

E.C.S. No. 3049

Richard Felciano

The Seasons

a cantata for chorus of unaccompanied mixed voices



The Seasons is a set of four choral songs conceived as a unit. The barren stillness of winter, the florid ebullience of spring, the static heat of summer, and the earthy, rhythmic dancing of the dry, harvest months are in turn evoked by a text consisting of only two words for each season, chosen certainly for their evocative quality but also with an eye to alliteration and the manipulative potential of their constituent sounds. These phonemes form the actual material of the piece from which the words eventually emerge. There are overlaps in the text as well as the music (the final syllable of "spring blossom" sounding the same as the first syllable of "summer sun"), suggesting that imperceptible transition in which the end of one season is simultaneously the beginning of another, the cycle being never complete; in the "summer" section, the voices produce multiphonics by isolating the harmonics in various vowels above a single and constantly sounding fundamental. The work ends with autumn, but the first notes of winter are already present, and the sense is that both of conclusion and of continuation yet to come.

—Richard Felciano

Commissioned by the University of Wisconsin, River Falls and first performed by the University Choir under the direction of Elliot Wold

Pronunciation

n-n-n = hum on *n*
 m-m-m = hum on *m*
 s-s-s = gentle hiss } Do not linger on preceding vowel, if one exists.

t = *t* sound; explosive; short; unvoiced; percussive.

T = *tongue click*: high, loud, produced at the side of the mouth. The tongue pulls away from the hard palate.

d = *d* sound; explosive; voiced.

u = *oo* as in *fool* (lips puckered).

o = *aw* as in *saw*.

w = as in the *w* in *winter*, lips puckered as in *oo*; voiced (*wuh*).

Plus the following, if the ossia parts are taken in Movement III:

O = pure vowel, without diphthong, as in the French *beau* or *faut*

Q = *a* as in *father*.

e = pure vowel, without diphthong, as in the French *nez* or *parlé*

i = *ee* as in *see*.

Performance Instructions

The pulse is a quarter note = 50 unless otherwise indicated.

In the unbarred sections, the conductor beats the pulse but not the meter.



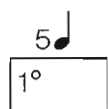
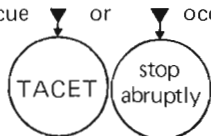
Conductor's cue to begin material



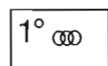
Unboxed material is performed only once, in unison.



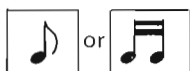
Boxed material is repeated in unison until new material is cued or a drop-out cue or occurs. *Tacet* or *stop* may also be indicated verbally, i.e. 2".



The section does not sing in unison. The section leader begins on cue; others begin on consecutive pulses thereafter on a one-at-a-time basis. Each singer continues his previous material (or silence) right up to the point where he begins singing the material in the new box. Considerable overlapping should result. Repeat until the next cue. (N.B. that if the duration of the box is five quarter notes, then five entries will result.)



Chain reaction. Enter in rhythmically free, irregular sequence, one singer after another. Begin with section leader.

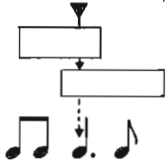


An isolated, boxed note or group without metric indication: each singer repeats the note, leaving irregular pauses between the repetitions. Do not synchronize with other singers.



Sustain the note (stagger the breathing) until the next cue.

A vertical dotted line indicates events that are simultaneous.



Top box (no arrow) is unaffected; lower box begins on cue; cue is coordinated with indicated beat in unboxed part.

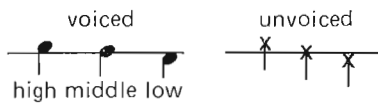
Time between cues is indicated in pulses (7♩, 5♩, etc.) or seconds (3", 10", etc.). During the former, the conductor beats time; during the latter, he does not.

Solo Voices leave the choral part for solos and then return to the choral part: the chorus continues singing during the solo unless specifically directed to drop out.

Accidentals apply to repeated notes and, in metered passages, carry through the measure.

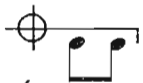
Parenthetical note heads at the beginning of the staff indicate that repetitive material utilizing those pitches continues from the previous staff.

