

## Antonio Vivaldi: Concerto in D minor, Op. 3 No. 11, RV 565



### CD 1 tracks 9–12

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice in 1678, the son of an accomplished violinist who worked at St Mark's Basilica, a very important musical centre at the time. He was among the most famous violin virtuosi of the day as well as a prolific composer. He became a violin teacher, then later *maestro de' concerti* at the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for abandoned children, mainly girls. Amongst Vivaldi's duties, he was expected to compose pieces for the girls to perform, and most of his major works were composed while he was there. In all he composed more than 500 concertos, and the majority of these are for solo instruments.

*L'Estro Armonico* (1711) was one of the first sets of Italian concertos to be published outside Italy and was designed to impress by its diversity of style and scoring. It consists of 12 concertos divided into four groups of three. *L'Estro Armonico* fascinated musicians throughout Europe and helped to establish the model of the 18th-century concerto.

### Following the score

This is a full score with the two violin soloists on the top two staves and the solo cello on the second-to-lowest stave. The larger ensemble of violins and violas is placed in between. The little numbers underneath the bottom stave are what is known as a **figured bass** where numbers or 'figures' indicate the required harmonies. The figured bass was commonly used in the **Baroque period** – a bass instrument would play the given bass line while a keyboard or plucked instrument filled in the harmonies (this recording includes an **archlute**). The intervals are counted up from the bottom note.

*L'Estro Armonico* is a title that defies translation; but may be taken to mean 'harmonic fancy' or 'harmonious inspiration'. Op.3 No.11 is for two violins, cello and strings – a **concerto grosso**, written for a group of solo instruments (the **concertino**) plus a larger ensemble (the **ripieno**). In this piece, Vivaldi kept the traditional form of the concerto grosso as inherited from composers such as Corelli and Torelli, but in other ways he anticipated the solo concertos of the future. This can be heard in the brilliant and technically demanding passages of the outer movements, the dramatic opposition of the tutti and soloists, and the lyrical outpouring in the slow movements.

In the fast movements of Vivaldi's concertos, ritornellos (passages for the full orchestra) alternate with episodes (passages) for the solo instruments. The concertos are marked by their boundless energy and Vivaldi's artful use of arpeggios, scales and **sequences**.

### Allegro – Adagio e spiccato – Allegro

The first five bars of the short introductory Allegro are made up solely of a D minor chord based on a **canonic**, arpeggiated tonic triad in the unaccompanied solo violins. The following 14 bars continue over a **pedal point** on D. As the cello and continuo enter, the harmony is based on a pattern of falling fifths. A three-bar Adagio leads to a **fugal** passage introduced by the solo cello and answered by the viola. **Spiccato** is a bowing technique in which the bow appears to bounce lightly upon the string.

### Largo e spiccato

The Siciliano-style Largo gives the upper solo voice a long cantabile line suggesting an operatic aria, singing freely over a simple accompaniment. The siciliano was an instrumental movement popular during the late 17th and 18th centuries. The soloist would have been expected to **improvise**, particularly in the reprise.

### Allegro

The work ends with a lively Allegro. It opens with the soloists in imitative style making much use of **suspensions**. The next passage is for solo cello and follows a sequential pattern. The first violin comes to prominence in the second half, parts of which are similar to a virtuoso **cadenza**, a feature of the solo concerto. This is followed by a passage of fugal entries. The movement includes several chromatic passages; notice the descending chromatic line in the final bars of the continuo.

### What to listen for

- Compare the harmony of the opening Allegro of the first movement with that of the three-bar Adagio, bars 32–34.
- Notice the arpeggiated decorations in the continuo part of the Adagio on the chords with pauses.
- Listen to the fugal writing that follows the three-bar Adagio. It opens with the cello on the tonic. Name the instruments that make the following entries along with the degree of the scale with which they open.
- Listen to the beginning of the final movement. Notice the use of suspensions (bars 1–3) and **sequences** (bars 7–10).

