

# *Tafelmusik*

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Educational Resource

A Vivaldi Guide

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Written by Alison Mackay

and Craig Romanec

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Curriculum Expectations .....	3
Junior .....	3
Intermediate .....	3
Senior .....	4
Information .....	5
Composer’s Life .....	5
Vivaldi as a performer .....	5
Vivaldi as a teacher .....	5
Composer’s Times .....	6
Composer’s Music.....	6
How has Vivaldi's music come down to us? .....	7
Activities .....	8
Junior .....	8
Objective .....	8
Summary .....	8
Activity .....	8
Spring.....	8
Intermediate .....	9
Objective .....	9
Summary .....	9
Activity .....	9
Spring.....	9
Senior .....	10
Objective .....	10
Summary .....	10
Activity .....	10
Spring.....	10

## Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for downloading and using this educational resource guide. We hope that you will find the material useful. Within this guide you'll find content information prepared by one of Tafelmusik's own musicians, activities for students from grades 6-12 based on this information, and curriculum connections for these grades as set by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Tafelmusik, based in Toronto, is a period instrument orchestra that has achieved international stature through its recordings and concerts. Founded in 1979, the orchestra is currently lead by violinist Jeanne Lamon as music director, a post she has held since 1981.

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in Baroque choral performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the orchestra and is currently under the direction of Ivars Taurins.

This resource guide has been created for any teacher that wants to integrate the arts into their classroom; this can include core music teachers as well as classroom teachers who want to deliver a more well-rounded curriculum.

We have created this document in effort to create a strong link between ourselves and educators in the hope of promoting knowledge of Tafelmusik, period performance, and baroque and classical music in general. As such, feel free to recommend this guide to colleagues or other interested parties.

# Curriculum Expectations

**T**afelmusik focuses its attention to delivering resources appropriate for grades 6 through 12. This educational resource, including the activities presented, address the following curriculum requirements for these levels for the province of Ontario.

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## Junior Grade 6

Music	Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., painting, computer animation);
Visual Art	Produce two- and three-dimensional works of art (i.e., works involving media and techniques used in drawing, painting, sculpting, printmaking) that communicate a range of thoughts, feelings, and ideas for specific purposes and to specific audiences (e.g., create a sculpture out of clay that shows a figure engaged in a typical pioneer activity);

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## Intermediate Grade 7

Music	Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., a short essay, a dance drama);
Language (Writing)	Give evidence of an expanding vocabulary in their writing;  Show a growing awareness of the expressiveness of words in their word choice;

## Grade 8

Music	Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., videotape, improvisation, watercolour paintings);
Language (Writing)	Use the vocabulary expected for this grade level accurately and imaginatively in their writing;

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	Select and use their words with increasing sophistication and effectiveness;
<b>Senior</b>	
Grade 9	
Music (Creation)	Demonstrate an understanding of music literacy, at a level appropriate for the grade, using the creative process (perception, production, and reflection);
Music (Composing and Arranging)	Create a simple composition using the elements of melody, rhythm, and form and a variety of media (e.g., pencil and paper, acoustic instruments, recording equipment, MIDI technology, music software);
Grade 10	
Music (Creation)	Apply the elements and principles of composition at an intermediate level, using the creative process (i.e., perception, production, and reflection).
Music (Composing and Arranging)	Demonstrate an understanding of simple homophonic composition (e.g., compose a melody with a simple triad accompaniment) with a variety of media;
Grade 11	
Music (Creation)	Compose and/or arrange simple homophonic compositions, using technology where appropriate (e.g., compose a melody with lyrics that includes non-chord tones and that is set to given chord progressions that include dominant sevenths; arrange existing music for an ensemble of available instruments or voices, transposing where appropriate);
Grade 12	
Music	Compose and/or arrange simple homophonic compositions in four or more parts, using technology where appropriate (e.g., write a composition using non-chord tones in the melody and chord progressions that include dominant sevenths; arrange existing music for an ensemble of available instruments or voices, transposing where appropriate);

## Information

### Composer's Life

**A**ntonio Vivaldi was born in Venice, the beautiful Italian city of canals, gondolas and carnivals. On March 4, 1678, the day of his birth an earthquake shook the city. The baby was not expected to live because of a lung ailment but he survived for 63 years to become one of the most influential musicians of all time.



