Concerto in D Minor

Op. 3 No. 11

A. Vivaldi 1711

Points of interest

* The development of Musical enlightenment in Venice.
* The importance of music at St. Mark’s Basilica.
* The rise of the Ospidale.
* The development of the Concerto Grosso.



**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Instrumental Music

Set Work 1

**Harmony & Tonality**

* The harmony used is functional throughout.
* Modulations are made to related keys via perfect cadences.
* Much material is based around primary chords.
* The cycle of 5ths is used to help modulate to new keys.
* Vivaldi makes great use of the Dominant 7th.
* Chromatic harmonies like the Neapolitan 6th and Diminished 7th are used.

**Melody**

* Melodic lines are virtuosic for the solo instruments.
* Much melodic material is based around scales and triads.
* Sequences are used to develop melodic lines.
* Melodic fragmentation is used in the third movement.
* Themes are often used to create fugues.
* Much melodic writing is conjunct but leaps appear in virtuosic passages.

**Structure**

* The concerto is divided into 4 movements, each characterised by tempo.
* Movement 1 *‘Allegro’* is in two sections the first for violins, the second for cello.
* Movement 2 *‘Adagio & Spiccato’* also has two sections. The second is divided into ritornello and episode passages.
* Movement 3 *‘Largo & Spiccato’* is divided into three sections, the middle being a violin solo.
* Movement 4 *‘Allegro’* is again in ritornello form.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* At the start of the eighteenth century Venice was establishing itself as a centre of arts and culture.
* Music was associated with the Venetian carnival.
* Music was readily performed in the homes of the nobility, churches and hospitals.
* Secular music developed in the Ospidali.
* This period was a time when the major/minor key system was totally established.
* The concerto is scored for two solo violins and cello (concertino) with string orchestra accompaniment.
* Solo sections are more virtuosic and cover a wide tessitura.
* Spiccato technique is used (played lightly off the string).
* No dynamic marks are given.
* Often the concertino and ritornello parts will be doubled.
* The figured bass would be played by a harpsichord.
* The third movement is for solo violin in a high tessitura.
* The concerto is characterised by the use of different textures.
* Solo sections often have reduced textures to allow the instruments to shine.
* Polyphonic passages are used in fugal sections.
* Homophonic textures are used in the *‘Adagio’.*
* Pedal notes are used to stabilise the harmony.
* The third movement features melody dominated homophony.
* An accented homophonic accompaniment is used in the last movement.
* Simple rhythms are used.
* Semiquavers are used in the more virtuosic passages.
* Syncopation is used in more polyphonic passages.
* The *Siciliano* rhythm is used in the third movement.
* The first movement is 3/4.
* The second movement is in common time.
* The third movement is in compound time (12/8).
* The fourth movement is in common time but begins with an anacrusis.

Wider listening: *Horn Concerto in Eb* – Mozart, *Concertino for Flute* – Chaminade, *Piano Concertos -* Rachmaninov.