



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I Solisti Veneti

CLAUDIO SCIMONE

Conductor

TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6, 1988, AT 8:00
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Music of Antonio Vivaldi — 1678-1741

“The Seasons” for Violin and String Orchestra
from *Il cimento dell’armonia e dell’invenzione*

Concerto in E major, RV 269 (“Spring”)
Allegro Largo Allegro

Concerto in G minor, RV 315 (“Summer”)
Allegro non molto Adagio Presto

Concerto in F major, RV 293 (“Autumn”)
Allegro Adagio molto Allegro

Concerto in F minor, RV 297 (“Winter”)
Allegro non molto Largo Allegro

MARCO FORNACIARI, *Soloist*

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

Concerto in B minor for Four Violins, Cello, and String Orchestra, RV 580
from *L’estro armonico*
Allegro Largo Allegro

MARCO FORNACIARI, KAZUKI SASAKI, GLAUCO BERTAGNIN, STEFANO ZANCHETTA,
Violinists

GIANANTONIO VIERO, *Cellist*

(Program continued on next page.)

*The harpsichord heard this evening is a double manual, five-octave instrument built in 1978
by Willard Martin, Opus 101, owned by Marilyn Mason, Professor and University Organist, U-M.*

I Veneti Solisti are represented by Columbia Artists Management Inc., New York City.

Halls Cough Tablets, courtesy of Warner-Lambert Company, are available in the lobby.

Concerto in C major for Violin and Double String Orchestra, RV 581

“For the Assumption of the Virgin Mary”

Adagio e staccato; allegro, ma poco poco

Largo

Allegro

BETTINA MUSSUMELI, *Soloist*

Concerto in G major for Two Mandolines and String Orchestra, RV 532

Allegro Andante Allegro

UGO ORLANDI and DORINA FRATI, *Soloists*

PROGRAM NOTES

by CLAUDIO SCIMONE

“*The Seasons*” for Violin and String Orchestra

The Seasons are the products of a happy time in the life of Antonio Vivaldi, during which he had reached the pinnacle of his career in the milieu of eighteenth-century Venice, where refinement, elegance, and love of art joined the *joie de vivre* of a wealthy world approaching its decline.

These four descriptive concerti were inserted by Vivaldi into his collection of twelve concerti published in Amsterdam around 1722 and known as *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (The Trial of Harmony and Invention), which had as a theme the rivalry between music and descriptive creativity. The concerti had already existed for quite a while before being published, having come into being as a result of Vivaldi's dedication to the Count of Marzin, for whom the composer often performed his creations, much to the Count's delight. As we listen to these twelve short portraits of pastoral life, we can almost see the distinguished Count listening, very pleased with the violinist/composer's smile, poetic vein, and subtle irony. The success of *The Seasons* was sudden and enormous, so much so that many composers imitated or outright transcribed them. (Corrette lifted an entire section of *Spring* and transformed it into a psalm for soloists, chorus, and orchestra.)

Vivaldi was ordained in 1704, but was quickly relieved of the duty of saying Mass owing to an infirmity that he defined as “tightness of the chest.” He was appointed violin teacher to the Hospital of the Piety, which took care of the education of foundling Venetian girls. The composer took good advantage of his position and created one of the most famous schools of music known to history: travelers from all over Europe came to hear the girls of the Piety perform their Sunday masses and concerts. Vivaldi would afterwards give more importance to his operatic activities, which would yield 94 operas, a 25-year position of impresario at the Teatro Sant'Angelo and a long-term relationship with Anna Giro, a famous opera singer. Many of the innovations Vivaldi brought to instrumental music can be traced to his experiences in the world of opera.

The Seasons constitute the triumph of the concerto for soloist, a form whose origins Vivaldi had illustrated in his third work *L'estro armonico* (The Harmonic Fire) and developed to maturity in *La Stravaganza* (The Extravaganza). The last formal innovations, which make *The Seasons* a unique work from any standpoint, were derived from the attempt at descriptive writing that strongly influenced the form of the soloist's dialogue with the rest of the orchestra. This attempt is best explained, not only by the four sonnets that Vivaldi himself inserted in the published edition of his work, but by the numerous indications on the score, some of which are of a very vivid specificity. In a passage from *Summer*, for example, in which violas and basses play the same notes, one group receives the marking “impetuous winds” and the other “conflicting winds.”

