



Music

Winter

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Programmatic music is not confined to the 19th Century. Antonio Vivaldi composed programmatic works in the 18th Century. The Four Seasons consists of four separate concertos; Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Vivaldi published these works with accompanying poems. There are three movements to each concerto, in the order of fast, slow, fast.

Each paragraph below refers to a movement from the concerto.

1. Frozen and **shivering** in the icy snow.
In the strong blasts of a terrible wind
To run **stamping** one's feet at every step
With one's teeth **chattering** through the cold.
2. To spend the **quiet** and **happy** days by the **fire**
Whilst outside the rain soaks everyone.
To **walk on the ice** with slow steps
And go carefully for fear of falling.
3. To go in haste, **slide** and **fall down**:
To go again on the **ice** and run,
Until the **ice cracks** and open.
4. To hear leaving their
Iron-gated house Sirocco,
Boreas and all the **winds** in battle:
This is winter, but it brings joy.

Expressive techniques in Winter

Listen to Vivaldi's musical interpretation of his text, following along with the breakdown below. Please note - there is a small break between each movement.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu6Hr9kd-U0> (00:09:29)
 - » Mov't I
 - *sul ponticello* – playing very close to the bridge, producing an eerie, icy, thin tone colour
 - *sul tasto* – bowing over the end of the fingerboard, producing an airy, tone colour and softer dynamics
 - *trills* – rapid alternation of two pitches next to each other. Here they are performed at a high pitch for only the length of a quaver
 - *tremolo* – rapid repetition of one note (unmeasured), like 'scrubbing' the bow on the string.

All of these expressive techniques give the feeling of icy winds, shivering, chattering teeth and stomping snow off your boots.

- » Mov't II
 - *pizzicato* – plucking the strings, giving the impression of raindrops falling.

Long note values by the soloist, including longer trilled notes, provide a warmer tone colour, evoking a feeling of warmth as one sits by the fire listening to the rain outside.

- » Mov't III
 - small, rapid, high pitched, descending passages sound like slipping on the ice
 - *sul tasto* – the calm before the winter winds arrive
 - *tremolo*, coupled with rapid ascending and descending sequences and scale passages – as the winter winds whirl around outside.