



Image: 'Concertatio in Silva' © Trifolion Echternach.

This sound recording was initiated by a puppet show production *Concertatio in Silva* (Conflict in the Forest), based on an idea by Michael Schneider, set to the music of Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, in association with TRIFOLIION. Scenic realisation was by the Figurentheater Favoletta and music performed by the European Union Baroque Orchestra in Echternach, Luxembourg, in June 2014.

OBSIDIAN

# THE FOUR SEASONS & STRING CONCERTI

Antonio Vivaldi

HUW DANIEL

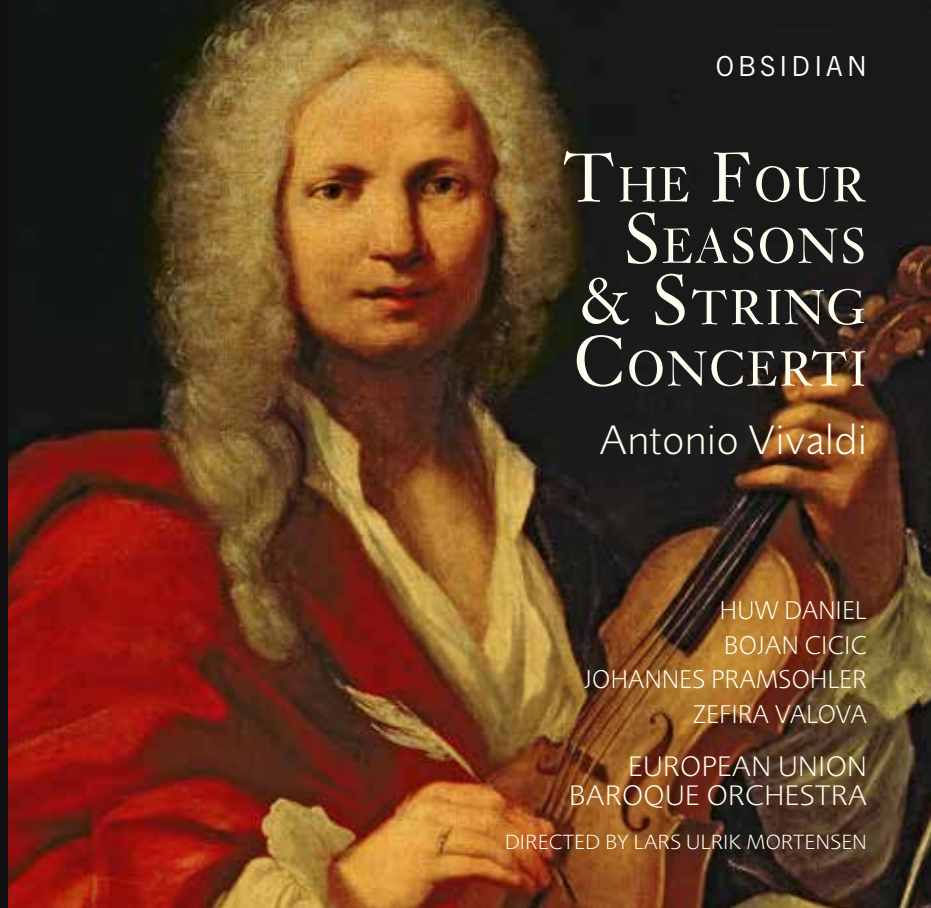
BOJAN CICIC

JOHANNES PRAMSOHLER

ZEFIRA VALOVA

EUROPEAN UNION  
BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

DIRECTED BY LARS ULRIK MORTENSEN



# The Four Seasons & String Concerti

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Concerto for strings and continuo in D RV124	Violin Concerto in F RV293 'Autumn'
1 <b>Allegro</b> (2'19)	13 <b>Allegro</b> (5'07)
2 <b>Grave</b> (1'18)	14 <b>Adagio molto</b> (2'17)
3 <b>Allegro</b> (1'58)	15 <b>Allegro</b> (3'18)
4 <b>Sonnet La primavera (Spring)</b> (0'50)	16 <b>Sonnet L'inverno (Winter)</b> (0'54)
Violin Concerto in E RV269 'Spring'	Violin Concerto in f minor RV297 'Winter'
5 <b>Allegro</b> (3'28)	17 <b>Allegro non molto</b> (3'17)
6 <b>Largo e pianissimo sempre</b> (2'27)	18 <b>Largo</b> (1'52)
7 <b>Allegro pastorale</b> (4'02)	19 <b>Allegro</b> (3'08)
8 <b>Sonnet L'estate (Summer)</b> (0'52)	Concerto for strings and continuo in g minor RV157
Violin Concerto in g minor RV315 'Summer'	20 <b>Allegro</b> (2'03)
9 <b>Allegro non molto</b> (4'47)	21 <b>Largo</b> (2'14)
10 <b>Adagio e piano – Presto e forte</b> (2'01)	22 <b>Allegro</b> (2'17)
11 <b>Presto</b> (2'32)	
12 <b>Sonnet L'autunno (Autumn)</b> (0'49)	Total time (52'50)

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CD713

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## EUROPEAN UNION BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

LARS ULRIK MORTENSEN

*director & harpsichord*

HUW DANIEL *violin* 'Spring'

BOJAN CICIC *violin* 'Summer'

JOHANNES PRAMSOHLER *violin* 'Autumn'

ZEFIRA VALOVA *violin* 'Winter'

ANTONIO DE SARLO *speaker*

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Paul James, Emma Wilkinson &

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Harpsichords (by Gerrit Klop 1989) prepared

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Jumpstart Jr. Foundation (Tim Mintiens)



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Ministère de la Culture



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Luxembourg

TRIFOLION  
Echternach



## **Antonio Vivaldi**

### **'A Man for All Seasons'**

The natural world was a playground for Baroque composers. The idea of 'art as imitation of nature' was fundamental to the aesthetic outlook of the age, and composers developed a whole vocabulary of colourful, evocative effects with which to conjure up the sights and sounds of the countryside. Birds could be mimicked with charming realism, frosty mornings shi-shi-shivered with cold, and the galloping energy of the hunt was harnessed for dashing Allegros.

