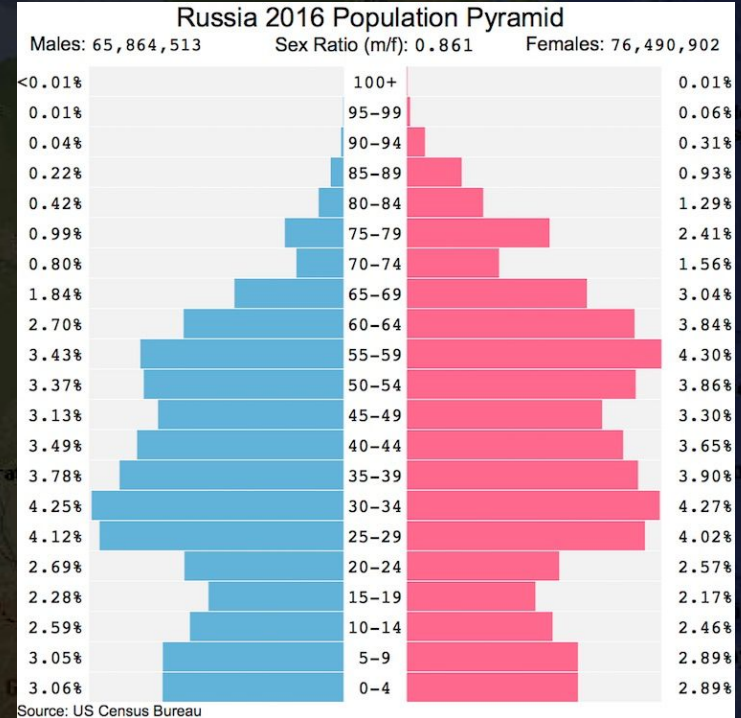




*Russian Balalaika
and
Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons*

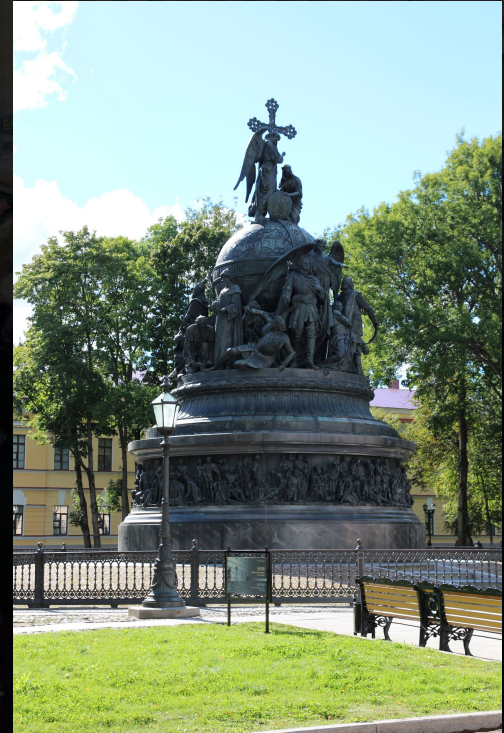
Russian Demographics

- **Total Population:** 144,498,215
- **Geography:** Tundra, taiga, grassland
- **Main Languages**
 - Russian
 - English
 - Tatar
- **Religion**
 - 42.5% Orthodox Christian
 - 25% Spiritual but not religious
 - 13% Atheist
 - 6.5% Islam
 - 13% Christian, pagan, other



Brief Synopsis of Russian History

- 0862 CE - Russ state of Novgorod founded by Rurik
- 0988 CE - Christianization of Kievan Rus
- 1237 CE - Tatar (Mongol) occupation
- 1380 CE - Dimitri Donskoi defeats the Tatars
- 1462 CE - Ivan II, the Great, expands the empire
- 1533 CE - Ivan IV, the Terrible, becomes the first czar
- 1689 CE - Peter I becomes the first emperor
- 1812 CE - Napoleon invades Russia
- 1861 CE - Emancipation of serfs by Alexander II
- 1875 CE - Tchaikovsky finishes Piano Concerto No. 1
- 1904 CE - Russia loses Russo-Japanese War
- 1917 CE - Bolshevik Revolution
- 1991 CE - Disintegration of Soviet Union



Millennium of Russia in the
Novgorod Kremlin

The Balalaika



- First documentation in 1688
- Three-string instrument
- Triangular body
- Functions like a guitar
- Plucked with a plectrum(pick) or fingers
- Many variants
 - Like violin, viola, cello, and bass, they are all resemblant of each other

Family of Balalaikas

- Descant
- Piccolo
- Prima
- Secunda
- Alto
- Tenor
- Bass
- Contrabass

Piccolo variant



Contrabass variant

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)



- Baroque-era composer, worked mostly with orchestra and opera
- Ordained as Catholic priest
 - Known as the “Red Priest” for his characteristic red hair
- Ran a girls’ orphanage and acted as violin instructor to them
- Virtuoso violinist
 - Asthma inhibited him from learning wind instruments
- Best known for *Le quattro stagioni* (The Four Seasons) violin concerti
- Other works
 - Storm at Sea (violin concerto)
 - *Arsilda, Regina di Ponto* (opera)
 - The Hunt, (violin concerto)
 - *La costanza triofante degli amori e degli odi* (opera)

