



Antonio Vivaldi The Four Seasons

Paul Carr Four New Seasons

Braimah Kanneh-Mason violin

Bournemouth Symphony Chorus

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Gavin Carr conductor

Tickets £16 - £36 plus booking fee

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PAUL CARR

Four New Seasons

Ever since I first encountered Vivaldi's Four Seasons at school when it was a set work for O-Levels, I have loved the imagery and variety these four concertos for violin and string orchestra conjure up. There have been many reinterpretations of this work over the years, a sure testament to its enduring popularity, but almost none have involved the human voice, and I have long thought of using the original Vivaldi as a basis for a new choral work, setting poems suggested to me by the contrasting atmospheres and scene-setting of the 12 individual movements that make up the four concertos.

For the most part I have taken Vivaldi's harmonic structure of each movement and formed new material of my own, adding direct quotes here and there from the more recognisable sections of the original; for example, the hunting motif in the 3rd movement of Autumn, I've used to evoke the fluttering of leaves as they fall to the ground, and the lyrical theme he uses in the 2nd movement of Winter in setting a scene beside the fire, I've given to the oboe in accompanying Christina Rossetti's popular Christmas poem "In the Bleak Midwinter".

The texts I've selected throughout are a mixture of poems relating directly to their respective seasons as set out in the Vivaldi, but I've also incorporated a number of love poems that add a more passionate response to the change of season, highlighting our own changing and developing paths through love.

I began the first movement, Spring, in August 2019 as something of a plaything for me, just to see whether it would work, and to my complete delight, I felt that it did. Spurred on by this and encouraged by the sheer enjoyment I found in working on the music, the first movement of Spring was completed in a matter of days. I then approached various choirs with whom I've had a relationship over the years in the hope of putting together a commissioning coalition; of the choirs I approached, four came straight back offering support, at which point I decided to dedicate each of the four seasons to one of the commissioning choirs - Spring (Bath Minerva Choir), Summer (Dallas Chamber Choir), Autumn (English Arts Chorale), and Winter (Bournemouth Symphony Chorus).

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Cover art: 'Four Seasons' by Paul Carr