

Quad City Symphony Orchestra
PROGRAM NOTES
Masterworks III: Season of Miracles

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FRANZ JOSEPH
HAYDN (1732-1809)
Symphony No. 30 in C
major
("Alleluja")

Instrumentation: Flute, two oboes, bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, and strings.
Premiere: Likely 1765, Esterhaza Castle, Eisenstadt.
QCSO Premiere.

From 1761-1790, Franz Joseph Haydn served as a court musician for the wealthy and influential Esterhazy family. Though the job was demanding, the appointment was fortuitous for Haydn: with a large corps of outstanding musicians under his purview, he had time and space to develop his prodigious technique as a performer and composer. By the time he left the house of Esterhazy in 1790, he had become the most famous musician in Europe.

A large number of Haydn's symphonies include descriptive subtitles, including "lamentation", "horn signal", and even "the absent-minded gentleman." The "alleluia" subtitle for Symphony No. 30 refers to a fragment of Gregorian chant on which the symphony's first theme is based.



Haydn Saal, Esterhazy Palace

Alleluia Symphony
Listening Guide

First movement: Allegro

♩ PHRASING: Haydn is a master of continuity between phrases. Notice how he varies how one phrase moves to the next: sometimes very smoothly, other times abruptly.

♩ ORCHESTRATION: Haydn will often have the first oboe hold a long note over an active string texture, and this note will "pass" from the first to second oboe. Using two woodwind players in tandem allows the illusion of an impossibly long oboe note.

Second movement: Andante

♩ INSTRUMENTATION: Haydn must have had exactly one excellent flutist at

court. Although this symphony includes only one flute part, that flutist is highly featured during this movement.

♫ **FORM:** As he often does in slow movements, Haydn begins with a very simple melody and texture, and over the course of the movement, sets faster and more elaborate figures against the original simple framework.

Third movement: Minuet

♫ **FORM:** Modern audiences are more familiar with later symphonies where the Minuet (or Scherzo) movement is the third of four movements. As this convention was not nearly so codified when Haydn composed this work, this Minuet must serve both as the symphony's dance movement as well as its finale.

♫ **TEXTURE:** Although most of this work abides by courtly decorum, this movement's trio includes some rather fierce interjections in the form of quick ascending three-note figures.

ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653-1713)

Concerto Grosso, Op. 6 No. 8, in G minor ("Christmas Concerto")

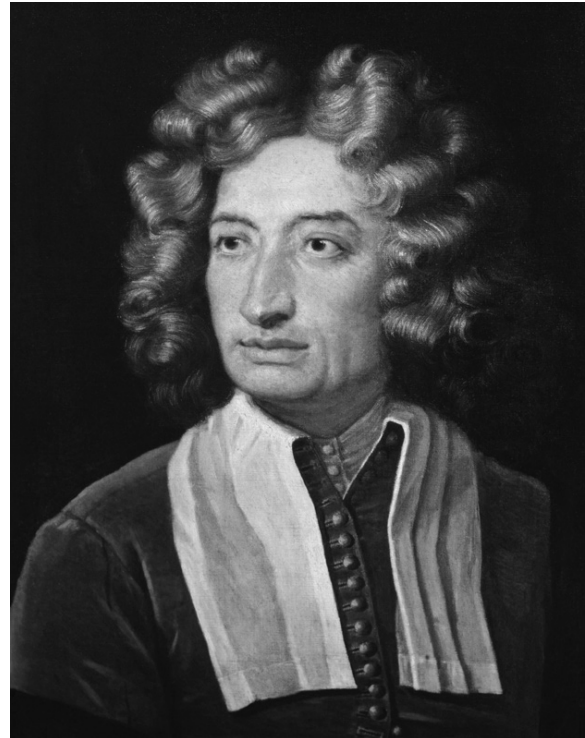
Instrumentation: Two solo violins, solo cello, strings, and continuo.

Premiere: Possibly Christmas 1690, Rome.

QCSO Performance History: The Christmas Concerto has previously been performed only once in QCSO history, on a 1995 Masterworks concert conducted by Kim Allen Kluge.

Pope Alexander VIII (1610-1691) served as Roman pontiff for less than two years, but that was just enough time for him to appoint his nephew and namesake, Pietro Ottoboni, a cardinal. This act of shameless nepotism gave Rome one of its most generous patrons

of music, and one of the cardinal's first beneficiaries was Arcangelo Corelli. A generation younger than Vivaldi, Handel, and J.S. Bach, Corelli was a celebrated violinist and composer, living most of his life in Bologna and Rome, while traveling widely. The "Christmas Concerto" was dedicated to Cardinal Ottoboni.



**Christmas Concerto
Listening Guide**

First movement: Vivace – Grave

♫ **TEMPO:** The introductory movement includes a quick phrase, followed by a series of phrases at a much slower tempo.

Second movement: Allegro

♫ **ORCHESTRATION:** The genre of concerto grosso calls for two groups of instruments: the "concertato" group of soloists, and the "ripieno", or the larger sections. The interplay between these two groups drama and tension, and

allows soloists the opportunity to exhibit virtuosity.