Figure 1 Antonio Vivaldi

At the age of 25, Vivaldi was ordained as a priest. He had bright red hair and came to be known as the "red priest". He spent little time in church activities, however, instead devoting his life to playing the violin, teaching, and composing instrumental pieces, operas and sacred music.

### Vivaldi as a performer

The son of a professional violinist, Vivaldi developed a dazzling technique that far surpassed the expectations of his time. His audiences were surprised and excited by his virtuosic improvisations played in very high positions. A visitor named Uffenbach reported "his playing terrified me for such has not been nor can ever be played; he came within a grass-stalk's breath of the bridge with his left hand so that the bow had no room - and this on all four strings at incredible speed!" Vivaldi had to begin composing in order to accommodate his own expanding abilities as a soloist.

### Vivaldi as a teacher

Violinists came from all over Europe to hear Vivaldi play and to take lessons from him. He was associated for most of his career with a famous music school at the "Ospedale della Pietà", a residence for orphaned and abandoned girls, many of whom were trained as singers and instrumentalists. The school had a famous orchestra made up of the most talented girls whose playing was a huge attraction for music lovers from Venice and from abroad. Most of Vivaldi's concertos were composed for this group which performed from a balcony, hidden from the audience by a lattice of ironwork.

## Notes

## Composer's Times

Venice, at the time of Vivaldi's birth, was the pleasure capital of Europe, offering an annual carnival that lasted for three months, seven full-time opera houses where the performances began at eleven at night and lasted until three in the morning, and a dizzying choice of shops, casinos, coffee houses and public masked balls.



Figure 2 Venice at the time of Vivaldi's birth.

## Composer's Music

In addition to 40 operas and works for church services, Vivaldi composed more than 500 instrumental concertos. About 350 were for solo instrument and orchestra. About 70 concertos were for 2, 3 and 4 soloists and orchestra, such as those found in his opus 3 *L'Estro Armonico*, a famous volume which was probably the most important music publication of the first half of the 18th century and which had an enormous influence on the compositions of J.S. Bach. A further group of about 60 works are orchestral concertos in which all of the players participate equally.

In these works Vivaldi developed the concerto form as we know it today with its three movements (fast-slow-fast). Virtuoso solo passages alternate with orchestral refrains or "ritornellos". The orchestral ritornello of the solo concertos almost always appears in its entirety at the beginning and end of the movement in the home key. The middle orchestral passages usually develop shortened fragments of the same material, travelling to related keys then giving the stage over to the soloist.

Vivaldi's concertos are some of the earliest works to paint pictures and describe phenomena of nature in music. The concertos of the *Four Seasons*, his

## Notes

most famous work, are full of fanciful depictions of storms, barking dogs, babbling brooks and hunting expeditions. The dramatic way in which Vivaldi used the violin and the entire orchestra to transport the audience to an imaginary world excited music lovers of his own time and still makes him one of today's most beloved composers.

How has Vivaldi's music come down to us?

Vivaldi was virtually forgotten between his death and beginning of the twentieth century. When an interest was revived around 1910 European libraries were found to contain a few works, such as *L'Estro Armonico* which had been published many times in Vivaldi's lifetime.

However, many of the works existed only in handwritten manuscript single copies and were thought to be lost. Then, in 1926, an impoverished monastery in northern Italy had to sell off its music collection and in it were found 14 thick books bound in pigskin which contained hundreds of unknown compositions by Vivaldi. Here is a sample of Vivaldi's handwriting:

L'ESTRO ARMONICO  
*Garcccaaa*  
 Consacrati  
 ALL' ALTEZZA REALE  
 Di  
 FERDINANDO III  
 GRAN PRENCIPE DI TOSCANA  
 Da D. Antonio Vivaldi  
*Musica di Violini e Concerto de' Concerti del  
 S. Spirito della Città di Venezia*  
 CONCERTO XI  
*Violino Solo e Concerto*



Figure 3 A sample score



Figure 4 A sample of Vivaldi's handwriting.

