

Antonio Vivaldi

Nature and Divinity



The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys
New York Baroque Incorporated

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CONCERTS *at* SAINT THOMAS

SAINT THOMAS CHURCH FIFTH AVENUE

The Reverend Canon Carl F. Turner, *Rector*

Richard Tanner, *The Nancy B. & John B. Hoffmann Organist and Director of Music*

OCTOBER 16, 2025
7:30 P.M.

KINDLY REMEMBER
TO SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

“Le quattro Stagioni” (*The Four Seasons*) Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op.8, RV 269 “La primavera” (*Spring*)

- i. Allegro
- ii. Largo e pianissimo sempre
- iii. Allegro pastorale

Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 8, RV 315 “L’estate” (*Summer*)

- i. Allegro non molto
- ii. Adagio e piano – Presto e forte
- iii. Presto

Concerto No. 3 in F major, Op. 8 RV 293 “L’autunno” (*Autumn*)

- i. Allegro
- ii. Adagio molto
- iii. Allegro

Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Op. 8, RV 297 “L’inverno” (*Winter*)

- i. Allegro no molto
- ii. Adagio
- iii. Allegro

Aisslinn Nosky, *violin*

INTERVAL

Gloria in D major, RV 589 Antonio Vivaldi

- i. Gloria
- ii. Et in terra pax
- iii. Laudamus te - Philippa Hyde & Margaret Carpenter Haigh, *soprano*
- iv. Gratias agimus tibi
- v. Propter magnam gloriam
- vi. Domine Deus - Philippa Hyde, *soprano*
- vii. Domine, Fili unigenite
- viii. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei - Biraj Barkakaty, *countertenor*
- ix. Qui tollis peccata mundi
- x. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris - Biraj Barkakaty, *countertenor*
- xi. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
- xii. Cum Sancto Spiritu

PROGRAM NOTES

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678. The son of a barber who later became a professional violinist, details of his early life are scarce. However, it is believed he may have received his first musical training from Giovanni Legrenzi, the *maestro di cappella* of St. Mark's Basilica and a close friend of his father. At the age of 15, Vivaldi entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1703. Because of his striking red hair, he soon earned the nickname *Il Prete Rosso*—"The Red Priest."

That same year, he was appointed violin teacher at the Ospedale della Pietà, a convent and orphanage for girls. For many years, the Ospedale had also been known for its exceptional music school and boasted one of the finest choirs and orchestras in Venice. However, since it was an enclosed convent, the performers could only be heard from behind a metal grate in the institution's chapel. Vivaldi would remain connected to the Ospedale for the next 30 years, during which time his reputation grew rapidly, both as a composer and as a virtuoso violinist. His demanding work schedule there, combined with poor health, earned him a dispensation from his priestly duties—meaning he was not required to say daily Mass or the Divine Office.

Although best remembered today for his concertos and sacred music, Vivaldi also composed 46 operas. He served as impresario at the Teatro San Angelo in Venice for several years, and the success of his operatic works led him to new opportunities in Mantua and Rome. In 1728, he met Emperor Charles VI, a great admirer of his operas. The Emperor invested Vivaldi with a medal, a knighthood, and an invitation to join his court as a composer in Vienna. To finance the move, Vivaldi sold many of his manuscripts for paltry sums and left Venice for Vienna in 1733.

Tragically, the Emperor died shortly after Vivaldi's arrival, leaving him without the Imperial patronage he had hoped for. With his music falling out of fashion and no steady income, Vivaldi struggled financially and died in poverty in 1741.

Vivaldi's greatest contribution to Western music was the formalization of the concerto form—an innovation born from his extraordinary ability as a technical violinist. The concerto form he established consists of three movements (fast–slow–fast), within which there is an alternation between the full orchestra and a soloist. In essence, concertos provide an opportunity for instrumentalists to showcase their virtuosic skill. It is worth noting that no less a figure than Johann Sebastian Bach greatly admired Vivaldi, transcribing several of his concertos for organ so that he could perform them himself.

Vivaldi's most famous and recognizable work is *Le Quattro Stagioni* (*The Four Seasons*), a sequence of four violin concertos composed during his tenure as *maestro di cappella* at the court in Mantua.

Published in 1725, *Le Quattro Stagioni* is one of the earliest and most celebrated examples of what is known as programmatic music—a type of composition that seeks to depict a text, scene, or image through sound. Each concerto corresponds to one of the four seasons of the year and was originally published alongside a descriptive sonnet, likely written by Vivaldi himself.

As the scholar Nicholas Lockey points out, a particularly novel aspect of *Le Quattro Stagioni* is that the accompanying sonnets focus on the power of nature and humanity's place within it. This marks a distinct departure from earlier Renaissance representations of the seasons, which were typically framed through classical imagery (the fall corresponding to Ceres and the harvest) or religious allegory (the spring corresponding to the resurrection of Jesus Christ).