Antonio Vivaldi was one of the greatest Baroque naturalists. He produced a delightful variety of descriptive concertos – from cuckoos to storms at sea – but it was his Four Seasons (Op.8, 1725) which really caught the public's imagination. These novel, cutting-edge concertos took their inspiration from a set of four sonnets – one for each season – which may well have been written by Vivaldi himself. To ensure that the players understood exactly what he was

trying to express in the music, he made sure that the relevant verses of each poem were carefully cued into all the performing parts. But his main ideas were clear for everyone to hear: the turbulent storms of Spring, Summer and Winter; the echoing birdsong in the opening movements of Spring and Summer; the excitement of the hunt at the close of Autumn; and, whatever the season, sleep and relaxation in all four slow movements.

Although it's the faster outer movements of the Four Seasons which tend to grab our attention immediately, Vivaldi was actually at his most imaginative in the central slow movements. In Spring, Summer and Winter he cleverly builds the music up in layers in order to paint the poetic images simultaneously, one on top of the other. In Winter, for example, the violins' warm, singing melody illustrates 'contented resting beside the hearth', while at the same time the plucking of the lower strings illustrates the less fortunate outside 'drenched by pouring rain'.

In Georgian England the Four Seasons met with a mixed response. The learned music historian Sir John Hawkins was rather impressed, and carefully explained to his readers in the 1770s that Vivaldi's works were 'a pretended paraphrase, in musical notes, of so many sonnets on the four seasons, wherein the author endeavours, by the force of harmony, and particular modifications of air and measure, to excite ideas correspondent with the sentiments of the several poems. The attempt is new and singular and distinguished for [its] peculiar force and energy'. But Charles Avison, Britain's most prolific concerto composer, was less enthusiastic: he thought Vivaldi's imitation of a barking dog in the middle movement of Spring was positively naïve. 'It would be much more effective', he mocked, to use 'the creatures themselves just as they did at the French court' where a herd of hogs was supposedly made into an 'organical instrument', oinking in a 'harmonious manner' when prodded with a stick.

The ebullient concertos which begin and end this recording may have no evocative titles, but they are rich in imagination. Unlike the Four Seasons, there's no violin soloist, and instead Vivaldi lavished all his ideas on the orchestra alone. The Concerto in D Major RV124 appeared around 1730 in Vivaldi's final published volume of concertos. Its opening movement makes dramatic capital out of the contrasts between rising and descending scales, full and unison textures, and opposing major and minor tonalities; while its final movement is a loose, playful fugue. Finally, despite its serious key of G minor, the little concerto RV157 is an exuberant study in jaunty syncopation. Whether writing colourfully illustrative music, or simply drawing on his own imagination, Vivaldi's inspiration was wide-ranging and ever-renewing – truly he was a man for all seasons.

