

Stories can be told orally or through poetry, music and paintings. **Composers** often write music to tell a story using sound (without words).

Vivaldi composed *The Four Seasons* based on landscape paintings by Italian artist, Marco Ricci. The composition consists of four pieces (*Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter*), each one containing three movements with tempos in the following order: fast-slow-fast.

When **composers** write a musical narrative of a story, poem, or painting, it is called **program music**. Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* is one of the earliest examples of program music which became much more common a century later.

The quartet will be playing excerpts from "*Spring*." You can listen to the entire movement on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3nSvliBNFo>.

Other compositions from which excerpts will be played by the quartet include:

Borodin - *Nocturne* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKsCvxT8e8Y>

Bach - *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, Movement 1* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSgkeOwTVx8>

Bartok - *Quartet No. 4, Movement 3* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oulYGSXQUo>

Shostakovich - *Quartet No. 3, Movement 3* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ3zzNI0oRc>



Landscape Paintings by Marco Ricci

Musical Characters – Vivaldi and Beethoven

(adapted from biography.com)



Anonymous portrait in oils is generally believed to be of Vivaldi

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was born in 1678, in Venice, Italy. His father was a professional violinist who taught his young son to play as well. Through his father, Vivaldi met and learned to play the violin from some of the finest musicians and **composers** in Venice at the time.

At the age of 15, Vivaldi began studying to become a priest. Vivaldi's career as a priest was short because health problems prevented him from leading church services.

At the age of 25, Antonio Vivaldi was named master of violin at the Devout Hospital of Mercy in Venice. He composed most of his major works in this position over thirty years. In 1716, he was promoted to music director.

In addition to his regular employment, Vivaldi accepted a number of short-term positions funded by patrons in Mantua and Rome. It was during his term in Mantua, from around 1717 to 1721, that he wrote his four-part masterpiece, *The Four Seasons* and paired the pieces with four **sonnets**.

After a few years, Vivaldi found it difficult to earn a living and left Venice for Vienna, Austria, where he found a position in the Imperial

Court located there. He became unemployed again after the death of Charles VI, however, and died in poverty in Vienna on July 28, 1741. He was buried in a simple grave.

Today, Vivaldi's **compositions** are very popular and played **frequently**. He wrote hundreds of works, and is famous for his concertos for solo instruments or groups of instruments with orchestra. He was a highly gifted **innovator** in form and pattern and has influenced many other important composers over the years.

Composer and pianist, **Ludwig Van Beethoven**, was born in 1770 in the city of Bonn which is currently in Germany. He studied the violin and **clavier** with his father and took additional lessons from organists around town, becoming an excellent musician at an early age.



Portrait of Beethoven by Joseph Karl Stieler, 1820

On April 2, 1800, Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 in C major was performed for the first time at the Royal Imperial Theater in Vienna. The performance established him as one of Europe's most **celebrated composers**.

Beethoven wrote piece after piece that marked him as a masterful composer. His "Six String Quartets," published in 1801, put him in the company of Mozart and Haydn as one of the most important composers of the time.

Despite losing his hearing, Beethoven continued to write music at a rapid pace. From 1803-1812, known as his "middle" or "heroic" period, he composed an opera, six symphonies, four solo concerti, five string quartets, six string sonatas, seven piano sonatas, five sets of piano variations, four overtures, four trios, two sextets and 72 songs.

Despite a difficult personal life and physical challenges which included growing completely deaf, Beethoven composed his greatest music near the end of his life. Beethoven's Ninth and final symphony, completed in 1824, remains the **composer's** greatest achievement. The symphony's famous choral **finale**, with four vocal soloists and a chorus singing the words of Friedrich Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy," is perhaps the most famous piece of music in history. Beethoven died on March 26, 1827, and is considered by many people who love classical music to be the the greatest **composer** of all time.

The quartet will be playing excerpts from Beethoven's *Quartet Op. 59, No. 2*. You can listen to the entire piece on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21daKHjkXpA>

What are 3 similarities of Vivaldi and Beethoven? _____

What are 3 differences between Vivaldi and Beethoven? _____

What are some settings where a story might take place? Choose a setting and **describe a story you know** that takes place there.

SETTING AND CHARACTER:

Where does the story happen? _____

Who/what is the main character/subject? _____

Describe the main character/subject. _____

When does the story take place? _____

BEGINNING: What is the main character/subject doing as the story begins?

MIDDLE: What happens to the main character/subject?

ENDING: What happens to the main character at the end of the story?

TONE: What **adjectives** (describing words) would you use to describe people and places in your story?

MOOD: What **adjectives** would you use to describe how you feel when you think about the beginning, middle and end of your story?

Beginning: _____

Middle: _____

End: _____

WRITE YOUR OWN STORY! (Answering some of the questions may help you decide what your story will be. Then use another piece of paper and write your story.)

Introduction (Catch the attention of the reader. How do you start? Is it happy or sad?)

Setting (Where does the story happen? What's the weather?) _____

Characters (Who is in your story? What do they look like? How old are they? What are they wearing? What are they feeling?) _____

Plot (What happens next? Do other characters appear?) _____

Conflict/Problem (What's the problem? Do the characters get along? Do they disagree about something? About what do they disagree? Do they like each other?)

Climax/Problem - (The big moment in the story when the plot goes one way or another. Then what happens?) _____

Resolution (How does the conflict get resolved? What happens to the characters?)

characters – the people, animals, or animated objects a story is about
celebrated – famous in a good way
composer – a person who writes music
composition – written music
clavier – a keyboard instrument common in Europe 250 years ago similar to a piano
finale – the last part of a musical composition that is usually exciting and impressive

frequently – often
innovator – a person who uses new ideas
plot – what your story is about: the theme or idea
resolution – the way you end your story so that all problems are solved
setting – where a story takes place, it includes time period and location
sonnet – a poem of fourteen lines using rhyming words, usually having ten syllables per line.

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