## Activities

These activities are meant to accompany the content given in the Information section of this document. Presented in three levels – junior, intermediate, and senior – each activity helps makes use of the content to teach students in an activity-based manner that is guided by the curriculum mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Teachers should recognize that the categorization of these activities serves only as a helpful guide. Please feel free to adapt any activities to your age group and class.

### Junior

#### Objective

To help students interpret music through art.

#### Summary

Students will listen to Spring of Vivaldi's Four Seasons and paint or draw details of what they hear.

#### Activity

Introduce the sonnet. Introduce students to the Spring sonnet Vivaldi apparently wrote himself which served as a descriptive basis for his music:

#### Spring

*Allegro*

Spring has come and with it gaiety,  
the birds salute it with joyous song,  
and the brooks, caressed by Zephyr's breath,  
flow meanwhile with sweet murmurings:

The sky is covered with dark clouds,  
Announced by lightning and thunder.  
But when they are silenced, the little birds  
Return to fill the air with their song:

*Largo*

Then does the meadow, in full flower,  
ripple with its leafy plants.  
The goatherd dozes, guarded by his faithful dog.

*Allegro*

Rejoicing in the pastoral bagpipes,  
Nymphs and Shepherds dance in the glade  
for the radiant onset of Springtime.

Introduce the music. Introduce students to Vivaldi's "*Spring/La Primavera*" Concerto in E Major, RV 269. Tafelmusik's recording, SK 48251, can be found on the Sony Classical label.

Create an visual representation. Have students create a painting or drawing of the music the music and sonnet. Like Vivaldi, they will use the sonnet as a basis, but will use Vivaldi's music to help shape their imagination. Students can separate a large canvas into three sections, one for each movement, or work with three canvases and arrange them in an attractive display afterwards.

## Intermediate

### Objective

To help students interpret music through writing.

### Summary

Students will listen to Spring of Vivaldi's Four Seasons and write a sonnet or poem of what they hear.

### Activity

Introduce the sonnet. Introduce students to the Spring sonnet Vivaldi apparently wrote himself which served as a descriptive basis for his music:

#### Spring

*Allegro*

Spring has come and with it gaiety,  
the birds salute it with joyous song,  
and the brooks, caressed by Zephyr's breath,  
flow meanwhile with sweet murmurings:

The sky is covered with dark clouds,  
Announced by lightning and thunder.  
But when they are silenced, the little birds  
Return to fill the air with their song:

*Largo*

Then does the meadow, in full flower,  
ripple with its leafy plants.  
The goatherd dozes, guarded by his faithful dog.

*Allegro*

Rejoicing in the pastoral bagpipes,  
Nymphs and Shepherds dance in the glade

for the radiant onset of Springtime.

Introduce the music. Introduce students to Vivaldi's "*Spring/La Primavera*" Concerto in E Major, RV 269. Tafelmusik's recording, SK 48251, can be found on the Sony Classical label.

Create their own descriptive story. Have students create their own descriptive story of the music. The setting can be anything they want: school, home, a magical kingdom. Set the story in the form of a poem.

## Senior

### Objective

To help students interpret develop their composition skills.

### Summary

Students will read the accompanying sonnet to Vivaldi's Spring and write their own music.

### Activity

Introduce the sonnet. Introduce students to the Spring sonnet Vivaldi apparently wrote himself which served as a descriptive basis for his music:

#### Spring

*Allegro*

Spring has come and with it gaiety,  
the birds salute it with joyous song,  
and the brooks, caressed by Zephyr's breath,  
flow meanwhile with sweet murmurings:

The sky is covered with dark clouds,  
Announced by lightning and thunder.  
But when they are silenced, the little birds  
Return to fill the air with their song:

*Largo*

Then does the meadow, in full flower,  
ripple with its leafy plants.  
The goatherd dozes, guarded by his faithful dog.

*Allegro*

Rejoicing in the pastoral bagpipes,  
Nymphs and Shepherds dance in the glade  
for the radiant onset of Springtime.

Introduce the music. Introduce students to Vivaldi's "*Spring/La Primavera*" Concerto in E Major, RV 269. Tafelmusik's recording, SK 48251, can be

found on the Sony Classical label. Students should analyze what compositional devices Vivaldi used to express the sonnet.

Create their own composition. Have students create their own composition to the sonnet Vivaldi used. Their composition can be in the Baroque style, or in another style.