THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY PERFORMS MAX RICHTER'S FOUR SEASONS

26 NOVEMBER 2026
Newcastle City Hall



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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS CONCERT

Expect to enjoy yourself! Maybe your heart will beat a little faster. Maybe your hair will stand on end. It's hard to predict or describe how the vast sound of a symphony orchestra will affect each of us. Just bring an open mind and engage with the music – close your eyes, watch the conductor and the musicians, or just sit back and let the music take you away.



When do I clap?

Good question. Most pieces of music are broken up into different movements – usually, people only clap at the end of a piece, so there will be silent pauses between movements. On the next page you will see how many movements the pieces in this concert have, and the duration of each piece. But the simplest thing is to wait until the conductor turns around – or when everyone else starts applauding.

The conductor may leave the stage and come back on a few times, and acknowledge the different sections of the orchestra. You can keep clapping as long as you want to – and feel free to cheer and stomp your feet if you really enjoyed the concert!



Can I take photos or videos?

You can take photos and videos on your phone during the applause at the end of a piece of music. **Please switch your phone to silent, make sure the flash is off and dim the brightness of your screen so you don't distract other audience members**. And if you share it to your socials, tag us in your posts! We love seeing what people have captured.

Please leave professional and semi-professional camera gear at home and limit yourself to a phone camera inside the venue.

2026 CONCERT SEASON

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY PERFORMS MAX RICHTER'S FOUR SEASONS

BENJAMIN NORTHEY conductor
HARRY BENNETTS violin

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)
Adagio for Strings (1936)

MAX RICHTER (born 1966)
On the Nature of Daylight (2004)

MAX RICHTER (born 1966)
Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi – The Four Seasons (2012)

1. Spring 0
2. Spring 1
3. Spring 2
4. Spring 3
5. Summer 1
6. Summer 2
7. Summer 3
8. Autumn 1
9. Autumn 2
10. Autumn 3
11. Winter 1
12. Winter 2
13. Winter 3

Thursday 26 November, 7pm
Newcastle City Hall

Pre-concert talk

By Kim Waldock at 6.15pm

Estimated durations

Barber – 9 minutes
Daylight – 7 minutes
Seasons – 45 minutes

This concert will run for approx. 75 minutes

Cover image

Photo by Kat Forrest, Good Thanks Media

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and water on which we work and perform. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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Keen for more? The Sydney Symphony Orchestra returns to Newcastle in 2027 for three fascinating and varied concerts.

CHAD KELLY AND THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY IN NEWCASTLE

Friday 9 July 2027, 7pm
Newcastle City Hall

Keyboardist and conductor Chad Kelly takes us to London in the 1700s, with the refined sparkle of the harpsichord as the centrepiece, with music by Mozart and Haydn.

SYMPHONIC SPECTACULAR

Saturday 28 August 2027, 7pm
Newcastle Civic Theatre

Three orchestral icons, one unforgettable performance: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice,* Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with pianist Simon Tedeschi, and Beethoven's magnificent Fifth Symphony.

CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR IN NEWCASTLE

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Newcastle Civic Theatre

A joyful way to begin the Christmas season with family and friends, full of holiday favourites.

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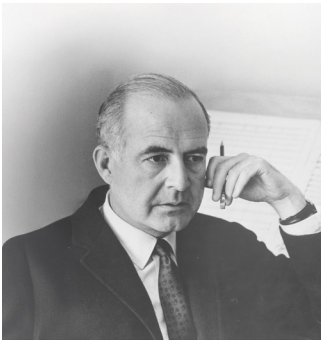
YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)
Adagio for Strings (1936)

Barber's greatest hit was originally the slow movement of his only string quartet. It uses repetition and gradual transformation of a simple, stepwise melodic fragment, with aching, strong-beat dissonances to create an intense, emotional atmosphere.

The string orchestra version dates from 1938, the year that saw the Anschluss, the invention of the ballpoint pen and Black Sunday at Bondi Beach.

Contemporary music included Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks,* Britten's Piano Concerto and Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*.



Samuel Barber © G. Schirmer Archives

MAX RICHTER (born 1966)
On the Nature of Daylight (2004)

The hit track of Richter's second album, *On the Nature of Daylight* was soon taken up by film directors. Like Barber's *Adagio* it repeats and transforms seemingly simple material – a four-chord progression.

It first appeared in 2003, the year that saw the invasion of Iraq, the SARS epidemic and the launch of MySpace.