Spoken ranges:



Multiphonics (indicated by harmonics \diamond) are produced by singing the fundamental on the vowel [u] (pronounced oo), with the lips thrust forward, puckered to form a tiny circular opening. With the tongue low and withdrawn (the normal position for this vowel), the sound will be mellow and 'flutey', i.e. with no pronounced harmonics. As the tongue is moved slowly forward and upward, toward the back of the upper front teeth, progressively higher harmonics will appear, not as strong as the fundamental, but clearly audible as individual frequencies. The exact tongue movement may vary from one singer to another and can be found only by experimentation. The following technique may help to isolate the harmonics:

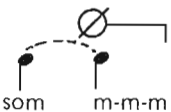
1. Pucker the lips for "oo", leaving only a tiny circular opening.
2. Sing "oo".
3. Leave the lips shaped for "oo"; sing "ee".
4. Move slowly back and forth between steps 2 and 3 (note the lips do not move—only the tongue).



Mute: cup hands over mouth.



bocca chiusa (closed mouth): if sign is over a vowel followed by a consonant, close mouth (hum) instantly after consonant is sounded.



If sign is over a subsequent note, close at that rhythmic position.

= close (hum) on second quarter.

The Seasons

a cantata for chorus of unaccompanied mixed voices

1 8♩

2 7♩

3 11♩

4 2♩ solo voice 3♩ pp another solo voice 9♩

5 1♩ pp

S

1^o pp

n-n-n (hum)

stop abruptly

n-n-n

n-n-n n-n-n

tiny wisps of sound

n-n-n

7 9♩

10" after all sopranos have entered 10"

6

10" each singer once anytime within 10" of cue

pp

w

1^o (♩=50) duration: one breath (variable)

n-n-n

fade to nothing at end of one breath; repeat

8

pp solo voice another solo voice 1st or 3rd solo voice

n-n n-n n-n

as before; wisps of sound non-vibrato; like violin harmonics

9 6"

10

3" sustain (dim.) to hand clap

hand clap

one singer

shortly after last alto note

11 1"

pp

n-n

non vib.

12 20"

1^o (n-n-n) duration: one breath

move slowly away from chorus B-natural in such a way as to produce beats of various speeds—then move back and coalesce with the B-natural again. Durations ad libitum. Do not synchronize repetitions with the subsequent entries of other singers—non vibrato

S

A

f pp ff mf nothing

in-n-n (gong-like)

w w w w w

very fast to very slow; all start instantly after hand-clap but do not synchronize ritard

13 15" 14

S
A
3 whistlers chosen from any section

1^o ♩ = 50 *pp* vary duration (long) do not synchronize
in-n-n t in-n-n t

♩ = 50 *pp*

1 = II

once only, in canon: tiny wisps of sound; like violin harmonics

15 10" 16 10" 17 8"

S
A
3 wh.
T

1^o *pp* vary duration; do not synchronize
in-n-n t in-n-n d

1^o *pp* vary duration (long) do not synchronize
in-n-n
well-accented

III

molto dim.
very fast to very slow

mp x x x x x x x x x x
w w w w w w w w w w w w w w w w

all start instantly on cue but do not synchronize the ritard

18 15 ♩ 19 20 ca. 4' 00"

S
A
T

1^o ♩ = 50 *p* like murmuring *ad lib.*
wind, wind_ 3 wind

dim. ppp TACET

dim. ppp TACET

dim. ppp TACET

P ♩ = 50 like bells
win - ter wind_

all voices stop together gently

♩ = 50

1 4♩ 2 4♩ 3 3♩ 4 5♩ 5 3♩ 6 1♩ 7 1♩

Solo S

Solo S

A

T

B

nothing *mf* nothing *mf* nothing *mf* nothing *mf* nothing *mf* nothing *mf*

s-s-s-s s-s-s-s

rin-n-n-ng

solos lightly lyrically flowing

ah 5 mp 5 ah 5

ring spring

s-s-s-s

8 3♩ 9 8♩

Solo S

Solo S

Solo A

A

T

B

spring *blo- s-s-s-som blos-som blo-s-s-som

nothing

1^o mp

ah 5 mp 5 ah 5

*hisses; gentle and rhythmically precise

10 5 J 11 12 13 11 J

2 soprano solos in canon at the as indicated

Solo S
Solo A

ah ah ah ah

S
A
T

spring blos- som spring spring

14 6 J 15 5 J 16 conducted in 4

Solo S
Solo A

spring blos-som

S
A
T

spring

each singer once anytime within 5" of cue

tutti, div. S. I mp S. II rin-n

B

† mp poco (bells)

blos-som-m blos-som-m blos-som-m blos-som-m-m

blos- som spring blos-som

background: normal, gentle, sustained without accent

† do not hiss on s but close mouth immediately and hum on final m.

