ANTONIO

# VIVALDI

*(1678 – 1741)*

# CONCERTO NO. 8

for 2 Violins and String Orchestra

RV128, Op. 30

*Edited by Ludwig Landshoff*

**FULL SCORE**

# FOREWORD

THIS orchestra concerto in D minor is published here for the first time. It has been taken from an autograph score, evidently a first copy, as indicated by the hurriedly written notes and the numerous corrections and crossings-out made by a master who composed with a kind of creative furor. Undoubtedly this concerto was among the works written for the orchestra of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice. From some documents of the Institute that have recently come to light* we know that it was Vivaldi's duty as director of music to furnish annually a certain number of symphonies and concertos for the public concerts which he made famous. The orchestra was composed of young girls brought up in the Ospedale largely Vivaldi's own pupils. These works were composed not only when Vivaldi was himself directing the rehearsals and performances but also during his travels through Italy and other countries.

This concerto is a typical example of its kind, of the *concert symphony,* first produced by Vivaldi. It is referred to in his manuscripts sometimes as *sinfonia* or *sinfonia concerto,* also as *concerto ripieno* or else merely *concerto,* indicating that its character wavered between symphony and concerto. This concerto is an excellent example of the path Vivaldi took in developing the new form, a path that led him away from being a mere expert contrapuntalist of the Giovanni Legrenzi school, to becoming the initiator and chief representative of the moderns in his day. And it is in his tireless search for new musical worlds, in his championship of a new style that we recognize—without underestimating his accomplishments in the field of polyphonic music—the particular artistic and historical significance of the peculiar and extraordinary phenomenon Vivaldi.

Vivaldi's main aim was to modify the strict rules of counterpoint, to loosen them up and transform them to such a degree that the stiffness which was often characteristic of the traditional polyphonic form would become more fluent and homophonic, the melody lighter and freer. We recognize as one of Vivaldi's major accomplishments the gradual overthrowing of the basso continuo. He attempted the experiment, which has often been successful, of freeing the phrase and particularly the melody from the clumsy appendage of an eight plus sixteen foot bass, running continually parallel to it. Vivaldi sought a *cantabile* quality in his music. Because of this the emphasis in his orchestra works falls more and more on the middle movements, in contrast to such early works as, for example, this previous D minor concerto. The largo of that work contains only twelve measures and represents nothing more (as was often the case with Bach) than a series of seventh chords which progress in slow tempo from the first to the third movements. It is enlivened only by a small rhythmic motive in the violins and an even shorter but very strictly held motive in the bass. On the other hand we find in this concerto that the emphasis, as in so many of his earlier works, is exclusively on the polyphonic sections such as in the regular fugato in the closing movement, whose lively, bubbling theme is repeated in five modulations in the nearest keys. This is even more the case in the first movement where the themes of both violins are written in a somewhat free but artistic counterpoint, so that they can be momentarily interchanged at the repetition of the single phrases, while the viola and bass remain the same. Only in his opus IV does Vivaldi, searching after new solutions, use this technique so largely and exclusively.

So we may presume that this concerto in D minor originated at the time of the composition of opus IV. And opus IV can be dated accurately, a rare and lucky case in the works of Vivaldi. In 1716 his music publisher, Estienne Roger of Amsterdam, issued a music catalogue as an appendix to the text of a book. It listed the musical works that he had published in order, providing them with publication numbers from 1-404. The entries on page 344 gave both books of Vivaldi's opus IV and were numbered 399 and 400. If we consider the quantity of music engraved by the diligent Roger and also the fact that Vivaldi's only slightly earlier opus III was plate no. 50, we must draw the conclusion that this opus IV must have been printed not earlier or later than 1715.

The score of this concerto represents the original text of the autograph copy without change of any kind except for the realization of the figured bass. In the parts indications of tempo, phrasing and dynamics have been added from the point of view of modern orchestral practice. It is up to the conductor to decide to what degree he wishes to make use of these editorial additions, which are only suggestions.

LUDWIG LANDSHOFF

* Presented by A. Salvatori in the "Rivista della Città di Venezia", 1928, in the "Rassegna Musicale", 1929/3, 1937.

