

Vivaldi 'Spring' from The Four Seasons

PowerPoint #1: Construction of Vivaldi Spring 1st movement

Ritornello 1 (bars 1-13) "little return".

The form of the movement is ritornello-episode-ritornello etc. There are 5 ritornello, i.e., the theme returns 5 times, and 4 episodes.

1

Lines from a poem about Spring are quoted in the music, "Spring has arrived and happily the birds welcome it in joyful song".

This is programme music as the strings sound like birds and other sounds of Spring.

The **instrumentation** used in the first ritornello is a solo violin, violin 1, violin 2, viola and a violoncello + basso continuo - plays the bass notes and improvises harmony above them (usually from a harpsichord/piano/organ/cello). Reads the bass clef.

1

The piece is in the key of E major.

PowerPoint #2: The structure of the ritornello starts at bars 1-3 with repeated bars 4-6 (slight variation at the end) bars 7-10 new theme but very related to fast pace, repeated showing halfway through bar 10 to beat 2 of bar 13.

Texture - homophonic (violoncello does a pedal note through the first 2 bars of each phrase).

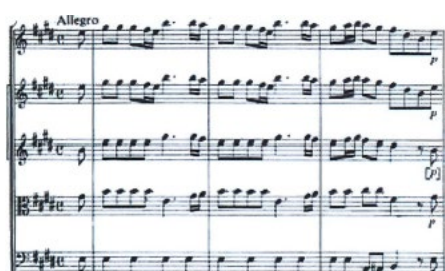
1

Compositional devices - repetition in the first 2 bars in each phase (pedal note is also a compositional device).

2

Dynamics - from bars 1-3 is loud (f) and bars 4-6 is soft (p) creating an echoing effect. Bars 7-10 is a new theme and bars 10-13 repeats that theme softer still having that echo.

1



Ritornello bars 1-3

PowerPoint #3: Episode 1 (bars 13-27)

The instrumentation changes as the basso continuo drops out in bar 14.

Polyphonic texture with imitation.

Mordents and trills - (ornamentation) to depict birds singing.

Compositional devices – rapid scales - scale fragments - repeated notes.

2

The pitch is high enough to imitate a bird's chirp.

One of Vivaldi's favourite compositional devices is used, diminution (bar 19-21) for violin II.

2

Uses one chord all the way through.