Third movement: Adagio—Allegro—Adagio

♩ HARMONY: The slow and fast passages in this movement are contrasted by more than just tempo. The slow outer sections also include a large number of “suspensions”. These are moments where two parts play a dissonant interval between them, and one moves down a step to make the dissonance consonant. The fast passage, by contrast, lacks these harmonic tension points.

Fourth movement: Vivace

♩ FORM: This relatively brief movement recalls the opening passage of the first movement, being in 3/4 time and marked “Vivace” (lively). This movement is in a clear “binary” form (AABB), with two main sections played two times each.

Fifth movement: Allegro

♩ METER: Also in binary form, the fifth movement is the first movement in 2/2 meter, also known as “alla breve” (to the half-note). Throughout the piece, Corelli used different meters and rhythmic divisions to draw contrasts between different types of fast music.

Sixth movement: Largo, Pastorale ad libitum

♩ METER: The gently swaying feel of this movement is an example of “compound meter”, where beats are divided into groups of three notes rather than two or four. This is related to the designation “pastorale”, which refers to a shepherd’s song. Handel similarly depicted the shepherds of the Christmas story with a “Pastoral Symphony” in *Messiah*.

OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879-1936)

Trittico Botticelliano

Instrumentation: Flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, percussion, harp, piano/celesta, and strings.

Premiere: Vienna, 1927.

QCSO Performance History: Donald Schleicher conducted the only other performance of Respighi’s *Trittico* in QCSO history, on a 2002 Masterworks concert.

Long predating the musical works on this weekend’s program, the paintings of Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) stand among the great masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. Active in his native Florence as well as in Rome, today several of Botticelli’s works are kept in Uffizi, the Florentine art museum where composer Ottorino Respighi first encountered them in 1927. He composed this chamber work in honor of the wealthy American benefactress Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who helped facilitate the work’s first performance in Vienna.



Botticelli, *La Primavera*



Botticelli, *Adorazione dei Magi*



Botticelli, *Nascita di Venere*

Trittico Botticelliano Listening Guide

First movement: Spring

♫ **ORCHESTRATION:** Although best-known for his stunning works for large orchestra (*The Pines of Rome* being the most-famous example), Respighi employs a much more economical size of orchestra in this work, using only single woodwind players and one trumpet.

♫ **ORNAMENTATION:** It seems unavoidable that any piece of music referring to Spring must include the obligatory trills, which no doubt are intended to call birdsong to mind.

Second movement: Adoration of the Magi

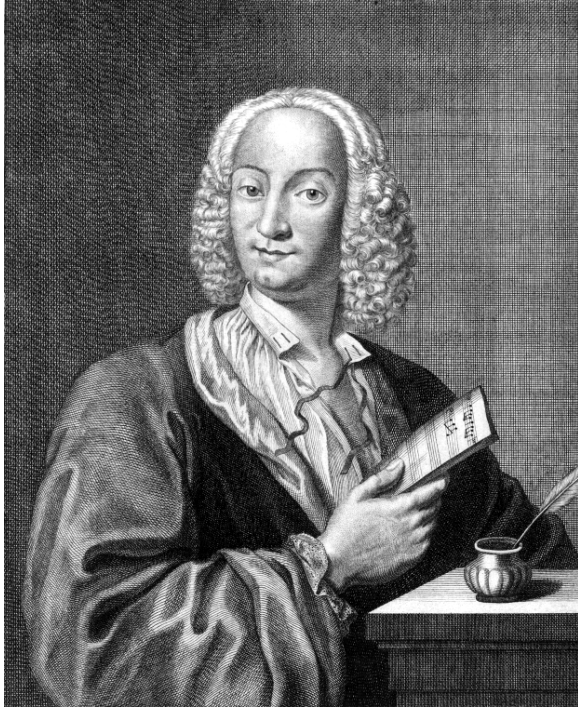
♫ **INSTRUMENTATION.** The movement opens with a plaintive and inviting bassoon solo.

♫ **TEXTURE.** Notice how the strings provide a solemn and staid background to the woodwind instruments' more florid solos in the foreground.

♫ **FORM.** The movement's central section has a curious passage in 5/4 meter. This is punctuated with sparkling gestures in the Celesta, Harp and Percussion. This is followed by a return to the opening material

Third movement: The Birth of Venus

♫ **MELODY.** The woodwind solos which open this movement make generous use of the "chromatic" scale, full of mysterious half-steps.



ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)
The Four Seasons, Op. 8 No. 4 (“Winter”)

Instrumentation: Solo violin, strings, and continuo.

Premiere: Sometime between 1718 and 1720, Mantua, Italy.

QCSO Performance History: “Winter” was featured on a 1997 Holiday Pops concert conducted by guest conductor David Tang, and on a Chamber concert in 2008, conducted by Mark Russell Smith.

A native of Venice, Antonio Vivaldi spent the first thirty years of his career as a teacher of music to girls at the Venetian orphanage known as Pio Ospedale della Pietà. Amid the demands of that appointment, he also rose in prominence as a composer and producer of opera. Following his years of service at the Ospedale, Vivaldi left his native Venice for roughly three years to take a court appointment in the Italian town of Mantua, 90 miles inland. There he served as music director to

the governor Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, and produced what has become his most famous work, a set of four violin concertos which depicted in exquisite musical detail the composer’s impressions of the natural world throughout the year.