Contemporary music included Kaija Saariaho's *Quatre instants,* Steve Reich's *Cello Counterpoint* and Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*.



Max Richter.
Photo © William Waterworth

MAX RICHTER (born 1966)
Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi – The Four Seasons (2012)

Richter made his electro-acoustic 'recomposition' of Vivaldi's greatest hit in 2012. The original set of four violin concertos, with its graphic rendering of birdsong, skating, chilly winds and summer storms, were probably composed sometime in the late 1710s, but were published in 1725, the year that saw the Treaty of Vienna, the Malt Tax Riots in Scotland and the publication of the *Complete Classics Collection of Ancient China*.

Contemporary music included Bach's Easter Oratorio, Couperin's *L'Apothéose de Lully* and Handel's *Rodelinda*.



Painting thought to be of Vivaldi, c.1725. Source: International Museum and Library of Music, Bologna/ Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BENJAMIN NORTHEY conductor

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Conductor in Residence of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2025 he was appointed Professor of Conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Director of the Australian Conducting Academy. He has previously held the posts of Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2010-2019), Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002-2006) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007-2010).

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila after being accepted as the highest placed applicant in 2002. He completed his studies at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula in 2006.

He previously studied conducting with John Hopkins OBE at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (2000-2002).

Northey appears regularly as a guest conductor with all major Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia (*La bohème, Turandot, L'elisir d'amore, Don Giovanni, Così fan tutte, Carmen*), New Zealand Opera (*Sweeney Todd*), Victorian Opera (*Candide, Into the Woods*) and the State Opera South Australia (*La sonnambula, L'elisir d'amore, Les contes d'Hoffmann*).

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Hong Kong Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Malaysian Philharmonic and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Northey has collaborated with a broad range of leading artists including Lang Lang, Pinchas Zukerman, Wynton Marsalis, Maxim Vengerov, Anne-Sofie von Otter, Julian Rachlin, Karen Gomyo, Piers Lane, Alban Gerhardt, Johannes Moser, William Barton, Lu Siquing, Amy Dickson, Slava Grigoryan, Marc-André Hamelin, James Morrison, Kurt Elling, Archie Roach, Ben Folds, Nick Cave & Warren Ellis, Paul Grabowsky, Tim Minchin, kd Lang, Patti Austin, Kate Miller-Heidke, Megan Washington, Barry Humphries, Meow Meow and Tori Amos.

Northey is highly active in the performance and recording of new Australian orchestral music, having premiered dozens of major new works by Australian composers. He has previously been a board member of the Australian Music Centre.

An ARIA Awards winner, he was voted *Limelight Magazine's* Australian Artist of the Year in 2018. Northey's many recordings can be found on ABC Classics. In 2026, he conducts the Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, West Australian, Tasmanian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras, and will be working again with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis in his *All Rise* program, this time with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.



Photo by Laura Manariti

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HARRY BENNETTS
Associate Concertmaster
Judy & Sam Weiss Chair

Sydney-born violinist Harry Bennetts studied at the Australian National Academy of Music under Dr. Robin Wilson, and in the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra mentored by concertmaster Noah Bendix-Balgley. His first years of violin lessons were in the Suzuki method and his subsequent teachers were Philippa Paige and Mark Mogilevski.

Following a series of success in national competitions, Harry has performed concerti as soloist with the Melbourne, Tasmanian, Willoughby, and Canberra Symphony orchestras. He has performed recitals in concert halls that include the Melbourne Recital Centre Salon, Ukaria Cultural Centre, Sydney Opera House Utzon Room, as well as numerous regional centres. He has performed chamber music at festivals in Townsville, Huntington, Baden-Baden, Cologne, Berlin and Melbourne.

Whilst still completing his studies, Harry was accepted into the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove in the class of Thomas Adès, and performed as an Emerging Artist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (with whom he now tours as a guest). During his time studying in Germany he performed regularly with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at their home in the Philharmonie and on their European tours. He has participated in masterclasses and lessons with Pinchas Zuckerman, Boris Kuschnir, Midori Gotō, Christian Tetzlaff and members of the Belcea and Doric string quartets.



Photo by Jez Smith

Harry Bennetts plays a 1716 Grancino violin, affectionately named the 'Hazelwood' Grancino, formerly belonging to Donald Hazelwood AO OBE, concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony from 1965–1998.

