

ORCHESTRA

Violins I	Helen Crook, Sonya Bennett, Michael Hunter, Joe Pinto, Joella Pinto
Violins II	Emily Bouwhuis, Alison Talmage, David Kayrouz, Roger Booth
Violas	Judith Gust, Sharyn Palmer, Neil Shepherd
Celli	Janet Robinson, Graham Falla, Annette Sachtleben
Bass	Huko Kobé
Harpichord	Patrick Cornfield
Narrator	Iain Rea

Violin Soloist

David Choi is in his 4th year of Medical studies at the University of Auckland. He has performed at several venues around NZ and overseas and has been awarded numerous prizes including 1st prize at Western art festival aged 7, a scholarship to NOVA and the University of Auckland's Music Academy aged 13, 2nd prize at the National Concerto Competition while still at high school, National Finalist at the NZ National Chamber Music Competition, and invited to study music at UTAS Australia on a Full-scholarship.

David has performed the Mendelssohn Violin concerto with the St. Matthew's Chamber Orchestra and been broadcast on ConcertFM, National Radio and TVNZ. He has also performed in master classes run by internationally renowned violinists such as Emil Chudnovsky (Washington DC) and Charmain Gadd (Sydney Conservatorium).



Devonport Chamber Orchestra at the Depot

Vivaldi: Four Seasons



Soloist: David Choi

Sunday 26th September, 2pm
28 Clarence Street, Devonport
Admission \$10, Children under 12 free

For further information and to be on our mailing list, go to our website:
<http://dco.net.nz/>

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)

The Four Seasons (Le Quattro Stagioni)

The details of Vivaldi's life are surprisingly sketchy. Indeed, only in 1962 was his birthdate determined from baptismal records to have been 1678; prior writers had placed it as early as 1669. Vivaldi learned the violin from his father, a Venetian barber who played in the orchestra of San Marco cathedral. Vivaldi was ordained in 1703 and, thanks to his flaming hair, became known as the Red Priest. However because of severe bronchial asthma he didn't have the stamina to say a complete mass, and so never took up ecclesiastical duties as a priest. Instead, he became a violin teacher and later, musical director, at the *Ospedale della Pietà*, an orphanage for a thousand girls, of whom a few dozen received intensive musical training.

Among his duties was to provide two concertos per month for concerts given each Sunday by the school orchestra in which, to the amazement of visitors, the students played all the instruments, rather than just the ones deemed suitable for ladies. The sensual attraction of the girls' performances likely contributed to the widespread fame of the concerts among gentlemen patrons. Although Vivaldi has a somewhat turbulent relationship with the school administrators, he enjoyed considerable freedom, not only to fill his compositions with whimsy and technical hurdles to challenge his students and display their artistry, but also to travel extensively to fulfill commissions and to stage his operas. Although Vivaldi negotiated sizable fees for his work, he also spent prolifically and died in poverty during a 1741 trip to Vienna.

For nearly 200 years, Vivaldi was a historical footnote, although a somewhat influential one – the twelve concerti comprising his first publication (*L'estro armonico*, 1711) were widely imitated. Soon after his death his few publications were forgotten and the rest of his output remained unknown. His only lasting recognition came from the fervent admiration of Bach, who modeled his own concerto style after Vivaldi's and adapted for keyboard nine Vivaldi violin concerti.

All that changed in 1926 however, when a monastery presented a massive collection of old scores to Turin University for appraisal prior to sale to fund repairs. The collection was traced back to a Count Durazzo, who had purchased the lot from the Ospedale, donated half to the monastery and passed the remainder to his heirs. In the collection were a huge number of Vivaldi's handwritten originals, including over 300 previously unknown works. Scholars trawled through the treasure and were astounded by the unsuspected diversity and range. Since World War II, a burgeoning of biographies, catalogs, analyses, performances and recordings have led to a thorough reevaluation of Vivaldi's significance and a new understanding and appreciation of the scope of his art.

Vivaldi's concerti fall into a general three-part pattern in which a majestic, vital opening and a rapid, playful finale are separated by a slow, lyrical movement of unprecedented depth, thus greatly extending the convention of the time of providing a brief, calming, functional interlude between the excitement of the outer movements. But even within his consistency of style, Vivaldi infused his work with

constant variety, and although the violin was his favourite, he wrote concerti featuring nearly every instrument. Luigi Dellapiccola's famous comment that Vivaldi didn't write hundreds of concerti but only one concerto hundreds of times is true only in the most superficial sense and ignores the considerable invention of his work. Nowhere is this invention and creativity more evident than in the Four Seasons.

In 1725, Vivaldi published twelve violin concerti entitled *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* (literally, The Contest of Harmony and Invention). The first four were designated *Le Quattro Stagioni*. Their enduring popularity is based to a great degree on their nature as descriptive or programmatic music, an aspect of orchestral music in which Vivaldi was a major pioneer. He didn't stop at just attaching an overall title to the set but prefaced each of the concerti with a sonnet (see below), likely to have been written by Vivaldi himself, describing the concerto's programme.

Spring – Concerto in E Major

Allegro

Springtime is upon us.

The birds celebrate her return with festive song, and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes. Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven, then they die away to silence, and the birds take up their charming songs once more.

Largo

On the flower-strewn meadow, with leafy branches rustling overhead, the goat-herd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him.

Allegro

Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes, nymphs and shepherds lightly dance beneath the brilliant canopy of spring.

Summer – Concerto in G minor

Allegro non molto

Beneath the blazing sun's relentless heat men and flocks are sweltering, pines are scorched. We hear the cuckoo's voice; then sweet songs of the turtle dove and finch are heard. Soft breezes stir the air...but threatening north wind sweeps them suddenly aside. The shepherd trembles, fearful of violent storm and what may lie ahead.

Adagio e piano - Presto e forte

His limbs are now awakened from their repose by fear of lightning's flash and thunder's roar, as gnats and flies buzz furiously around.

Presto

Alas, his worst fears were justified, as the heavens roar and great hailstones beat down upon the proudly standing corn.

Autumn – Concerto in F Major

Allegro

The peasants celebrate with song and dance the harvest safely gathered in. The cup of Bacchus flows freely, and many find their relief in deep slumber.

Adagio molto

The singing and the dancing die away as cooling breezes fan the pleasant air, inviting all to sleep without a care.

Allegro

The hunters emerge at dawn, ready for the chase, with horns and dogs and cries. Their quarry flees while they give chase. Terrified and wounded, the prey struggles on, but, harried, dies.

Winter – Concerto in F minor

Allegro non molto

Shivering, frozen mid the frosty snow in biting, stinging winds; running to and fro to stamp one's icy feet, teeth chattering in the bitter chill.

Largo

To rest contentedly beside the hearth, while those outside are drenched by pouring rain.

Allegro

We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously, for fear of tripping and falling.

Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and, rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.

We feel the chill north winds coarse through the home despite the locked and bolted doors... this is winter, which nonetheless brings its own delights.