherd trembles at the menace
of violent storm and what it may betide.
2. His limbs are now from restful ease unbound
by fear of lightning's flash and thunder's roar
and flies and bluebottles that buzz around.
3. Alas, right well has he read Nature's lore:
the heavens growl and flash and hail-stones pound
the ripened corn that proudly stood before.



L'autunno (“**Autumn**”)

1. With song and dance the peasant celebrates
the harvest safely gathered in his barns;
Bacchus' flowing bowl intoxicates
and many a reveler sinks in Morpheus' arms.
2. The singing and the dancing die away
as cooling breezes fan the balmy air;
the summons of the season all obey;
to yield to sweet repose without a care.
3. At dawn the hunters, ready for the chase,
emerge with horns and guns and dogs and cries;
the prey breaks cover, they pursue apace.
The din of guns and dogs now terrifies
the wounded brute, who for a little space
tries wearily to flee but, harried, dies.

L'inverno (“**Winter**”)

1. To shiver frozen midst the frosty snow
as unrelenting winds bite and sting,
to stamp one's icy feet, run to and fro,
one's teeth for bitter chill a-chattering;
2. To muse contentedly beside the hearth
while those outside are drenched by pouring rain.
3. With cautious step to tread the icy path
and try to keep one's feet with might and main;
To turn abruptly, slip, crash to the ground
and, rising, hasten on across the ice
until it cracks and splinters all around;
To hear the winds burst with ferocious might
their prison gates and clash with martial sound;
this is the winter; these are its delights.

Music for the Royal Fireworks

composed 1749



BY

**George
Frideric
HANDEL**

BORN

February 23, 1685
Halle, Prussia

DIED

April 14, 1759
London

A “**GRAND OVERTURE** of Warlike Instruments” — such was the original title of the composition now known as Handel’s *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. It was April 1749. The previous fall, a treaty had been signed to bring to a close the War of the Austrian Succession, in which a number of nations took sides to determine if the Hapsburg’s heir to the throne, Maria Theresia, would be allowed to succeed her father. Her side of the argument ultimately won.

With the return of warmer weather the next spring, King George II of England was determined to present a festival to celebrate the peace. The festival, to be held outdoors in Green Park — a decorative outdoor space now in the center of London but then at the city’s western outskirts — would include both fireworks and music. (The park is just to the north of today’s Buckingham Palace, the site of which in 1749 was a smaller and non-Royal residence known as Buckingham House.) In fact, in the weeks leading up to the event, there was significant fireworks over the music itself. The king, a man whose musical tastes ran strongly to military styles, wanted only a military band, whereas Handel was advocating the addition of string instruments. Although Handel defended his point of view, when a king is involved, there is no real debate, and King George got his way. Strings were excluded from the original composition (Handel added instructions for including string instruments at later performances.)

The work’s original instrumentation, in accordance with the king’s demands, was nine trumpets, nine horns, twenty-eight oboes, twelve bassoons, a contrabassoon and/or serpent (not a reptile, but rather a low-pitched wind instrument), six kettledrums, and two side drums. It was a hearty blend guaranteed to resonate throughout the spaces of Green Park, and reach most of the way to the Tower Bridge.

Several days before the festival itself, a public rehearsal of the music was presented in the Spring Gardens at Vauxhall. Handel generally opposed the idea of public rehearsals, but Londoners approved earnestly. So strong was their anticipation of the upcoming event that 12,000 people arrived for the rehearsal, overflowing from the Gardens and causing a three-hour traffic jam on London Bridge. If such was the crowd for

At a Glance

Handel wrote his Music for the Royal Fireworks in 1749 for King George II's planned festivities to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The first public performance was given as a preview on April 24, 1749, in London's Vauxhall Gardens, with the composer leading the assembled musicians. The work was repeated and officially premiered during the Treaty celebration festivities on April 27.

This suite of music runs about 20 minutes in performance. Handel's original performances featured 28 oboes, 12 bassoons, one or more contrabassoons and serpents, 9 horns, 9 trumpets, and 3 sets of timpani. Modern indoor performances usually utilize a smaller ensemble made up of a variety of wind instruments, horns, trumpets, and timpani, with strings often also included.

The Cleveland Orchestra has presented Handel's Royal Fireworks Music on a number of occasions, most recently at the Blossom Festivals of 1998 and 2001, and in concerts led by Nicholas McGegan at Severance Hall in October 2008.

the rehearsal, imagine how many celebrants arrived in Green Park for the festival itself on April 27. Festivities began at six in the evening with Handel's music, followed after dark by an elaborate fireworks display, launched from 101 brass cannons.

The evening was not without mishaps. At one point in the festivities, a rocket went astray and set fire to a decorative pavilion. Although no one was injured, the pavilion's designer, a reportedly excitable Frenchman, took personal offense at the incident and threatened the fireworks master with his sword. Fortunately, the quarrel was quickly concluded. It would be tragic indeed if, at the celebration of one international peace treaty, another international conflict had been launched.

Music for the Royal Fireworks is an orchestral suite. In the days before the existence of what Haydn or Mozart would soon call a symphony, orchestral suites filled the purpose when writing a large-scale instrumental work. Generally, orchestral suites were composed of several dance-style movements with an introductory overture to set a stately mood. Handel's *Water Music* is an orchestral suite, as is the *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, written about three decades after the *Water Music*. In the case of *Fireworks*, however, the composer went one step further. Given the purpose of the festival at which the work would be performed, he also attached descriptive titles to the two central movements, so that the third movement honors the peace treaty itself and the fourth sets out to portray a mood of rejoicing. The various movements were intended to contrast with one another in tempo, atmosphere, and energy level, giving a delightful variety to the work. One rather wishes that Handel had still been around when suites finally evolved to become symphonies, as it seems he would have reveled on that broader canvas.

—BETSY SCHWARM © 2010