In 2019 a generous donor, Vicki Olsson, purchased the violin from Don and loaned it to the Orchestra; in 2024, Olsson donated the violin to the Sydney Symphony – her only stipulation was that the instrument be renamed the 'Hazelwood' Grancino in honour of Don.

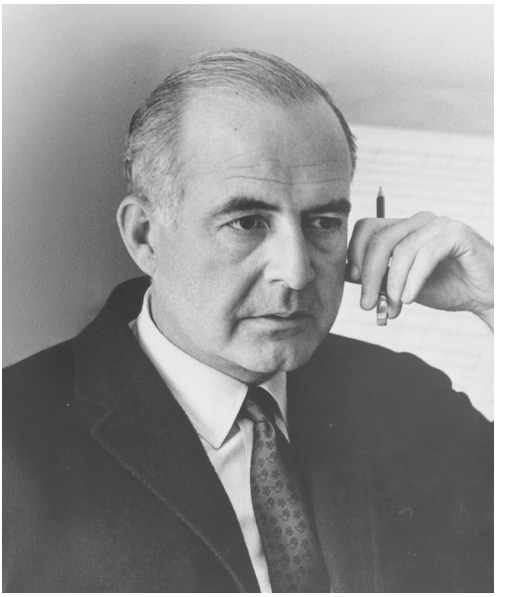
ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT SAMUEL BARBER

Samuel Barber was in a sense cursed by early success. His reputation today survives largely on the strength of the *Adagio* for strings (1936) and the Violin Concerto (1939). The *Adagio* was an instant hit when introduced by the conductor Toscanini in 1938; the Violin Concerto immediately won the hearts of American audiences with its heart-felt lyricism at about the same time. But Barber was a prolific composer and careful craftsman, producing a large output of high quality music.

Barber's family was more than able to support him in learning music, and his aunt was a much loved alto at the New York 'Met'. Not surprisingly he showed a great aptitude for vocal music, writing an opera at the age of ten, and then, a decade or so later, composing his setting of Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' to sing at an exam at the Curtis Institute where he was studying. The work shows that Barber had an innate sense of how to write for the voice to maintain a clearly sense of the words' meaning as well as adding emotive colouring, and it displays a great understanding of the string quartet. He wrote a great many fine songs, and in 1948, Barber produced one of his most beloved works, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. This 'lyric rhapsody' sets a prose-poem by James Agee which describes a quotidian evening in a small southern US town from a child's point of view. One notable interpreter of the work, Leontyne Price put it, 'You can smell the south in it.'

He won numerous award in his early life, including the Rome Prize, allowing him to spend two years in Italy where he wrote his first symphony; his Piano Sonata was commissioned by Richard Rodgers and Irving Berlin, and premiered by Horowitz; he wrote a ballet on the ancient myth of *Medea* for the equally legendary Martha Graham; and won his first Pulitzer Prize for the 1958 opera *Vanessa* – a work of Gothic opulence which has been rightly compared to certain works of Richard Strauss, and which was the first opera by an American to be produced at the Salzburg Festival. For the 1966 opening of the Met, he was



Samuel Barber © G. Schirmer Archives

commissioned to write the opera *Antony and Cleopatra*. Barber represented US music at major European conferences in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, becoming the first US composer to attend the Congress of Soviet Composers, which he did in 1962. That year also saw the premiere of his Piano Concerto, commissioned for the inauguration of the Philharmonic Hall at New York's Lincoln Center.

Barber's image of defiant conservatism may have contributed to the neglect of his work. Even the sympathetic composer and critic Virgil Thomson was forced to say of the Violin Concerto that 'the only reason Barber gets away with elementary musical methods is that his heart is pure'. But Barber's 'retro' reputation is more apparent than real: while he never experimented in the way that John Cage or Pierre Boulez did, he was alive to what he could extract from new methods like twelve-note serialism or the rhythmic organisation of Stravinsky. His Piano Sonata actually uses techniques derived Schoenberg's twelve-note serial method, and works such as Summer Music and the Piano Concerto are notable for rhythmic action which suggests the twin influences of Stravinsky and jazz.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE *ADAGIO FOR STRINGS*

Seven years after *Dover Beach* Barber composed the first version of his only quartet, Op.11, with the famous *Adagio* at its heart, which premiered in Rome in 1937. Where *Dover Beach* is an unequivocally pessimistic work about the need to cling to love and faith in a hostile universe, the string quartet was, Barber said, 'just music'. Except that in its various incarnations (as a string orchestra piece, or choral setting of the *Agnus Dei* from the Mass) the piece has come to be associated with tragedy and loss, and overwhelming sadness.

