

Allegro



Composer: Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Nationality: Italian

Source: *Spring, Concerto No. 1 in E Major, Op. 8* (1723)

'Allegro' is the first movement of Vivaldi's famous violin concerto, *Spring*. The concerto is part of a set of four known as *The Four Seasons* published in 1723, with each concerto inspired by one of the four seasons of the year. One of Vivaldi's most famous works, *The Four Seasons* suite remains a favourite to this day and is regularly performed across the world.

Antonio Vivaldi was an Italian composer, teacher and violinist. He is widely considered one of the most influential Baroque composers, and is believed to have even had an influence on renowned composer Bach. Throughout his life, Vivaldi composed hundreds of concertos, and more than 40 operas. Vivaldi was also a catholic priest, and wrote many sacred works for an all-female music ensemble while working in an orphanage as a violin instructor.

Performance Notes



A key consideration for this piece is that it is programmatic music. Spring, nature, flowers blooming, birds tweeting, streams rippling and leaves whispering in the wind are all asking to be imitated in your playing. The opening should be crisp and full of joy and energy, using a brisk bow stroke that is well-articulated and a sparkling narrow, fast *vibrato*.

There are obvious moments for flexibility in timing – there is no 'right' way to approach these – you should feel free, but have specific ideas in mind as to why you take more time over one note than another. At bar 31, use a *flautando* bow, floating softly over the string as you are portraying murmuring streams and gentle breezes. At bar 44 there is a brief thunderstorm heralding the arrival of spring, before a moment of sunshine at bar 47. Practise the string crossings here slowly with a relaxed wrist, keeping the bow on the strings. The birdsong moments need quick and narrow trills, with a percussive up-bow *staccato* on the quavers as if the birds are pecking.

Audio Access

Audio for this book can be accessed via the **QR code** on the right (*requires a compatible smartphone or tablet*) or by using the **URL and download code** shown on page 5.



Allegro

from *Spring, Concerto No. 1 in E Major, Op. 8*

By Antonio Vivaldi

Spring has returned.

Allegro

Musical notation for measures 1-3. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), 4/4 time. Measure 1 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *f*. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 3 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *p*.

Musical notation for measures 4-7. Measure 4 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *f*. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 7 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *f*.

Musical notation for measures 8-11. Measure 8 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *p*. The melody includes trills and triplets. Measure 11 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *p*.

BIRDSONG

Musical notation for measures 12-15. Measure 12 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*. The melody includes trills and sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 15 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*.

Musical notation for measures 16-19. Measure 16 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*. The melody includes sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 19 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*.

All is gay, and the birds sing happily

Musical notation for measures 20-22. Measure 20 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*. The melody includes trills and sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 22 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*.

Musical notation for measures 23-26. Measure 23 starts with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*. The melody includes trills and sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 26 ends with a violin (V) and finger 0, marked *mf*.

Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 8:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection from each group to be performed. For group C, you may choose one technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

Group A: Scales

All scales must be played:

- Unaccompanied
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves as shown for each example

Major and minor scales:

- Must be played at a minimum tempo of $\text{♩} = 120$
- Must be played with separate bows, **or** slurred with three quavers to a bow **or** three octaves to a bow, changing bow on the top note (**examiner choice** - the examiner will state which with each requested scale)
- With 'even note rhythms' (no long tonic)

Major Scales

A^b major, three octaves

The image shows the musical notation for an A-flat major scale, spanning three octaves. It consists of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, starting on A-flat (F4) and ending on A-flat (F7). The second staff shows the descending scale, starting on A-flat (F7) and ending on A-flat (F4). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

D^b major, three octaves

The image shows the musical notation for a D-flat major scale, spanning three octaves. It consists of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, starting on D-flat (B3) and ending on D-flat (B7). The second staff shows the descending scale, starting on D-flat (B7) and ending on D-flat (B3). The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, and A-flat).

Ear Tests

The examiner will play a two-bar diatonic melody in the key of D^b major, with a range up to an octave. There will be a D^b root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice, each preceded by four clicks. After this, there will be a one-bar count-in and then candidates need to play the melody back to a drum backing. The first note of the melody will be either the root, third or fifth. The tempo is ♩=95.

The downloadable audio is representative of what candidates will hear in an exam.

Melodic Recall | Example 1



Please note: The tests shown are examples: The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.