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# Sonnets for The Four Seasons

## Violin Concerto in E RV269

La primavera

*Allegro*

Giunt' è la Primavera e festosetti  
La Salutan gl' Augei con lieto canto,  
E i fonti allo Spirar de' Zeffiretti  
Con dolce mormorio Scorrano intanto:  
Vengon' coprendo l'aer di nero amante  
E Lampi, e tuoni ad annuntiarla eletti  
Indi tacendo questi, gl' Augelletti;  
Tornan' di nuovo al lor canoro incanto:

*Largo*

E quindi sul fiorito ameno prato  
Al caro mormorio di fronde e piante  
Dorme 'l Caprar col fido can' à lato.

*Allegro*

Di pastoral Zampogna al suon festante  
Danzan Ninfe e Pastor nel tetto amato  
Di primavera all' apparir brillante.

## Violin Concerto in g minor RV315

L'estate

*Allegro non molto*

Sotto dura Staggon dal Sole accesa  
Langue l'huom, langue 'l gregge, ed arde il Pino;  
Scioglie il Cucco la Voce, e tosto intesa  
Canta la Tortorella e 'l gardelino.  
Zeffiro dolce Spira, mà contesa  
Muove Borea improvviso al Suo vicino;  
E piange il Pastore, perche sospesa  
Teme fiera borasca, e 'l suo destino;

*Adagio e piano - Presto e forte*

Toglie alle membra lasse il Suo riposo  
Il timore de' Lampi, e tuoni fieri  
E de mosche, e mossoni il Stuel furioso!

*Presto*

Ah che pur troppo i Suoi timor Son veri  
Tuona e fulmina il Ciel e grandinoso  
Tronca il capo alle Spiche e a' grani alteri

Spring

*Allegro*

Spring has arrived, and happy  
Birds welcome it with joyful song,  
And the streams murmur sweetly  
At the breath of Zephyrs, but meanwhile  
A black mantle covers the sky  
And thunder and lightning announce their presence  
When these fall silent, little birds  
Return again to their charming song.

*Largo*

And so, in the pleasant flower-filled meadow,  
With the sweet murmur of leaves and trees  
Sleeps the goat-herd with his faithful dog beside him.

*Allegro*

To the festive accompaniment of a rustic bagpipe  
Nymphs and shepherds dance under the welcome sky at  
the arrival of a glorious spring.

Summer

*Allegro non molto*

Under the season's harsh conditions, scorched by the sun,  
Languish the man and his flock, the pine tree burns;  
The cuckoo sings, and with him  
Sing the turtle dove and the goldfinch.  
A sweet Zephyr blows, but suddenly,  
Bora begins arguing with his neighbour.  
The shepherd cries out,  
frightened of the storm and of his fate.

*Adagio e piano - Presto e forte*

Forced to get up and move his weary limbs  
In fear of thunder and ferocious lightning  
And swarms of flies and wasps!

*Presto*

Alas, all his fears are justified  
Thunder and lightning fill the sky and hailstones  
Snap off the heads of the tall corn crops.

## Violin Concerto in F RV293

L'autunno

*Allegro*

Celebra il Vilanel con balli e Canti  
Del felice raccolto il bel piacere  
E del liquor de Bacco accesi tanti  
Finiscono col Sonno il lor godere

*Adagio molto*

Fà ch' ogn'uno tralasci e balli e canti  
L'aria che temperata dà piacere,  
E la Staggon ch' invita tanti e tanti  
D' un dolcissimo Sonno al bel godere.

*Allegro*

I cacciator alla nov' alba à caccia  
Con corni, Schioppi, e canni escono fuore  
Fugge la belua, e Seguono la traccia;  
Già Sbigottita, e lassa al gran rumore  
De' Schioppi e canni, ferita minaccia  
Languida di fuggir, mà oppressa muore.

