

# Music @ St. Alban's

*Sunday Concerts in Davidson*

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*Concert Notes – April 18, 2021*  
*Earle Cheshire-Wood*

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## **Violin Concerto in D Major, RV 211 - Vivaldi**

Though not his most famous, Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto in D Major, RV 211*, with its continuous variety and vitality, will not disappoint. "RV" is the abbreviation of "Ryom-Verzeichnis", musicologist Peter Ryom's standard catalogue of all of Vivaldi's music. ("Verzeichnis" is German for "catalogue".) This work enabled the 800-odd works of Vivaldi to be categorized by type, key, and instrumentation. In 2007, the musicologist and flautist Federico Maria Sardelli was appointed to continue the cataloguing of Vivaldi's arrangements. In conjunction with the catalog, he also published a novel investigating the mysterious disappearance of Vivaldi's manuscripts.

## **Bach Violin Concerto in E Major, BWV 1042 - J. S. Bach**

The "BWV", Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis, is another composer-based catalogue. The *Violin Concerto in E Major, BWV 1042* is thought by musicologists to have been written during the only period in Bach's years as a musician that he was not composing for Lutheran worship. He also composed the popular *Brandenburg* Concertos during this time. Close listeners may notice that in the first movement Bach uses the Italian *ritornello* style. This translates to "little return" and refers to a phrase or passage that resurfaces throughout the movement, as in ABA or ABACA patterns of phrasing.

## Violin Concerto in E Major, Op. 8, RV 269, “Spring (La Primavera)” – Vivaldi

Sonnets accompany each of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*. While the author of the sonnets is unknown, it is theorized that they were written by Vivaldi himself, since each has so many clear connections to the orchestral movements. This makes it one of the earliest known examples of “program music”, music that follows a narrative. Here is the sonnet for *Spring* in English and Italian:

### *Allegro*

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

Springtime is upon us.  
The birds celebrate her return with festive song,  
and murmuring streams are  
softly caressed by the breezes.  
Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar,  
casting their dark mantle over heaven,  
Then they die away to silence,  
and the birds take up their charming songs once  
more.

### *Largo*

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

On the flower-strewn meadow, with  
leafy branches  
rustling overhead, the goat-herd sleeps,  
his faithful dog beside him.

### *Allegro*

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

Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes,  
nymphs and shepherds lightly dance  
beneath the brilliant canopy of spring.

In the second movement, a goat-herd naps in a peaceful meadow. The solo violin is the sleeping goat-herd, the viola the barking dog, the full orchestra possibly the murmuring streams. In this solo violin arrangement, see if you can assign the musical phrases to imagery in the sonnet!