Fresh as the day they were written, these four concertos possess a *joie de vivre* that is the cause of their inherent listenability. It is no surprise that they frequently find themselves on lists of 'top 40 classical music pieces'.

Vivaldi composed three settings of the *Gloria* from the Ordinary of the Mass. From the outset, the settings were concert pieces composed for the choir and orchestra of the Ospedale della Pietà. Of the three, the second setting, *Gloria*, **RV 589**, is the most popular. As such, it is typically referred to as "The Vivaldi Gloria." Owing to its singability and relative brevity, it is a perennial favorite of choirs the world over.

The *Gloria* is a delicious tasting menu of Baroque forms, containing smatterings of *stile antico* (*Et in terra*), fugue (*Propter magnam*), the "French" style (*Domine Fili unigenite*), as well as various aria forms for soprano and alto soloists. A veritable feast for the ears!

Le Quattro Stagioni

I. <i>La primavera</i> Springtime has now arrived, and full of cheer The birds greet her return with festive song, And streams caressed by breaths of western breezes With gentle murmuraton flow along. Casting a dark mantle over heaven, Come thunder, lightning, harbingers of spring: They die away to silence, and the songbirds Take up their tuneful strain once more and sing. Now in the lovely meadow, filled with flowers, Under the branches rustling overhead The goat-herd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him. Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes, The nymphs and shepherds lightly dance and sing Beneath the brilliant canopy of spring.	II. <i>L'estate</i> In the harsh season, under blazing sun man languishes, flocks wither, pine-trees burn; the cuckoo's voice trails off, while turtledoves and finches sing impassioned in their turn. The Zephyr softly stirs, but menacing the North Wind sweeps it suddenly aside; the shepherd cries with dread, and hanging on before the gale, fears for his life and hide. His limbs, exhausted, are deprived of rest, alarmed by lightning-bolts and thunderclaps, and by the flies and gnats in frenzied swarms. Alas, what's more, his fears are justified: the heavens thunder loud with hail-filled rain, cutting the heads from stalks of wheat and grain.	III. <i>L'autunno</i> The peasants celebrate, with songs and dances, The pleasure of a harvest wide and deep, And warmed up thoroughly by Bacchus' liquor, Full many end their revelry in sleep. They all forget their cares, and dance to greet The air that is with joy and pleasure filled, The season that holds out to all and sundry The sweetest slumber with delight instilled. The hunter at the break of dawn goes hunting, With horns, and guns, and dogs keen on the trail; The animal runs off, with them in tow; In terror and half dead from the commotion Of guns and dogs, the beast, now wounded, tries To flee, but harried and exhausted, dies.	IV. <i>L'inverna</i> In icy snow we shiver from the cold, Stung by the bitter wind with its fierce breath; We run and stamp our feet over and over, Our teeth a-chatter, frozen half to death. Then by the fire we sit relaxed and happy, While outside rages a torrential squall. We tread across the ice with careful footsteps, Paying attention not to slip and fall – But turn and crash down on the earth and sleet; Then, rising, hasten on across the ice In case the surface cracks beneath our feet. Through bolted doors we hear the winds compete, Sirocco, North Wind, all the winds at war. It's winter! But it brings us joy for sure.
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AISSLINN NOSKY

A unique and dynamic violinist, Aisslinn Nosky has captivated audiences around the world with her innovative interpretations and impeccable technique. Her fierce passion for early music and skill as a soloist, director, and conductor has generated robust appreciation by press and audiences alike. Hailed as “superb” by The New York Times and “a fearsomely powerful musician” by The Toronto Star, widespread demand for Aisslinn continues to grow.

As a soloist and director Aisslinn has collaborated with the New World Symphony, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Holland Baroque, Portland Baroque Orchestra and Juilliard415. She was a core member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra from 2005 to 2016. Aisslinn served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Niagara Symphony from 2016 to 2019 and was Guest Artist-in-Residence of the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra from 2019 to 2023. Currently Aisslinn is an Artistic Leader of Bach Akademie Charlotte in North Carolina.

Since 2011, Aisslinn has served as concertmaster of Boston’s Grammy-winning Handel and Haydn Society. Founded in 1815, the Handel and Haydn Society is one of the world’s longest continuously performing musical organizations. Their most recent recordings of the complete Mozart violin concerti with Aisslinn as soloist and director were released in 2024 on the CORO label.

A passionate educator, Aisslinn has been on faculty at Amherst Early Music Festival, the International Baroque Institute of Longy, Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute, and The Banff Centre. She has given masterclasses, workshops and performances at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the New England Conservatory of Music, and the Juilliard School.