In 1938 Arturo Toscanini asked Barber for a new work. Barber provided two: the string orchestra version of the *Adagio* and the first Essay for orchestra, and both were performed and broadcast by the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The *Adagio* instantly became part of the US's soundtrack to the encroaching crisis of the war and was played during the broadcast announcement of President Roosevelt's death. It brought its composer high standing with audiences and sneering dismissal by the more learned. With its eternal note of sadness and its sense of constant yearning, the *Adagio* dwells on its limited thematic material, making gradual changes as it gathers intensity.

NOTABLE USES

Barber's *Adagio* has become one of the most-played pieces of music, used in a great number of film and television soundtracks and regularly performed at moments of commemoration and reflection - one critic described it as 'America's semi-official music for mourning.'

Notable uses and performances include:

- Radio broadcast to announce the death of US President of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1945).
- Performed at the funeral of Albert Einstein (1955).
- Performed in a national radio broadcast following the funeral of US President John F. Kennedy (1963).
- Conducted by Leonard Bernstein at New York Philharmonic concerts commemorating Samuel Barber's death (1981).
- Performed at the funeral of Princess Grace of Monaco (1982).
- Performed at the Last Night of the Proms in 2001 at the Royal Albert Hall to honour the victims of the September 11 attacks.
- Performed by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra at the funeral of Singapore's first prime minister Lee Kuan Yew (2015).
- Played at the televised memorial for the victims of the Manchester Arena bombing (2017).
- Played at the digital European Concert by the Berlin Philharmonic under Kirill Petrenko on 1 May 2020, for Coronavirus victims.
- Performed at Last Night of the Proms in 2021 at the Royal Albert Hall on the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.
- The *Adagio for Strings* can also be heard on many film and television soundtracks, including *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Platoon* (1986), *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992) and *Outlander* (2019). More comedic or lighthearted uses occur in the film *Amélie* (2001) and on episodes of *Seinfeld, The Simpsons, American Dad!* and *South Park*.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT MAX RICHTER

Max Richter is an Oscar-nominated composer and one of the most influential and acclaimed musical voices of his generation. Renowned for redefining contemporary classical music through the seamless fusion of traditional orchestration and modern electronic elements, Richter's work spans solo albums, ballet, film, fashion and installation. His singular ability to translate profound human experience into sound has earned him a vast global following, with his catalogue now surpassing three billion streams worldwide.

Beyond his solo work, Richter is a prolific and sought-after collaborator. His recent score for *Hamnet*, directed by Chloé Zhao, has received widespread critical acclaim, earning nominations at the Critics Choice Awards, Gloden Globe Awards, BAFTA Awards and the Academy Awards, underscoring his position as one of contemporary cinema's most distinctive musical voices.

His creative partnerships span disciples and generations: from scoring Dior runway shows for Kim Jones, to landmark ballets with Wayne McGregor, and film collaborations with directors including Denis Villeneuve, Martin Scorsese and Ari Folman. Whatever the medium, Richter's work is defined by emotional clarity, conceptual ambition and deep humanism.

Central to this evolving body of work is Studio Richter Mahr, cofounded by Richter and his creative partner, visual artist Yulia Mahr. Located in rural Oxfordshire, UK, within a restored farmhouse set among 31 acres of woodland, the solar- and heat-pump-powered studio operates as a sustainable, multidisciplinary retreat – conceived as both instrument and environment, and reflecting Richter's belief that music-making can shape not only culture but the world around it.

Through its residency program, the studio offers free access and uninterrupted time in this serene setting, fostering focused experimentation and meaningful creative development.



Photo © William Waterworth

Across more than two decades of work, from politically charged projects to intimate solo recordings, from overnight concerts to Oscar-nominated scores, Max Richter continues to expand the language of contemporary compositions in which listeners can reflect, dream and reconnect.