For each of the concertos, Vivaldi included descriptive text in the form of a sonnet. The lines of the sonnet associated with each movement of “Winter” are printed below (translation by Armand D’Angour).

Winter
Listening Guide

First movement: Allegro non molto

*“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.”*

♫ **INSTRUMENTATION:** Early violin concertos were written so that the principal player of the first violins, and not an independent soloist, played the solo part. With this in mind, notice how closely integrated the solo violin part is with part played by the first violin section.

Second movement: Largo

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

♫ **TEXTURE:** Vivaldi builds a fascinatingly-layered texture in this movement. The base layer is the cellos, basses, and continuo with steadily-pulsing eighth notes. Above them are the violas, with extremely long notes, and above them are quick pizzicato (plucked) notes in the violin sections. On top of all of this

is the elegant, drawn-out melody played by the soloist.

Third movement: 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.”

♩ TEMPO: Passages of this movement allow the soloist a high degree of freedom in tempo based on the relatively inactive accompaniment; at other times, the soloist must play more strictly in time.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

*The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires:
“Winter”*

Arranged by Leonid Desyatnikov (b. 1955)

Instrumentation: Solo violin and strings.

Premiere: Original version premiered by Piazzolla on May 19, 1970 at the Teatro Regina, Buenos Aires. Information on the premiere the Desyatnikov arrangements is scarce; one source offers 1998 as the date of first performance.

QCSO Premiere.

Throughout his life, Astor Piazzolla constantly straddled the worlds of popular and classical music. He made his early living as a bandoneon performer in tango bands, but sought out the mentorship of Argentina’s most prominent classical composer, Alberto Ginastera, in order to learn compositional craft. Mid-career, his bold and innovative performing style made him a leading and controversial figure among the tango bands

of Buenos Aires, but he later sought to escape the tango entirely by moving to Paris to study counterpoint and harmony with famed mentor-of-many, Nadia Boulanger.

So, given his place as a formidable musical figure in both popular and classical genres, it seems appropriate that Piazzolla would compose four works for quintet (violin/viola, piano, electric guitar, bass, and bandoneon) describing the seasons in a musical manner after the example of Antonio Vivaldi. Originally conceived as separate works, the four seasons were later assembled by Piazzolla into a suite, and were eventually arranged for various ensembles.

Astute listeners to the string arrangement of *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* will notice some winking references to Vivaldi’s “Winter” throughout the piece. Absent from Piazzolla’s original works, these clever additions are actually the idea of Piazzolla’s arranger, the Russian composer Leonid Desyatnikov.



FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

Symphony No. 96 in D major (“The Miracle”)

Instrumentation: Two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Premiere: March 11, 1791, Hanover Square Rooms, London.

QCSO Performance History: James Dixon conducted the “Miracle” symphony in 1977.

The most triumphant moments in Haydn’s long career came after his “retirement” from his service to the Esterhazy family. While still nominally a member of the Esterhazy court, Haydn was given the freedom to travel and to compose wherever and whatever he wished. At the invitation of violinist Johann Peter Salomon, Haydn made the first of two highly successful visits to London in 1791. The British public, already familiar with Haydn’s works, gave him a celebratory (and lucrative) welcome.

The twelve symphonies composed for performance during Haydn’s London journeys include some of his most striking and brilliant music. Composed for the first London journey, Haydn’s “Miracle” symphony is allegedly so-named because no one at the premiere was injured when a massive chandelier fell in the concert hall during the performance. (The incident may actually have occurred during a performance of Symphony No. 102, but let’s not split hairs.)

Miracle Symphony Listening Guide

First movement: Adagio – Allegro

♩ **HARMONY:** The slow introduction of the piece begins in the symphony’s main key of D major. Notice, though, that after a few moments the music takes a more solemn turn, to the darker key of D minor. This is known as a “parallel” key. When the tempo increases, Haydn returns to D major.

♩ **TEXTURE:** Haydn is one of the great masters of silence, often using empty bars to build his listeners’ anticipation.

Second movement: Andante

♩ **RHYTHM.** Notice how many different kinds of rhythms Haydn uses in the slow movement’s opening melody. He includes regular rhythms (both triplets and notes in sets of four) as well as dotted rhythms.

♩ **HARMONY:** As he did in the first movement, Haydn draws harmonic contrast by moving to the “parallel” minor key for a more extended central passage. (He will also do the same in the final movement.)

Third movement: Minuet

♩ **INSTRUMENTATION:** Haydn’s extended use of the solo oboe in the trio (middle section) draws a clear timbral and textural contrast to the main minuet passages (outer sections).

Fourth movement: Vivace

♩ **MOTIVE:** The movement’s opening melody, with its steady eighth notes and melodic leaps, finds its way into nearly every measure in this piece. This foreshadows the symphonies of Beethoven, who both admired and criticized Haydn.