## Violin Concerto in f minor RV297

L'inverno

*Allegro non molto*

Aggiacciato tremar trà neri argenti  
Al Severo Spirar d' orrido Vento,  
Correr battendo i piedi ogni momento;  
E pel Soverchio gel batter i denti;

*Largo*

Passar al foco i di quieti e contenti  
Mentre la pioggia fuor bagna ben cento

*Allegro*

Caminar Sopra 'l ghiaccio, e à passo lento  
Per timor di cader gersene intenti;  
Gir forte Sdruzziolar, cader à terra  
Di nuovo ir Sopra 'l ghiaccio e correr forte  
Sin ch' il ghiaccio si rompe, e si disserra;  
Sentir uscir dalle ferrate porte  
Sirocco Borea, e tutti i Venti in guerra  
Quest' è 'l verno, mà tal, che gioja apporta.

Autumn

*Allegro*

The peasant celebrates with dances and songs  
The sweet pleasure of a plentiful harvest  
And lit up by the liquor of Bacchus  
many end their enjoyment in sleep.

*Adagio molto*

So everyone stops singing and dancing  
As the cooler air gives pleasure  
And the season invites so many  
To rest in sweetest sleep.

*Allegro*

The hunter goes out at the new dawn to hunt  
With horns, rifles and dogs  
The prey flees, and the hunter follows its tracks.  
Bewildered and frightened by the noise  
Of guns and dogs, wounded, the prey  
Tries wearily to escape but, overwhelmed, dies.

Winter

*Allegro non molto*

Shivering frozen in icy snow  
In the cruel blast of the biting wind,  
They run, stamping feet constantly  
And overcome with the cold, their teeth chatter.

*Largo*

Passing quiet and contented days by the fire  
While the rain outside drenches everything

*Allegro*

Walking on the ice, with slow steps,  
With care, afraid of falling;  
Moving abruptly, slipping, falling on the ground  
Again on the ice, running fast  
Until the ice breaks and cracks;  
Hearing through closed doors,  
Sirocco, Bora and all the winds at war  
This is the winter, but nevertheless, what delight it brings.

## European Union Baroque Orchestra

The European Union Baroque Orchestra is like no other orchestra, offering performing experience to provide a bridge into the profession: its modus operandi since its foundation in 1985 has been to audition and select new personnel every year. Members of EUBO come from all over the EU, working together for a season under the inspirational leadership of Music Director Lars Ulrik Mortensen and some of the world's finest baroque musicians. A generation of EUBO musicians graduate each year; alumni go on to successful careers with Europe's leading early instrument ensembles, many as soloists. Granted the title of EU Ambassador for

Culture by the European Parliament, EUBO is honoured to fly the flag for Europe. "EUBO is" as the President of the European Commission wrote, "a perfect symbol of the power of integration, a subtle and potent instrument of harmonisation between people and nations". EUBO's ephemeral existence makes its concerts special: live performances enjoying all the technical accomplishment of the best young baroque musicians in Europe, allied to an infectious undimmed sense of discovery and enjoyment. Tours take the talented young orchestra to all corners of Europe – from celebrated city concert halls, to seaside summer festivals, to monasteries nestling

in autumnal forests, and to winter celebrations in beautiful churches. And at the centre of these great arcs of European travelling EUBO has established several residencies, most

notably in Echternach, Luxembourg, where, with the support of local partners, it recorded this CD in the impressive Trifolion concert hall.



EUBO "orchestra-in-residence" in Echternach



## European Union Baroque Orchestra

### Director & harpsichord

Lars Ulrik Mortensen *Denmark*

### Violin soloists

Huw Daniel *United Kingdom*

Bojan Cicic *Croatia*

Johannes Pramsohler *Italy*

Zefira Valova *Bulgaria*

### Violins

Roldán Bernabé-Carrión *Spain*

Antonio De Sarlo *Italy*

Yotam Gaton *Romania*

Sarina Matt *Liechtenstein*

Jamiang Santi *Italy*

### Violas

Rafael Roth *Germany*

Hilla Heller *Hungary*

Andrea Angela Ravandoni *Sweden*

### Cellos

Guillermo Turina Serrano *Spain*

Nicola Paoli *Italy*

### Double Bass

Lisa de Boos *Belgium*

### Harpsichord

Marianna Henriksson *Finland*

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## LARS ULRIK MORTENSEN

*Music Director*

When Lars Ulrik Mortensen began studying musicology, he came across a book about English music for the virginals; he was fascinated, and this soon led him to the harpsichord. He studied first in Copenhagen and then in London, becoming harpsichordist with London Baroque and Collegium Musicum 90. In 2004, after a long association with the European Union Baroque Orchestra as keyboard tutor and guest director, Lars Ulrik Mortensen became its Music Director. A Financial Times reviewer,

