



Antonio Vivaldi

## "Spring" from *The Four Seasons*

### Antonio Vivaldi

Born: March 4, 1678

Died: July 28, 1741

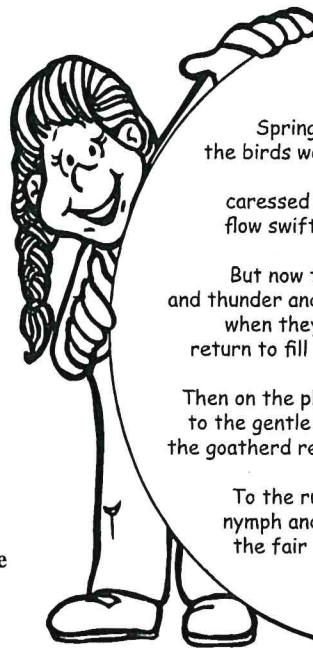
Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice, Italy, which is where he spent most of his life. His father, a professional musician at St. Mark's Church, taught him to play the violin, and the two often performed together.

Although Vivaldi was ordained a priest in the Catholic Church (he was called the "Red Priest" because of his flaming red hair), health problems prevented him from celebrating the Mass and he was not associated with any one particular church. He continued to study and practice the violin and became a teacher at a Venetian orphanage for young girls, a position he held for the rest of his life. The orchestra of this

institution became famous, and people came from miles around to hear Vivaldi's talented students perform the beautiful music he had written for them.

Vivaldi was one of the best composers of his time. He wrote operas, sonatas and choral works, but is particularly known for his concertos (he composed over 500, although many have been lost). One of the most famous sets is *The Four Seasons*. After his death, Vivaldi's music was virtually forgotten for many years. However, in the early 1900's, many of his original scores were rediscovered and his popularity and reputation have continued to grow since that time.

1. This concerto has a feeling of:
  - a. constant motion and change
  - b. stillness -the music stays the same
2. What is the name of the family of instruments used in this concerto?
  - a. brass family    b. string family
3. Does the music gradually change from soft to loud or do the changes happen suddenly?
  - a. gradually - using crescendos and decrescendos
  - b. suddenly - using terraced dynamics
4. Is there any part of the music that sounds like the instruments are playing a round (imitating each other)?
  - a. yes    b. no



### Spring

Spring has come, and joyfully  
the birds welcome it with cheerful song,  
and the streams,  
caressed by the breath of zephyrs,  
flow swiftly with sweet murmurings.

But now the sky is cloaked in black  
and thunder and lightning announce themselves;  
when they die away, the little birds  
return to fill the air with their sweet song.

Then on the pleasant flower-strewn meadow,  
to the gentle rustle of leaves and branches  
the goatherd rests, his faithful dog at his side.

To the rustic bagpipe's gay sound,  
nymph and shepherd dance beneath  
the fair spring sky in all its glory.