# CONCERTO IN D MINOR

## I

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Allegro non molto

VIOLIN I

VIOLIN II *spiccato*

VIOLA

CELLO

Allegro non molto

PIANO *f*

*p*

5 *spiccato*

*mf*

9

13

*poco a poco cresc.*

*f*

16

*p*

19

*mf*

22

*cresc.*

*f*

26

*p*

30

*poco a poco cresc.*

*mf*

33

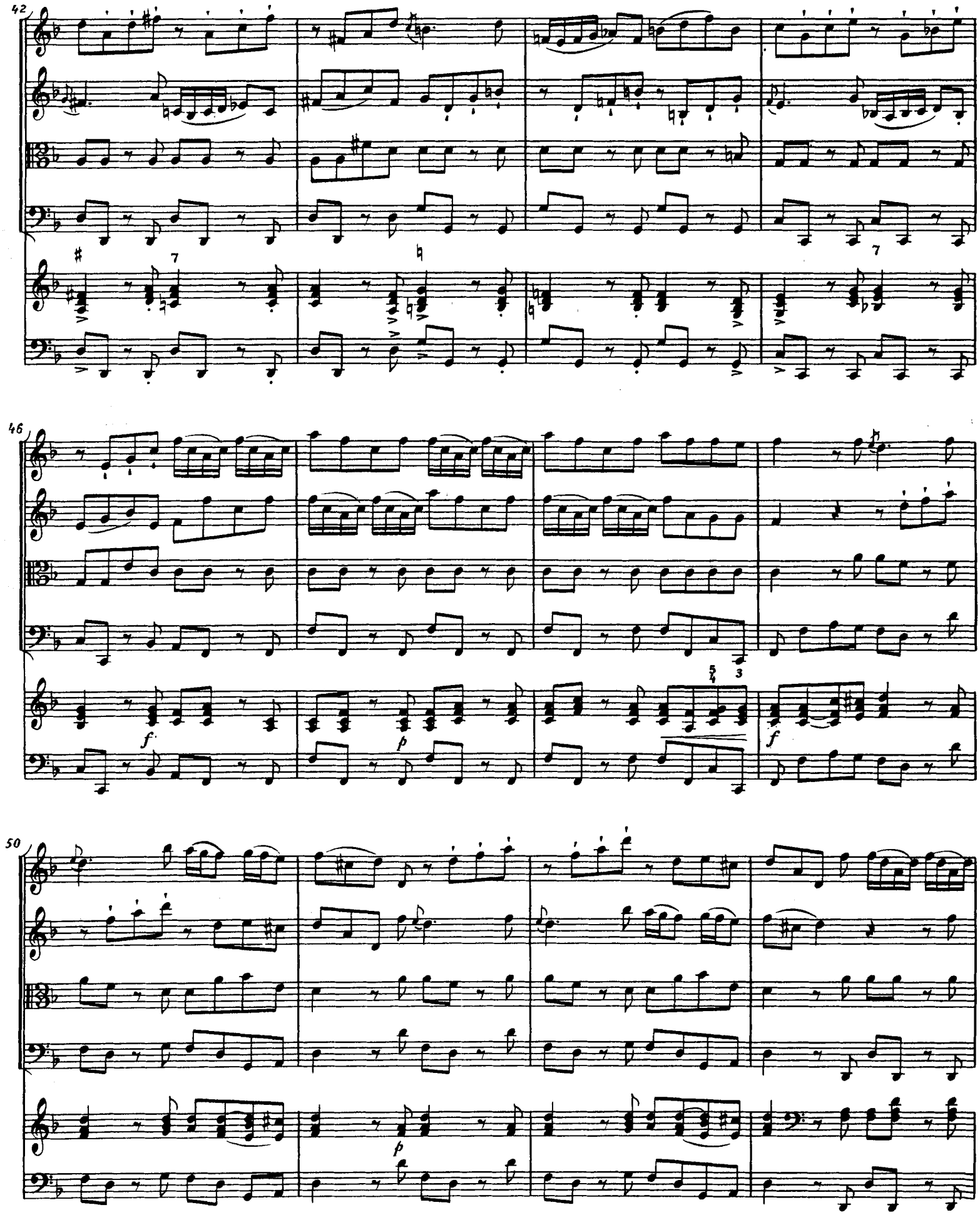
f

36

p

39

mf


42
46
50

54

57

60

*allargando*

# II

Largo

Largo

*p*

3

7

5

7

9

11

*un poco rit.*

# III

Allegro

Allegro non troppo

3

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

6

*mf*

9

*poco a poco cresc.*

12

*f*

15

*sf*

18

21

cresc.

*f*

24

27

7

30

33

*mf*

36

cresc.

*f*

40

*mf*

*f*

44

*allargando*

*ff*