

# Antonio Vivaldi



1678-1741



A composer is someone who writes music.



Vivaldi was a **composer** in the Baroque Period. He was born in Venice, in Italy and he is now thought of as one of the greatest ever Baroque composers.



As well as being a composer, Vivaldi was a gifted violinist. He was taught to play the violin by his father and they regularly performed together in Venice.



At the age of fifteen, Vivaldi began studying to become a priest. He was ordained in 1703, aged 25, and was soon nicknamed il Prete Rosso, "The Red Priest". (Rosso is Italian for "red", and would have referred to the colour of his hair.)

THE IDEAL BAROQUE INSTRUMENTALIST



# THE BAROQUE PERIOD

## The Beginning of the Orchestra

The Baroque period of classical music lasted from 1600 to 1750. The art and architecture in this era was complicated, full of carvings of flowers, lots of gold coloring, and exaggerated images of love and tragedy which was reflected in the music. Music was written for and heard only by kings and nobility and the Church during the Baroque period—few “common people” got to hear this new sensation.

Venice, Italy is a city in Europe that has canals for streets and was an important center for Baroque music. The famous St. Mark's Cathedral in Piazza San Marco (Saint

Mark's Square) is a good example of how the art and architecture of the period inspired its music. The beautiful and complicated gold arches, made from gluing tiny tiles together (a technique called a mosaic), at the front of the Cathedral stand beneath huge golden towers capped with giant statues of horses that overlook the beautiful and elegant square. The Church wished to dazzle everyone with the splendor of its art—the paintings, sculptures and the architecture of its buildings—and the music heard within had to be just as awesome as the buildings themselves.

**Composers wrote music** for St. Mark's and placed the musicians in the balconies, near the altar and throughout the church to surround the audience with music. The sound was spectacular and the audience was wowed. This was the beginning of orchestral music.



# Quiz

1. Where was Vivaldi born?
2. What instrument was Vivaldi very talented at playing?
3. Who taught Vivaldi to play the instrument?
4. What job did Vivaldi train to do before he was a composer?
5. What was Vivaldi's nickname?

After training as a Priest, Vivaldi switched to teaching the violin to girls at an orphanage in Venice, where part of his job was to compose music for them to play. The girls at his school played many different instruments and also sang, so he composed music for lots of instruments and for choirs too.

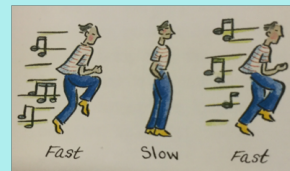
Vivaldi composed 500 *concertos* (for instruments like the violin, mandolin, flute and cello), 46 operas and many other works, including the beautiful choral piece Gloria. His most famous composition is a set of four violin *concertos* called the Four Seasons.



A concerto is a piece of music composed for solo instrument and orchestra.

A concerto is a bit like a conversation. The solo instrument asks a question and the other instruments reply. Concerto means 'with accompaniment' in Italian.

Concertos are in 3 parts called 'movements' that vary from fast, to slow, then back to fast.



Your challenge:

Create a mind map of information and pictures about Vivaldi's life.

