

A portrait of Keziah Thomas, a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark green dress with a large leaf pattern. A harp is visible in the background on the left.

*Antonio Vivaldi*

# THE FOUR SEASONS

Keziah  
Thomas

## TRACKLIST

### Concerto No. 1, Op. 8, RV 269, “Spring” (La Primavera)

i.	Allegro	. . .	3.37
ii.	Largo	. . .	3.06
iii.	Allegro pastorale	. . .	4.27

### Concerto No. 2, Op. 8, RV 315, “Summer” (L'Estate)

iv.	Allegro non molto	. . .	6.58
v.	Adagio – Presto	. . .	2.50
vi.	Presto	. . .	3.26

### Concerto No. 3, Op. 8, RV 293, “Autumn” (L'Autunno)

vii.	Allegro	. . .	5.59
viii.	Adagio molto	. . .	2.43
ix.	Allegro	. . .	4.06

### Concerto No. 4, Op. 8, RV 297, “Winter” (L'Inverno)

x.	Allegro non molto	. . .	4.08
xi.	Largo	. . .	2.20
xii.	Allegro	. . .	3.58

Running time . . . 47.43

## PROGRAMME NOTE

# Vivaldi's Four Seasons (arranged for harp)

Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons was published in 1725 when he was the music director of the Ospedale Della Pietà in Venice, a charitable institution that trained orphan girls to be professional musicians. Vivaldi had been employed to raise the standard of string playing at the institution, but he also conducted the orchestra and choirs and composed many works for the musicians he trained including motets, vespers, concertos, and an oratorio.

Vivaldi was the inventor of the concerto as we know it today; as a work that showcases a solo instrument alongside orchestra. Of Vivaldi's output of nearly five hundred concertos, the Four Seasons are undoubtedly his most popular, in fact, they are some of the best loved and most

recognisable classical pieces in the world.

So, what is it about the music that compelled me to add yet another album of the most recorded classical work in history and a harp arrangement at that?

Simply, it is the way in which the music so brilliantly communicates our extraordinary relationship with nature. Each of the concertos depicts the season musically but they are also each preceded by a sonnet, presumably written by Vivaldi, which tells myriad details about our response to this eternal cycle. Lines from the sonnets are woven into the music inviting the listener to join the composer on a human reaction to the weather as dogs bark, the wind blows and wasps buzz. When combining the orchestral and solo violin parts to make

## Keziah Thomas

my harp arrangement, I created a display of virtuosity, in which the harp showcases the breadth of its colour palette, and the harpist gives a display of technical prowess.

Spring is the only concerto which needed to be transposed by a semitone to suit the harp's enharmonic range and some of Vivaldi's musical illustrations work so beautifully that they could have been written for the harp. Take the birdsong in the opening of Spring for example, this is displayed with trills in the highest octaves of the instrument. Bisbigliandi played between two hands are the chattering of the teeth in the winter's cold and there is liberal use of harmonics as the peasants sleep after their Autumn harvest celebrations. There were a few moments where I had the opportunity

to really use my imagination to find the perfect colour on the harp. In Autumn, I searched for a gunshot to sound during the hunt and found it by ricocheting off my soundboard and how I could depict claps of thunder on a sweltering summer's night? By bouncing the palm of my hand on the wire strings in the bass octaves of my harp.

I find the final answer to the question of 'but why the harp?' lies in the title that Vivaldi gave the set of twelve concertos which contain the Four Seasons; 'The contest between Harmony and Invention'. I interpret this as Vivaldi's personal invitation to be comforted by the familiarity of nature's cycle and then to go wild, dance, get drunk, fall over and finally... sleep!

Acclaimed by the New York Concert Review as 'Stupendous...totally original and engaging', at her Carnegie Hall debut recital, British harpist Keziah Thomas enjoys a reputation of a lively and engaging performer and educator. At the heart of her work is the belief that the power of music is for everyone, a value which drives a diverse freelance career.

Keziah's creative programming strives to expand the repertoire for concert harp and has led to performances at major venues and festivals throughout the world including a solo tour of Japan for Aoyama Harps, concerts for Astral Artists in the USA and performances at the World Harp Congresses in Geneva, Dublin, Amsterdam and Cardiff.

In recent years, Keziah has developed a particular interest in arranging which has led to this creation of the first solo transcription of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, the sheet music of which is published by 80 Days Publishing.

Her previous album Crossing Waves included newly commissioned works by British composers, James Young, Huw Watkins, and Andy Scott and was hailed as an 'imaginatively programmed, winningly played recital' by the BBC Music Magazine.

Keziah is principal harp with the Covent Garden Sinfonia and her work as a chamber musician with the Aoyama Trio and 4 Girls 4 Harps has been described as having 'Scrupulous attention to the harp's dynamic and rhythmic possibilities' by The Times.

## BIOGRAPHY

The winner of the London Harp Competition, the Camac Harp Competition and the Contemporary Record Society Performing Artists Competition, Keziah Thomas holds an ARCM diploma and bachelor's degree from the Royal College of Music and was taught by Danielle Perrett, Daphne Boden and Alison Nicholls.

Keziah is a creative educator and entrepreneur and is the founder of two popular harp programmes; Retreat to the Harp, a series of workshops and study weekends that bring together those who share her love of the harp and Little Harp Social, the group learning programme for adults. Keziah has been teaching in the harp department at the Guildhall School since 2020 and is a resident musician for the charity Breathe.



## CREDITS

### HARP

Keziah Thomas

### RECORDING ENGINEER

Adaq Khan

### PRODUCER

George Richford

### ARTWORK

Mike Cooter

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Adrian Green

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