Solo S

Solo A

S I & II

A

T

B

-n-ng sprin-n-n-ng spring_ blos-som rin-n-ng spring_

unison mf *divisi mf* *unison*

blos- som, springblossom, blos-som, springblossom, blos- som, springblossom, blos - som,

*Beginning at this point, half the bass section sings the material as written, the other half sings the same music one sixteenth note later, thus creating a constant alteration of unisons and harmonic overlaps. Maintain the background character of the line.

Solo S

Solo A

S I & II

A

T

B

- blos-som, sprin-n-ng spring spring blos- som, blos- -

divisi *unison*

blos- som, blossom, ring, spring, spring blossom, blos-som - blos- som - spring_

Solo S

Solo A

S

_____ som, blos- som-m-m blos- som-m-m blos- som-m-m

A

T

B

_____ blos-som, _____ spring blos-som, blos - - - som, spring blossom, spring blossom

17

18

Solo S

Solo A

S

mf
spring

A

mp
unis. 3 3 3
spring _____ blos-som spring _____ spring _____

T

B

spring blos- - som, spring _____ blos- som spring blos - - - -som

Solo S

Solo A

S

A

T

B

blos-som

spring

spring

mf

unis.

div.

unis.

spring

blos-som

sprin-n-ng

spring

blos-som

spring blos- som, spring blos - - - som, spring blos- - som,

Solo S

Solo A

S

A

T

B

mp

mp

one solo soprano

blos - - som, blos-som, blos - - som,

blos - - som, blossom, blos - - som,

spring

blos-som,

ah

ah

div.

mp

unis.

sprin-n-ng

blos-som

blos-som,

blos - - som,

spring blos- - - som-m-m, - som-m-m, - som, - - m-m-m,

*All basses in unison

poco rall.

Solo S
 S
 Solo A
 S
 A
 T
 B

blos- - - som, spring _____ blos-som, blos - - som, blos- som,
 blos- - - som, spring _____ blos-som, blos- - som, blos- som,
 ah _____ blos-som-m-m, blos-som-m-m spring blos-som-m-m
 _____ blos - - som, _____ blos- som, spring blos- som, m-m-m
 som-m som, _____ m-m-m, som, _____ m-m-m, som, _____ m-m-m, som, _____ m-m-m

(tacet)

(soloists not in foreground; same dynamic as other singers)

a tempo

30''

Solo S
 Solo A
 S
 A
 T
 B

mf spring, _____ spring _____ blos- som _____ ah _____ spring blos-som, spring
 spring _____ blos- som ah _____
 ah _____ ah _____ spring _____ blos- som, ah _____
 ah _____ ah _____ ah _____ spring, spring, ah _____
 ah _____ blos-som ah _____ ah _____
 blos - - som, _____ spring _____ ah _____

23

suddenly *mf*, the initial entry
slightly accented in each voice

spring _____

I
II

ah _____ some blos-som, spring _____ blos-som

ah _____ some blos-som, spring _____ blos-som

All Women*
III
IV

ah _____ some blos-som, spring _____ blos-som

V

ah _____ some blos-som, spring _____ blos-som

spring _____

I
II

ah _____ some blos-som, spring _____ blos-som

ah some blos-som spring _____ blos-som

All Men*
III
IV

ah _____ some blos-som spring _____ blos-som

V

ah _____ some blos-som spring _____ blos-som

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The 'All Women' section (measures 23-28) features five staves (I-V) in treble clef. The 'All Men' section (measures 29-34) features five staves (I-V) in bass clef. The lyrics are: 'spring', 'ah', 'some blos-som, spring blos-som'. The score includes dynamic markings like *mf* and accents.