### Wider listening

Listen to other examples of concertos from different periods and in different styles. You could listen to Cécile Chaminade's *Concertino for flute and orchestra* (1902), which was written nearly 200 years later. This technically demanding work was written as a test piece for students at the Paris Conservatoire.

**Allegro**

Soli

Violino I

Violino II Soli

Violino III

Violino IV

Viola I. II

Violoncello

Violone e Cembalo




7

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I. II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.




13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I. II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.



19

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I. II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Solo

25

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I. II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

5 6 5 6 5 3 # #

**Adagio e spiccato**

Tutti

Violino I  
Violino II  
Violino III  
Violino IV  
Viola I. II  
Violoncello  
Violone e Cembalo

Allegro

5 7 5 7 6 b 7 5 7

6

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc.  
Cemb.

7 7 7 7 7 2 6 3 4 4 3 4 6 4 3

II

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc.  
Cemb.

4 6 7 3 4 3 6 5 7 6 5 5 6 5 4 #

16

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc.  
Cemb.

6 5 7 9 8 6 5 4 7 7

21

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I. II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Soli

7 7 7 7 7 6 5 7 7

Solo

7 7

26

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I. II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

7 7 7 6 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 5

31

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I. II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Tutti

6 5 7 8 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 4 6 5

Tutti

36

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

41

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

46

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

51

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

56

Tutti

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

5      4      7  
      6      5      5

Tutti

p

Tutti

p

p

p

Tutti

p

Tasto solo

60

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

f

f

f

f

f

p

p

p

f

f

f

f

f

f

64

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

68

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Adagio

Largo e spiccatto

Violino I  
Violino II  
Violino III  
Violino IV  
Viola I, II  
Violoncello  
Violone e Cembalo

Solo

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*tr*

The musical score consists of three identical staves of music, each containing six parts: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vln. III, Vln. IV, Vla. I, II, and Vc. Cemb. The music is written in common time, with a key signature of one flat. The notation includes various note heads (circles, squares, triangles), stems, and bar lines. Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are indicated above the staves. Measure 5 starts with a melodic line in Vln. I. Measures 9 and 13 show more complex harmonic movement with changes in pitch and rhythm across the ensemble.

Musical score for orchestra, page 17, measures 17-18. The score includes parts for Vln. I, Vln. II, Vln. III, Vln. IV, Vla. I, II, Vc., and Vcl. Cemb. Measure 17 starts with a dynamic *f*. Measure 18 begins with a dynamic *f*.

**Allegro**

Violino I      Soli      *tr*      *tr*

Violino II      Soli      *tr*

Violino III

Violino IV

Viola I. II

Violoncello      Solo

Violone e Cembalo

6

Tutti

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I. II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

7

7

7

7

7

7

7

11

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Soli

Tutti

6 6 7 6 7 6 7 6 6 5

15

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Solo

19

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

23

Vln. I      

Tutti

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

7      7      87      7      7      7      7

27

Vln. I      

Tutti

Vln. II

Solo

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

6      6      7      6      7      6      7      6      5

31

Vln. I      

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

7      7      7      7      7      7

35

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

39

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

43 Tutti

Soli

Soli

Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vln. IV

Vla. I, II

Vc.

Vc. Cemb.

47

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli

52

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli  
Tutti      Soli

57

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vln. III  
Vln. IV  
Vla. I, II  
Vc.  
Vc. Cemb.

Solo  
Tutti

62

Vln. I      Vln. II      Vln. III      Vln. IV      Vla. I. II      Vc.      Vc. Cemb.

Tutti

Vln. I      Vln. II      Vln. III      Vln. IV      Vla. I. II      Vc.      Vc. Cemb.

Tutti

Tutti

6      7      6      7      6      7      6      7

70

Vln. I      Vln. II      Vln. III      Vln. IV      Vla. I. II      Vc.      Vc. Cemb.

p      f

p      f

p      f

p      f

p      f

p      f

p      f

6      5      p      6      7      6      7      6      7      6      5      f