Le quattro stagioni (The Four Seasons)

- Made for string orchestra and violin soloist
- Each composed along with a poem to illustrate its respective season
- Each concerto emphasizes a certain aspect of its respective season
 - Spring - The songs of the birds
 - Summer - A thunderstorm
 - Autumn - The abundance of the harvest
 - Winter - Bitterness and cold
- All have three movements, fast/slow/fast
- Extensive use of 16th and 32nd note arpeggios in the fast movements of the violin solo
 - Interspersed with scales, trills, double stops, and repeated notes
 - Often even-count bowings
- Slow movements make liberal use vibrato and front-heavy bowings
 - Orchestra maintains quiet, constant rhythm that contrasts that of the soloist

Concert No. 1 in E Major, "Spring" (La primavera)

1

La Primavera / Spring
Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Inventione – Concerto I
ANTONIO VIVALDI

ALLEGRO *Giam'è la Primavera*

Violino Principale *Allegro* *Piano*

Violino Primo *Allegro* *Piano*

Violino Secondo *Allegro* *Piano*

Alto Viola *Allegro* *Piano*

Organo e Violoncello *Allegro* *Piano*

Fute *Forte*

Fute *Forte*

Fute *Forte*

Fute *Forte*

Motopla/ISD

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

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

Allegro

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

Concert No. 2 in G minor, "Summer" (L'estate)

1

Estate / Summer
Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Invenzione – Concerto II
ANTONIO VIVALDI

ALLEGRO NON MOLTO
Solo dura Stagion dal Sole accesa Languo L'hoam, languo l' gregge, ed arde il Pino;
Languida per il caldo
Allegro non molto - Pianissimo
Languida per il caldo
Allegro non molto - Pianissimo
Languida per il caldo
Allegro non molto - Pianissimo
Languida per il caldo
Allegro non molto - Pianissimo
Organo e Violoncello
Languida per il caldo
Allegro non molto - Pianissimo

MatoplaISD

Under a hard Season, fired up by the Sun
Languishes man, languishes the flock and burns the pine
We hear the cuckoo's voice;
then sweet songs of the turtledove and finch are heard.
Soft breezes stir the air, but threatening
the North Wind sweeps them suddenly aside.
The shepherd trembles,
fearing violent storms and his fate.

Adagio e piano - Presto e forte

The fear of lightning and fierce thunder
Robs his tired limbs of rest
As gnats and flies buzz furiously around.

Presto

Alas, his fears were justified
The Heavens thunders and roar and with hail
Cuts the head off the wheat and damages the grain.

Concert No. 3 in F Major, "Autumn" (L'atunno)

1

Autunno / Autumn
Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Inventione – Concerto III

ANTONIO VIVALDI

ALLEGRO

Celebra il Vintol con balli e Canti Del felice raccolto il bel piacere
Ballo e Canto di Villanelli

Violino
Principale

Allegro Piano

Violino
Primo

Allegro Piano

Violino
Secondo

Allegro Piano

Alto
Viola

Allegro Piano

Organo e
Violoncello

Allegro Piano

3^a

Forte

Forte

Forte

Forte

Forte

Forte

MotoplaISD

Celebrates the peasant, with songs and dances,
The pleasure of a bountiful harvest.
And fired up by Bacchus' liquor,
many end their revelry in sleep.

Adagio molto

Everyone is made to forget their cares and to sing and dance
By the air which is tempered with pleasure
And (by) the season that invites so many, many
Out of their sweetest slumber to fine enjoyment

Allegro

The hunters emerge at the new dawn,
And with horns and dogs and guns depart upon their hunting
The beast flees and they follow its trail;
Terrified and tired of the great noise
Of guns and dogs, the beast, wounded, threatens
Languidly to flee, but harried, dies.

Concert No. 4 in F minor, "Winter" (L'inverno)

1

L'Inverno / Winter
Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Invenzione – Concerto IV
ANTONIO VIVALDI

ALLEGRO NON MOLTO
Aggiacciato tremar trà nevi algesti

Violino
Principale
Allegro non molto

Violino
Primo
Allegro non molto

Violino
Secondo
Allegro non molto

Alto
Viola
Allegro non molto

Organo e
Violoncello
Allegro non molto

7

Musica1818D

To tremble from cold in the icy snow,
In the harsh breath of a horrid wind;
To run, stamping one's feet every moment,
Our teeth chattering in the extreme cold

Largo

Before the fire to pass peaceful,
Contented days while the rain outside pours down.

Allegro

We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously,
for fear of tripping and falling.
Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and,
rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.
We feel the chill north winds course through the home
despite the locked and bolted doors...
this is winter, which nonetheless
brings its own delights.

Winter (Movement 1) and Balalaika Comparison

- Vivaldi's Winter recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZCfydWF48c>
- Arkhipovsky's Balalaika performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JqeSU7lSLE>

Vivaldi

- Bowed
- Consistent quadruple meter
- Orchestra accompaniment

Both

- Usage of punctual chords
- Fast tempo
- Scales/Arpeggios*
- Simultaneous harmony and melody in solo part**
- Open with quiet dynamics and transition to loud dynamics

Arkhipovsky

- Plucked
- Changing meter
- Soloist only

**Primary Link*

***Secondary Link*

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