Concerto in B minor, RV 580 (Op. 3, No. 10)
for Four Violins, Cello, and String Orchestra

This concerto is one of the Red Priest's (a name derived from his red hair) most well-known works and constitutes a portion of his Third Opus, *L'estro armonico*, which was the first collection of his concerti published around 1711. This collection consists of four concerti for four violins, each one followed by a concerto for two violins and a concerto for solo violin (in his Concerti Nos. 2, 10, and 11 there is also a cello solo). The structure contained in these pieces was conceived so as to present the new creation of the Venetian School: the concerto for soloist and orchestra. To our modern tastes, Vivaldi's concerti for four violins are the most interesting and enjoyable, aside from being unique in the history of music.

In the opera houses of Venice, the beginning of the opera was announced by a series of chords played by the orchestra, the so-called "Symphony Before the Opera" that served the purpose of summoning the public into the auditorium, much like the modern-day chimes. These chords were consequently arranged into three rhythmically different movements: *veloce-lento-veloce*; Cavalli's symphony *The Virtue of Cupid's Darts* is composed of the same chord repeated 264 times! This formula was later varied with movements taken from the individual parts, beginning with simple *arpeggi* and moving on to melodic and virtuosic passages, thereby arriving at the modern concerto. Vivaldi's genius shows us how grandeur, dramatic richness, and virtuosic splendor can be obtained in such a simple form.

No less original and unique in its genre is Bach's transcription of this concerto for four harpsichords (Concerto in A minor, BWV 1065).

Concerto in C major for Violin and Double String Orchestra, RV 581 *"For the Assumption of the Virgin Mary"*

Modern stereophony has its remote origins in Venice, where the presence of two organs placed one facing the other against opposing walls of the Basilica di San Marco in 1500 forced composers into assembling groups of musicians and their instruments around either organ so that they could alternate or play simultaneously. Thus arose the distinctive style known as *a due cori* (literally, "for two choruses"). Famous examples of this style have been preserved in the songs written for two or even three instrumental "choruses" by Giovanni Gabrieli and in works by other great composers of successive eras, among them J. S. Bach and Handel.

In this marvelous Concerto in C major, Vivaldi gives us an imaginative example of the dual-chorus style, in which the two orchestras (which "answer" one another) accompany a solo violin, producing remarkable effects of dynamic contrast and contrapuntist imitations between the two choruses. (The second chorus frequently answers *pianissimo*.)

It is one of Vivaldi's most developed concertos: the *tutti* are written with great finesse and the solo part is rich in virtuosic and expressive figurations. The long signature cadenza of the last movement is important, because it ends with a very original *dolcissimo* chromatic melody. The very fact that the concerto was written for the festivities surrounding the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and was most probably performed by a female pupil of Vivaldi's, bestows a light and luminous character to this particularly rich and varied work.

Concerto in G major for Two Mandolines and String Orchestra, RV 532

No statement about music has proved to be as off-the-mark as the one — attributed to either Igor Stravinsky or Luigi Dalla Piccola — saying that Vivaldi has not written 450 concertos, but the same concerto 450 times. Not only is every single concerto by the Red Priest a new work from the point of view of musical form and structure, but no composer has written for such a wide range of instruments — almost all that were in existence during his lifetime.

Modern listeners may associate the mandoline only with Neapolitan folk-songs; nevertheless, the instrument has been dignified in the works of such composers as Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Mahler, and Respighi, among others. Vivaldi's concertos for mandoline are, without a doubt, the most important works in the literature for the instrument. Vivaldi seems to have been very much in love with the mandoline. The great Concerto for Two Mandolines is a unique achievement not only for the peculiarity of the instrumental ensemble required, but also for the beauty and elegance of the thematic material used, the fantasy of the development — which in the two fast movements progresses from a very simple to a more complex harmonic and rhythmic pattern — and the variety of its instrumental color.

The Concerto for Two Mandolines may have been written for two talented girls among Vivaldi's young pupils at La Pietà or may have been inspired by the artistry of a noble amateur such as the Marquis Bentivoglio, with whom the composer had a very close relationship, or the daughter of Count Clary, the French Ambassador in Venice at the time.

About the Artists

Formed in Padua in 1959, **I Solisti Veneti** ranks as one of the world's leading proponents of Italian music, performing a wide range of compositions stretching from the classics of Vivaldi to contemporary works by Sylvano Bussotti, Franco Donatoni, and Valentino Bucchi, among many others. A regular participant at such major events as the Salzburg Festival, the group has performed to tremendous acclaim in more than fifty countries, including the United States and Japan. Five major television projects have been devoted to the orchestra, the most recent being *Vivaldi: peintre de la musique*, made by François Reichenbach, and a film by Ermanno Olmi of Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross*, recorded in Padua's Giotto Chapel. In the 1988-89 season I Solisti Veneti makes its first major United States tour in over a decade. The group first performed in Ann Arbor in 1966.