RICHARD TANNER

Richard Tanner is The Nancy B. and John B. Hoffmann Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York City, where he directs the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, the leading ensemble of its kind in the United States.

Richard has specialized in the training of boy and girl chorister voices for over thirty years. As music director, organist, and producer, he has made over fifty recordings and has worked extensively for the BBC, including for twenty years as a musical director and organist for BBC Radio 4’s *Daily Service*.

Orchestras that he has conducted include the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the period instrument ensemble, *Canzona*, and The Bliss Sinfonia, which he founded. Recordings as a conductor, both with the Northern Chamber Orchestra, include *Requiem* and *Organ Concerto* by David Briggs and *The Manchester Carols* by Carol Ann Duffy and Sasha Johnson Manning. His organ recordings are available on Spotify, including Messiaen’s *La Nativité du Seigneur*. He has given masterclasses in Shanghai and Shenzhen, and has directed choral courses in Sweden and for RSCM America.

Richard was a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral, student at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and organ scholar at Exeter College Oxford. He has held posts at St Albans Cathedral, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, All Saints’ Northampton, Rugby School and Blackburn Cathedral, where he was Director of Music for 13 years.

He is married to the soprano, Philippa Hyde (www.philippahydesoprano.com)

THE SAINT THOMAS CHOIR OF MEN AND BOYS

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys is considered to be the leading ensemble of its kind in the Anglican choral tradition in the United States. While its primary *raison d'être* is to sing five choral services each week, the choir also performs regularly with Orchestra of St. Luke's and New York Baroque Incorporated as part of the Saint Thomas Church concert series. Live webcasts of choral services and further information concerning recordings, tours and concerts given by the choir can be found at www.SaintThomasChurch.org.

Over recent years, the choir has toured throughout the US, Europe and Scandinavia with performances at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, King's College, Cambridge, the Aldeburgh Festival, at the Vatican, and in Dresden and at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Domestically, the choir has appeared often at National AGO Conventions.

Besides annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, the choir's concerts at Saint Thomas Church have included presentations of the Fauré, Duruflé and Mozart *Requiems*, the J. S. Bach *Passions*, Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and James MacMillan's *Seven Last Words from the Cross*. In 2016, a concert in memory of former Director of Music John Scott was performed with Orchestra of St. Luke's under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle.

The choir has made many commercial recordings, and has done so in recent years under the direction of former Director of Music Jeremy Filsell. Recent recordings have included an album of the Music of Gerre Hancock (Signum), the Mass and Propers for the Feast of Corpus Christi by William Byrd (Signum), a Christmas album, *No Small Wonder* (Acis), and an album of works by Calvin Hampton (Signum). The Gentlemen of the Choir are all professional singers working here in New York, and the Boy Choristers live at the historic Saint Thomas Choir School and are educated in collaboration with New York's Professional Children's School.

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NEW YORK BAROQUE INCORPORATED

Hailed as “truly excellent” and “studded with stars in the making” (New York Times), New York Baroque Incorporated (NYBI) is a conductorless orchestra of period instruments in New York City, bringing vital, informed, and fresh performances of a wide range of 17th and 18th-century repertoire while creating a vibrant landscape for collaborations between historical performance and living composers. NYBI has shared the stage with renowned soloists including Richard Egarr, Vivica Genaux, Monica Huggett, and Jakub Józef Orliński, and has graced prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Morgan Library, Spoleto Festival USA, and Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. Striving to make music on period instruments a living art form, NYBI has premiered works by Nico Muhly, Hollis Taylor, and Huang Ruo. The orchestra also dedicates itself to bringing to life unknown works of the Baroque, and has revived and presented modern-day premieres of Cavalli’s *Veremonda* (1652), Aliotti’s *Santa Rosalia* (1687) and Seckendorff’s *Proserpina* (1777).

VIOLIN

Aisslinn Nosky
Concertmaster
Karen Dekker
Ryan Cheng
Isabelle Lee
Francis Liu
Rebecca Nelson
Rafa Prendergast

VIOLA

Alissa Smith
Annie Garlid

CELLO

Ezra Seltzer

BASS

Wen Yang
Artistic Director

OBOE

David Dickey

TRUMPET

Maximilian Morel

CONTINUO

Nicolas Haigh
Saint Thomas Church

GLORIA IN D MAJOR, RV 589

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King, O God almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of The Father,
who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

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Friends of Music share a passion for choral music and a commitment to upholding the tradition of excellence maintained by the world-renowned Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys. **Friends of Music** enjoy a host of benefits including concierge ticketing and invitations to social and educational events throughout the season.

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Judith Eckerman Hancock

(October 18, 1934 – October 10, 2025)



This concert is dedicated in loving memory to Dr. Judith Hancock,
former Associate Organist of Saint Thomas Church.