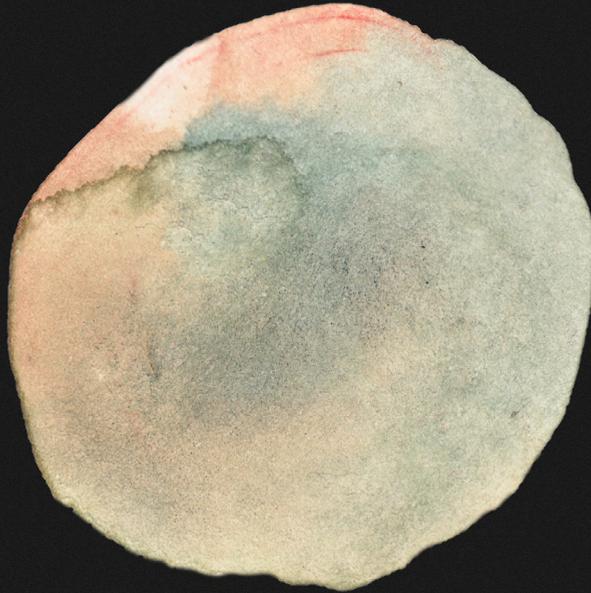


Scottish Ensemble
Anna Meredith
Eleanor Meredith
Vivaldi's Four Seasons

Anno



Composer	Anna Meredith
Visual artist	Eleanor Meredith
Solo violin	Jonathan Morton
Production	Scottish Ensemble
Lighting / environment design	DO Architecture
Sound design	Sound Intermedia
Technical team	MCL Create
Movement director	Matthew Lenton
Animation assistant	Batuhan Bintas
Photographer and filmmaker	Hugh Carswell

Supported by



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Anna Meredith, 2016.

Composer / producer / performer

The original idea for this piece came from (SE Artistic Director) Jonathan Morton. We met a few years ago and chatted about this idea of hearing *The Four Seasons* in a new context. Jon heard quite a few connections between the way I write and Vivaldi's music which I hadn't previously thought about - but the more I got to know the material, the more I could see what he meant. *The Four Seasons* is a collection of short focused movements, each with a differing and distinctive sense of character, which is how I try and approach writing.

The aim was never to rework the Vivaldi. I knew from the beginning that I didn't want to do that - but instead almost imagine we were all collaborating on making a piece together.

I think we're so used to *The Four Seasons* as a sort of identity in itself that I, for one, slightly forget about the picture of the calendar year that Vivaldi was trying to paint. We've taken that idea of a year as our guide, and also tried to remove the Vivaldi-ness (and the Anna/Ellie-ness) from the picture so that everything - all the music and all the visuals - are working together to create a flow through a year.

The result is a map of this annual journey, created from most, but not all, of Vivaldi's movements interspersed with my new material. Sometimes I've linked things together, or added a small electronic element, but mostly the material stands as it is. The original *Four Seasons* runs as 12 short, varied movements - we've simply extended and tweaked this format to create something new.

The final combined piece, **Anno**, runs as 15 short movements, sometimes linked, sometimes stand-alone. I've tried to make sure that each of my own movements has their own feel and character - just like the Vivaldi - but actually, there are so many connections running through all the writing that the movements are all bound together whilst also creating something new.

Jonathan Morton, 2016.

SE Artistic Director

The impulse for this project came from an ongoing fascination with the relationship between the old and the new. We are lucky to have access to so much life-affirming music from the past, but I think there is an imbalance, with too much focus on the old at the expense of the new. Ideally, old music wouldn't be heard as 'old' and new music wouldn't be heard as 'new' - it would be a conversation, and in the end it would all just be 'music'.

I hope **Anno** will question the audience by stripping away some of the preconceptions that don't actually have anything to do with the music. Gentle confusion can give everyone a chance to hear something in a new way. Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* in particular has been played about with so much - turned in to pop songs, used as ubiquitous hold music - that actually the seal has already been broken.

But in the end, we're not rewriting Vivaldi, but trying to draw out the future from it, and also to tease out the past from Anna's music and Ellie's artwork by initiating a dialogue across the centuries.

This is how art is created/re-created and always has been. People borrow and adapt ideas from others; they nick bits, they re-arrange and re-contextualise. Music is never finite or frozen in time.

Gareth K.Vile, 2016.

SE Writer-In-Residence / critic

Allegro Scottish Ensemble's vision sits between two apparently competing ideals: a respect for the rich repertoire of classical chamber compositions that reach back in history, and a desire to present that heritage in a thoroughly contemporary context. Sometimes drawing together diverse pieces into a mixed programme that casts new light on the twentieth century's varied movements, or gathering a collection of works from a specific time and place, SE's restless curation of the past and the present pays respect to these twin ambitions.

Largo Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* - or, at least, the first of the four concertos - is in danger of becoming too familiar. Nigel Kennedy's spiky-haired recordings in 1989 - one of the best-selling classical recordings of all time - hammered the sprightly Spring into the public consciousness and provides the soundtrack to ringtones and held calls. There is a symphonic metal version, a jazz version, a hip hop version and contemporary composer Max Richter reworked it in 2012.

Familiarity hides complexity: reduced to a series of magic moments, the diversity and intention of Vivaldi's score disappears. Its strangeness and ambition melts: cities like Glasgow boast that their climate can give 'four seasons in one day' while Vivaldi offers the year in under two hours. Time passes for the audience and the musicians, but at different speeds. The circle of the year completes itself through the music: mood, modes and atmosphere rotate.

Allegro Vivaldi spreads out time on the staves and bars. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, he looks back on a past that measured itself through a natural scale, before embracing the metronome of the modern age, the division of time into seconds and minutes. Bright allegros and sombre largos predict the reordering of time; even the seasons are trained to the discipline of the Enlightenment's new metrics.

To update again, through Anna Meredith, and the potential hidden in the curlicues of electronic sound. Another set of measures set to Vivaldi's rhythms, from social media and immediate access. Speaking of tensions between the heritage of the past and the need for now...

Co-commissioned by

Scottish Ensemble and Spitalfields Music.

Supported by

Cockayne - Grants for the Arts, John S. Cohen Foundation, Hinrichsen Foundation, The Leche Trust, The London Community Foundation, Lord Phillimore's Charitable Trust, The Radcliffe Trust, RVW Trust and an anonymous donor.

An announcement

Scottish Ensemble is thrilled to be collaborating with Glasgow-based theatre company **Vanishing Point** on a new production, to be presented across Scotland in November 2017. Keep an eye on both companies' websites for more details.

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