The ensemble is particularly well-known for its extensive recordings of the works of Antonio Vivaldi and Tommaso Albinoni. I Solisti Veneti has recorded works of Francesco Geminiani, Alessandro Marcello, Giuseppe Tartini, Gioacchino Rossini, and Sylvano Bussotti. With Marilyn Horne the group has recorded Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* and Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Among the many awards received by I Solisti Veneti for its recordings are three Grand Prix International du Disque of the Academie Charles Cros, prizes from the Academie du Disque Lyrique, and the Critica Discografica Italiana, the "Caecilia" award, the Elizabeth Memorial Medal, the Prix d'Honneur and Prix Mondial du Disque, and a Grammy award.

Founder and director of I Soloisti Veneti, **Claudio Scimone** is also director of the Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon Chamber Orchestra. After studying conducting with Dimitri Mitropoulos and Franco Ferrara, Maestro Scimone achieved international renown through a series of guest conducting appearances with such orchestras as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, the Orchestre National de France, the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, the Philharmonia Hungarica, and the Yomiuri Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo.

A native of Padua, Claudio Scimone founded I Solisti Veneti in 1959. With the chamber orchestra he has thoroughly explored the works of the great Italian baroque masters, including all of the Vivaldi works printed during the composer's lifetime. I Solisti Veneti's numerous premiere performances attest to Maestro Scimone's sincere commitment to modern music.

An internationally recognized musicologist, Maestro Scimone is the author of *Segno, Significato, Interpretazione*. His revisions and first modern editions of Tartini's works have sparked a revival of interest in this nearly forgotten composer and philosopher. Equally important is his revision and publication of Antonio Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso*, which he directed in its world premiere recording in 1977 with Marilyn Horne and Victoria de Los Angeles. Two years later he led its first modern public performance, at the Teatro Filarmonico in Verona. He has also collaborated closely with the Rossini Foundation in preparing the definitive edition of that composer's works. In 1979 he presented Rossini's *Mose in Egitto* in Lisbon and later recorded it for Philips Classics.

Maestro Scimone has made several world premiere recordings for Erato-RCA, the most outstanding being the Four Great Symphonies of Muzio Clementi with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, unpublished works of Giacomo Puccini, Saverio Mercadante, and Arrigo Boito, and Italian Overtures by Gaetano Donizetti, Gaspare Spontini, and Amilcare Ponchielli.

Among the many awards he has received for his scholarly and musical achievements are the Coolidge Memorial Medal, the Gold Medal of the President of the Italian Republic, the Prix Mondial du Disque de Montreux (previously only given to Stokowski, Rubinstein, Böhm, Solti, and Bernstein), the Diapason d'Or, the "Caecilia" award of the Union de la Presse Musicale Belge, the Prix de l'Academie du Disque Lyrique, and the Premio della Critica Discografica Italiana. He has also won the Grand Prix International du Disque of the Academie Charles Cros several times. Scimone is a frequent guest at the Aspen Music Festival and has also led an all-Vivaldi program at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival.

I SOLISTI VENETI
CLAUDIO SCIMONE, *Conductor*

<i>First Violins</i> Marco Fornaciari, <i>Leader</i> Bettina Mussumeli, <i>Associate Leader</i> Glauco Bertagnin, <i>Associate Leader</i> Stefano Zanchetta Emanuele Benfenati Giacobbe Stevanato Lucio Degani	<i>Second Violins</i> Kazuki Sasaki, <i>Leader</i> Gabriele Baffero, <i>Associate Leader</i> Luca Falasca Federico Parravicini Cristina Monacelli	<i>Violas</i> Antonello Furello Fabrizzio Merlini Luca Falasca <i>Cellos</i> Gianantonio Viero, <i>Leader</i> Daniel Malkin Vincenzo Taroni	<i>Double Bass</i> Gabriele Ragghianti <i>Mandolines</i> Ugo Orlandi, <i>Leader</i> Dorina Frati <i>Harpichord</i> Ernesto Merlini
--	--	---	---

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

John W. Reed, <i>President</i>	Thomas E. Kauper, <i>Secretary</i>	
David B. Kennedy, <i>Vice President</i>	Norman G. Herbert, <i>Treasurer</i>	
Robert G. Aldrich	Patrick B. Long	John D. Paul
James J. Duderstadt	Judythe R. Maugh	Ann S. Schriber
Richard L. Kennedy		Herbert E. Sloan

Kenneth C. Fischer, *Executive Director*

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1270

Telephone: (313) 764-2538