

# Antonio Vivaldi

**BORN** 1678, Venice, Italy. **DIED** 1741, Vienna, Austria.



## HIGHLIGHTS

1. Antonio Vivaldi was born on March 4, 1678, in Venice, Italy.
2. Vivaldi's father began teaching him the violin when Antonio was a boy and sent him into the priesthood when he was 15. Unlike most divinity students, he doesn't seem to have joined a seminary or attended one on a regular basis. Instead, he may have been receiving music lessons from the director at St. Mark's, where his father worked.
3. Vivaldi spent most of his life teaching music at an orphanage for girls. He also spent many years living with two women (the Giraud sisters) in what some historians believe was a scandalous but happy menage à trois.
4. Vivaldi disliked criticism and loved to brag about his fame, skill, rich patrons, and his ability to write music quickly.

## BACKGROUND & TIMES

1. Many critics say Vivaldi recycled the same ideas over and over again, such as modern pop singers who keep recreating the same formula hits. The 19th-century composer Igor Stravinsky irreverently

remarked that rather than writing hundreds of concertos, Vivaldi wrote the same concerto hundreds of times.

2. Vivaldi fans consider him dependable and find that every piece can be counted on for charm, beauty, and crisp rhythms. They also relish the many subtle and delightful variations in his works.
3. At age 60, Vivaldi lost favor with the public and the church banned his operas. He was later barred from celebrating Mass (the church citing his relationship with the Giraud sisters as grounds for such punishment).

## INNOVATIONS IN STYLE

1. Vivaldi is famous for his instrumentals and especially for his violin music.
2. In his work *The Four Seasons*, Vivaldi carefully devised each song so the music matched the spirit and impressions of each of the four seasons.
3. Vivaldi is renowned for his concertos. These concertos later influenced Bach and helped pave the way for the Classical era. Among them was a work that is perhaps the most important musical piece of the first half of the 18th century.

Vivaldi called it *L'Estro Harmonica—The Harmonic Whim*.

4. To date, 750 of Vivaldi's works have been discovered. His style changed little over the years, and today he's loved for his fresh melodies, lively rhythms, and the clarity of his work.

## UNIQUE INFLUENCE

1. Vivaldi is considered one of the heroes of the Baroque period.
2. He serves as a transition between the Baroque period and the Classical period.
3. The most famous and popular of Vivaldi's compositions is his concerto *The Four Seasons*. It is one of the most frequently played pieces of classical music on radio stations and elsewhere.
4. Vivaldi was one of the leading violinists in history and perhaps the foremost composer of violin music. He was Italy's master composer of concertos.
5. Vivaldi left a rich musical heritage consisting of 49 operas; 23 sinfonias; 75 sonatas; reams of oratorios; cantatas; motets; and 450 concertos.

## MAJOR WORKS

### OPERAS

*Armida al campo d'Egitto; Giustino; La fida ninfa; L'Olimpiade.*

### VOCAL MUSIC

*Juditha triumphans; Stabat Mater; Salve Regina; Gloria in D Major.*

### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

*L'Estro Harmonica; Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione (The Four Seasons: Winter, Fall, Spring and Summer); La cetra.*