writing after a EUBO concert, said “Mortensen is exceptional not just for his scholarship and virtuosity at the keyboard, but also because he makes music with his entire body and soul”. In Denmark, his home country, Lars Ulrik is the artistic director of Concerto Copenhagen whose concerts and opera productions have built a profile for the group nationally and internationally. In addition to his work with his ‘own’ orchestras, Lars Ulrik also performs extensively as guest director, soloist and chamber musician in Europe, the United States, Japan and Australia, with distinguished colleagues including Emma Kirkby, Susanne Rydén, Maria Keohane, John Holloway and Jaap ter Linden. He is also a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music. Lars Ulrik Mortensen’s many CD recordings have reaped major awards. Directing Concerto Copenhagen, his recordings include the complete harpsichord concertos by Bach, Haydn piano concertos (with soloist Ronald Brautigam), as well as symphonies by Danish composers Hartmann, Kunzen and Gerson. As well as this latest Vivaldi recording, Lars Ulrik has directed EUBO in recordings for CD of Suites by Bach, Fux and Rameau, Handel choral works, solo cantatas and ‘The Water Music’. Lars Ulrik has received a number of prizes, among them Denmark’s most prestigious music award, the Léonie Sonning Music Prize.



## HUW DANIEL

*Violin*

Welsh-born Huw Daniel studied music at Cambridge University and then in London, where his baroque violin tutor was Simon Standage. Huw was a member of the 2004 EUBO and subsequently formed the ensemble Harmony of Nations with his generation of EUBO colleagues. He now works regularly as a chamber musician and with many period instrument orchestras in the UK and Ireland, and is concertmaster of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música Porto in Portugal, Harmony of Nations, and English Touring Opera’s baroque orchestra. He frequently returns as guest leader to both EUBO and Barokkanerne Oslo. Huw plays a violin by Alessandro Mezzadri c1720, on loan from the Jumpstart Junior Foundation.

## BOJAN CICIC

*Violin*

Bojan Cicic completed his modern violin studies in Croatia, his home country, and moved to Paris and then London to pursue his baroque violin studies. He quickly established a career working regularly with many of the UK’s leading early music ensembles, including Trevor Pinnock’s European Brandenburg Ensemble, Florilegium, La Nuova Musica and The Academy of Ancient Music. With his own group, Suonar Cantando, Bojan is currently exploring solo violin repertoire including recently rediscovered works by Carbonelli. Bojan was a member of EUBO in 2000, and returned as concertmaster for tours in 2012 and 2013. He plays a violin by Francesco Ruggieri c1680, loaned to him by the Jumpstart Junior Foundation.



## JOHANNES PRAMSOHLER

### *Violin*

South Tyrolean musician Johannes Pramsohler studied modern violin in Bozen-Bolzano and London, where he began studying baroque violin with Rachel Podger. He continued his baroque studies in Paris with Patrick Bismuth, and has gone on to establish himself as a soloist, concertmaster and chamber musician, performing throughout Europe, the Near East and Japan, and playing with many prominent period instrument orchestras. Johannes has his own group, Ensemble Diderot, and directs the International Baroque Players. He was a member of the 2007 EUBO and returned as concertmaster in 2011. He plays an instrument which was previously owned and played by Reinhard Goebel, a violin made in 1713 by Pietro Giacomo Rogeri.



## ZEFIRA VALOVA

### *Violin*

Zefira Valova began her musical studies in her home city of Sofia; before she left Bulgaria to specialise in baroque violin, she held concertmaster positions with both the Classic FM Radio and Sofia Festival Orchestras. After baroque violin studies in The Netherlands, Zefira founded the Sofia Baroque Arts Festival, and was a member of the 2008 EUBO. She has returned to EUBO as a concertmaster every year since, as well as working with many of Europe's prestigious early music ensembles. She is co-founder and concertmaster of the French ensemble Les Ambassadeurs. Zefira plays a violin labelled Lorenzo & Tomaso Carracci 1760, Florence, loaned to her by the Jumpstart Junior Foundation.

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