



## UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

### Venice Baroque Orchestra: “The Seasons Project” Review

By Kailey Hart

The stage is set. Centennial Hall has its traditional white shell extended from the backdrop all the way to the front of the stage. There are assorted instruments and music stands on stage, just waiting for their owners. This stage and the bright white lights create a hushed, almost electric air of anticipation in the seats. When the musicians walked onto the stage, the excitement level of the audience visibly rose, the anticipation palpable. As the musicians began, I was amazed by the expertise and mastery that they displayed. As they played Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons,” I thought about Vivaldi’s music, and how it has been around for centuries. “The Four Seasons” is one of my favorite classical pieces, and I believe, one of the absolute greatest pieces ever composed. After being around for centuries, it would seem like there would be no new ways to make this piece sound fresh and exciting, but as I listened, these talented musicians made the seasons feel like a crisp breath of fresh air. I was excited by the music, swept along in the passing of the seasons as the music went on.

Everyone has a certain few measures they think of when they hear classical music, whether it is the famous percussion from the 1812 Overture, or the soft chords of Beethoven’s Fur Elise. For me, I hear the Spring Movement of the Four Seasons, and as I listened to this performance, I heard in the melody the same rush that I did when I first heard the music long ago. It is a beautiful piece, and the Venice Baroque Orchestra gave one of the most modern, exciting and beautiful renditions I have ever heard, or could ever hope to hear. I think Vivaldi would have been honored to have his music portrayed in such an exquisite atmosphere.

The second half of the concert was a newer adaption on “The Four Seasons” composed by Philip Glass. He is an absolutely fantastic composer, and in his new rendition, this adaptation has an edgy, more gothic feel. Glass’s music has a dissonant side to it, taking the familiar strains of Vivaldi and making it darker and different. While Vivaldi’s music embodies the softer sides of the four seasons, Glass embodies the harsher, more unpleasant side. While Vivaldi reminds us of the soft breezes of spring, Glass’ composition forces the listener to feel the unbearable heat of the summer along and the frigid, bone-numbing cold of winter.

If I had to pick one, I would say I enjoyed Vivaldi’s classic four seasons as opposed to Glass’s edgier seasons. They can both certainly stand on their own as astonishing compositions, but when they are placed together there is a subtle clash between dark and light, and different decades and genres.