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Hey There! Welcome to episode 19 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano and I'm thrilled to have you here with me today.

I live near Atlanta, and at the time of this recording -- which is April -- we are in the middle of a beautiful spring. Flowers and trees everywhere are blooming, temperatures are warming up, the days are longer and the birds are noisier. Many composers were inspired by the seasons -- including spring. Today, we're going to learn about some famous springtime pieces.

Antonio Vivaldi was a famous Baroque composer whose most well-known piece is a set of violin concertos entitled The Four Seasons. The music you are listening to now is the concerto that represents spring. To help listeners understand his work, Vivaldi included a poem to describe what happened during each of the seasons. The poem for spring is this:

"Joyful spring has arrived  
the birds greet it with their cheerful song,  
and the brooks in the gentle breeze,  
flow with a sweet murmur."

Do you hear how the music reflects this idea in the poem? The music begins as a sort of joyful explosion. The violins sound cheerful and imitate the sounds of birds and babbling brooks. Can you picture the springtime scene as you listen to the music?

Many composers and audiences found something "spring-like" in the sound of a violin. Ludwig van Beethoven -- whom we have talked about before on our podcast -- wrote a famous violin sonata that is often referred to as his "Spring Sonata".

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Why do you think the piece was given this name? I hear the playful runs on the piano and think of animals starting to become active again in spring time as they come out of hibernation. While Beethoven may not have actually named this piece “Spring Sonata” during his lifetime, he was a nature lover. One of his favorite pastimes was taking walks in the countryside. He often left the city to work in rural areas and his observations in nature inspired many of his pieces, including his famous 6th symphony. Do you think Beethoven would have agreed with the title “Spring Sonata” being given to this piece?

Robert Schumann, a composer during the Romantic period of music, was known for his music for piano and voice. His first symphony, Symphony No. 1 in Bb Major, is also known as Spring Symphony. Schumann had just married Clara Schumann -- a talented pianist -- after a long and bitter battle in the courts. When Robert had asked Clara’s father for permission to marry his daughter, he would not grant it. For three years, Robert and Clara’s father battled in court until a judge finally ruled in the couple’s favor.

This time in Schumann’s life sparked a lot of creativity in the composer’s works. During their first year of marriage, he wrote over 130 pieces for piano and voice that were inspired by their new life together and his feelings for her. Clara encouraged him to write for the orchestra, and wrote in her diary, "it would be best if he composed for orchestra; his imagination cannot find sufficient scope on the piano... His compositions are all orchestral in feeling... My highest wish is that he should compose for orchestra—that is his field! May I succeed in bringing him to it!"

Schumann initially nicknamed the first movement of his symphony -- the one you are listening to now -- “The Beginning of Spring”.

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He wrote in a letter, “Could you breathe a little of the longing for spring into your orchestra as they play? That was what was most in my mind when I wrote [the symphony] in January 1841. I should like the very first trumpet entrance to sound as if it came from on high, like a summons to awakening. Further on in the introduction, I would like the music to suggest the world’s turning green, perhaps with a butterfly hovering in the air, and then, in the Allegro, to show how everything to do with spring is coming alive...”

Do you think Schumann succeeded in making audiences think and feel these things in this work?

To listen to more famous pieces about or inspired by spring, head over to my website: [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/19](http://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/19). I’ve created a listening calendar for you with a variety of spring-themed selections. My suggestion is to pick a piece from the listening calendar and start your day with it each morning. Again, you’ll find that listening calendar at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/19](http://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/19).

Thanks so much for joining me today to listen to these springtime pieces of music! I hope that you’re having a wonderful spring -- or whatever season it may be as you listen to this -- and I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks for the Busy Kids Love Music podcast.