In recognition of his contribution to music, Richter was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the King's New Year Honours reflecting both his cultural impact in the UK and his international standing as a leading figure in contemporary composition. In 2026 he was also presented with the Berlinale Camera at the Berlin International Film Festival, acknowledging his outstanding contributions at the intersection of music, cinema and cultural reflection.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *ON THE NATURE OF DAYLIGHT*

Richter is a politically engaged composer; his second album *The Blue Notebooks* (released in 2003 and re-released with various enhancements in 2018) has been described as a subtle and peaceful protest against political, social and personal brutality. It included narrated texts from Franz Kafka's 'Blue Octavo Notebooks', with the composer explaining that they

> reflected on my sense of the politics of the time. Facts were beginning to be replaced by subjective assertions in the build-up to the Iraq war, which seemed to be viewed as inevitable and justified in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. Kafka's use of the absurd to investigate power structures struck me as highly relevant. He is, of course, the patron saint of doubt, and doubt – about politics, and the way society was heading – was what I was looking to express. The texts were specifically picked because they refer to childhood, or the passing of time, when everything around is failing.

The 'hit single' from the album was *On The Nature Of Daylight* which was rapidly taken up by film directors such as Martin Scorsese in *Shutter Island,* and several others, most recently Denis Villeneuve in *Arrival* as a crucial element of the soundtrack. By definition it deals with the passing of time, reflecting in the music's structure. Like Baroque forms such as the passacaglia, in which a repeated idea underlies a texture that grows by accretion, this work begins with simple four-chord patterns, adding layers of stepwise minor-mode melody that move at different speeds in the different string voices to create a sense of massive resonance, as in some works of Arvo Pärt.

ABOUT VIVALDI, RICHTER AND *THE FOUR SEASONS*

Born in Venice in 1678 and ordained a priest in 1703, Vivaldi had enjoyed great success during his lifetime as a violin virtuoso, entrepreneur and composer. His works included some 500 concertos as well as many operas, instrumental sonatas and a large body of sacred music. His playing was clearly prodigious. It would seem that Vivaldi pioneered technical advances, such as using the highest register of the strings, which were unknown at the time. One contemporary describes how Vivaldi 'put his fingers but a hair's breadth from the bow, so that there was scarcely room for the bow'.

Vivaldi knew the value of publishing his music. In his *Four Seasons* Vivaldi's musical rhetoric exquisitely depicts the seasons' progress and annual rhythms of life, described also in sonnets (possibly written by him) that he affixed to the score. The set forms part of *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* ('The Contest of Harmony and Invention'), Opus 8, which was published in 1725 in Amsterdam. The publisher, Etienne Roger, had developed the new technology of engraved plates – these could be reused as often as needed, and because there wasn't a single glyph for every note, the use of beams to link groups of small notes together made the print more legible than before. Vivaldi's Opus 3, or *L'estro armonico* (The harmonious fancy), a collection of twelve concertos for a variety of instrumental combinations appeared in Roger's edition in 1711. Roger was so impressed at the collection's popularity that he ordered what became Opp. 5, 6 and 7 and engraved them at his own expense.

L'estro armonico soon became, as scholar Michael Talbot puts it 'perhaps the most influential collection of instrumental music to appear during the whole of the eighteenth century'. Its enormous currency helped establish Vivaldi's approach to concerto writing as standard: his concertos are usually in three movements (fast-slow-fast). The first and third movements are structured around the alternation of a *ritornello* (or refrain) from the orchestra interspersed with virtuosic episodes from the soloist, while the central slow movement is usually simple in

form, allowing elaborate decoration from the soloist. *L'estro armonico* certainly captivated the imagination of a slightly younger German composer who transcribed and arranged some of the music in order to perfect his own concerto form. His name was JS Bach.

Vivaldi also knew the value of *not* publishing certain works, understanding that anything in print was fair game for other composers to copy – Bach did just that with several of Vivaldi's pieces. Baroque composers were accustomed to the notion of 'parody' in its original sense: composers might borrow music from their own or others' instrumental music and set the words of, say, the mass to them.

Despite the digital electronic element, Vivaldi would, then, have been unsurprised and probably quite comfortable with Max Richter's 'recomposition' of his most popular work in 2012. The German-born British composer has a distinguished career in electro-acoustic work, including scores for the stage and screen, and the post-minimalist aspect of his style makes for a fruitful point of contact between his music and that of the Baroque. But this is no mere arrangement or remix. As Richter has noted:

> I wanted to open up the score on a note-by-note level, and working with an existing recording was like digging a mineshaft through an incredibly rich seam, discovering diamonds and not being able to pull them out. That became frustrating. I wanted to get inside the score at the level of the notes and in essence rewrite it, recomposing it in a literal way.

In the event, with quasi-minimalist repetition and dramatic elisions of Vivaldi's music, Richter estimates he retained about one quarter of the original. He begins with a brief sound sculpture that sets the scene for spring; in the first movement proper he plays with Vivaldi's birdcalls over a new, slow-moving ostinato of magisterial chords.



Painting thought to be of Vivaldi, c.1725. Source: International Museum and Library of Music, Bologna/ Wikimedia Commons.

Similarly in the other two movements a phrase from the original is repeated and examined from different angles; Vivaldi's nymphs and shepherds are omitted. After a relatively straight version of the introduction, the first movement of summer drives the 'cuckoo' motif relentlessly before Richter adds his own long cantilena. Richter captures the heat-struck lassitude of the second movement, and in the third adds new rhythmic emphases to Vivaldi's stormy music. *Autumn 1* is full of subtle rhythmic displacements before the somnolent episode toward the end. The slow movement uses electronics to create a static, echoing sound-world. Vivaldi's 'hunting horns' are absent from *Autumn 3*, the music using the soloist's first material to decorate more, slow-moving ostinatos. *Winter 1* is characterised by familiar material made strange by slight metrical irregularities. There is no crackling fire in the slow movement, where the violin sings the lonely melody against a frozen backdrop. Similarly, Richter dispenses with Vivaldi's skaters while still creating a sense of movement through a winter landscape.

Notes by Gordon Kerry © 2026, Max Richter (biography) © 2026

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Vivaldi's score included sonnets that illuminate the musical imagery:

SPRING
Allegro
Here comes the Spring, and festively
She is saluted by the birds with a merry song;
The fountains and whispering Zephyrs
Flow all the while, with sweet murmuring harmonies.

Advancing over the heavens is a black mantle
With lightning and thunder chosen to announce her;
Then, when all is silent, the little birds
Return anew to their tuneful songs.

Largo
And later in the lovely flowering fields,
To the delightful murmuring of fronds and leaves,
The goat-herd sleeps, his faithful dog watchful beside him.

Allegro
To the rustic bagpipes' sound
Nymphs and shepherds dance beneath the canopy;
Spring appears, clothed in brilliance.

AUTUMN
Allegro
The peasants celebrate with dance and song
The happiness of a good harvest
And the wine of Bacchus having fired them,
It comes to an end in sleep.

Adagio molto
Gradually each ceases singing and dancing;
The mild and pleasant air
Of this Season beckons one and all
To the sweetness of sleep.

Allegro
The hunter at the new dawn joins the chase
With horn, guns and dogs;
The hunted beast flees, and the scent is followed;

Already confused and distracted by the great noise
Of guns and dogs, wounded by shot
Weakly it flees, but exhausted, dies.

SUMMER
Allegro non molto – Allegro
Beneath this hard and burning sun
Men and beasts languish and the pine trees burn;
Stuttering, the Cuckoo gives voice, and in answer
Sing the Turtledove and the Goldfinch.

The sweet Zephyr blows, but is challenged by Boreas the North Wind;
The shepherd weeps, because he fears
The fierce coming storm, and for his fate.

Adagio
His tired limbs are deprived of their rest
By his fear of lightning and fierce thunder;
The flies swarming furiously!

Presto
Ah, his fears are all too true –
Thunder and flashes in the Heavens!
Hailstones dash the heads from stalks of ripe grain!

WINTER
Allegro non molto
We freeze and shiver amidst the silvery snow
At the severe breath of the horrid wind;
We stamp cold feet relentlessly
While the harsh frost makes our teeth chatter.

Largo
To pass the day by the fire, quiet and content,
While outside there is drenching rain.

Allegro
To walk out on the ice, and with slow steps,
For fear of falling, tread cautiously.

To go boldly, skid, fall to the ground,
And go on the ice anew; to run strongly
Until the ice breaks and splits apart.

To hear them emerge from their iron gates:
Sirocco the South, Boreas the North and all the Winds at war –
This is Winter, but it too brings joy.

Originally in Italian, translation by David V. Russell
Symphony Australia © 1998

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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Associate Concertmaster
Alexandra Osborne
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Jennifer Booth
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Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Leone Ziegler
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SECOND VIOLINS
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Emma Jezek
Assistant Principal
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Robert Smith
Maja Verunica
Riikka Sintonen°
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Steven Larson
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HARP
Louisic Dulbecco
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Nathan Cox*
Guest Principal

Italian Harpsichord after Grimaldi by Carey Beebe, Sydney 1990. Supplied by Carey Beebe Harpsichords & prepared by Nathan Cox

Bold Principal
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