*SATB each divide into five parts in order to
distribute their respective timbres equally.

ca. 4' 15"

[Attacca]

(pulse continues at M.M.=50)

1 4 J **2** 5 J **3** 4 J **4** 6 J **5** 8 J

(spring)
m-m-m

quietly add other sopranos, one at a time, on successive beats, humming

(spring)
m-m-m

quietly add other altos, one at a time, on successive beats, humming

(spring)
m-m-m

quietly add other tenors, one at a time, on successive beats, humming

(spring)
m-m-m

quietly add other basses, one at a time, on successive beats, humming (except second basses, who enter on cue, humming)

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

mp
sum-mer sun

all voices; one at a time, on successive beats change to u (oo)

all voices: one at a time, on successive beats change to u (oo)

all voices: one at a time, on successive beats change to u (oo)

all voices: one at a time, on successive beats change to u (oo)

all voices: one at a time, on successive beats change to u (oo)

*One voice momentarily leaves the section to sing the motto (preferably not the same voice each time, thus a different singer for each entry should be appointed in advance). To be sung in a static, dry, expressionless monotone. After each figure the voice rejoins the section. The effect should be that the motto roams to and fro spatially inside the sustained sound.

6 4 J 7 5 J 8 3 J 9* 20 J 10 5 J 11 20 J

S
One Soprano

A
One Alto

T
One Tenor

B I
One Bass I

B II

sum-mer sun

mum

(gua)

u

1° o

(gua)

u

1° o (ah)

(gua)

u

1° o

(gua)

u

1° o (ah)

(gua)

u

1° o

(gua)

u

1° o (ah)

(gua)

u

1° o

(gua)

u

1° o (ah)

(gua)

u

1° o

(gua)

u

1° o (ah)

*Multiphonics at cue, all voices except B II move back and forth between 3rd and 4th partials at random (other partials may occasionally occur). The lower box in each part is an ossia, to be used only if the multiphonics cannot be satisfactorily produced or are for other reasons impracticable. In that event, change one at a time, on successive beats to the new vowel. B II produces no multiphonics but opts for the ossia box if the rest of the choir does so.

12

5 J

13

20 J

14

8 J

conducted in 4

S

One Soprano

A

One Alto

T

One Tenor

B I

One Bass I

B II

Two Whistlers
(from any section)

(8^{va})

u

1^o e

(8^{va})

u

1^o e

(8^{va})

u

1^o e

u

1^o e

u

1^o e

mum-mum

sum-mum

mum-mum

mum

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

sum-mer sun

sum-mer sun

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum

8^{va}

mum-mum-mum

(momentarily leave section, then return)

simply, but clearly audible

15 20 ♩ 16

*conducted in 4
(sempre ♩=50)*

S
One Soprano

A
One Alto

T
One Tenor

B I
One Bass I

B II
Two Whistlers

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

(g^{ua})
u
1°
i
(ee)

z-z-z (voiced)

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum

as before
a different voice

* Su-mer is i-cu-men in — mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum

*Like a child's voice, without vibrato if possible. Use middle English pronunciation: approximately, "soo-mur iz ih-koo-men in" (sumoer lz ikumen in). The line should be sung simply but be clearly audible.

17*

mf

sh

One Soprano

mum-mum-mum mum mum mum

One Alto

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum

One Tenor

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum mum mum mum mum-mum-mum

One Bass I

mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum mum-mum

Bass II

*All parts stop suddenly with unvoiced 'sh' at cue 17 (third beat).
Keep sound continuous up to that point. Do not crescendo.

Continue without pause
in the same tempo

ca. 3' 10"

(like drums)

S *mf* sh sh sh

A *mf* sh sh sh

T *sempre mp* mum-mum-mum-mum mum-mum mum-mum mum-mum mum-mum-mum

B I *sempre mp* mum-mum-mum-mum-mum mum-mum mum-mum-mum mum-mum mum-mum-mum

B II *mf* o (aw) o
 spoken in lowest range
 with downward glissando and diminuendo

S t t t

A sh sh sh sh

T mum-mum-mum mum-mum-mum mum mum

B I mum-mum mum-mum-mum mum mum

B II o o

S
A
T
B I
B II

[3/16] [2/16] [3/16]

t t t t t tt t tt t

tum tum tum tum tum

tum tum tum

o o o

beat $\frac{8}{8}$

1

S
A
T
B I
B II

3/4 t t T T t t T

au- †tumn au-tumn au- tumn au- tumn

*sustain held spoken notes full value
 † 'tumn' (autumn) and 'tum' are pronounced identically

S (x)

A sh-sh sh-sh sh-sh sh-sh

T tum tum tum tum autumnearth tum tumtum tumtum tum autumn au- tumn au-

B I earth autum au-tum earth au- tumn earth autumnearth autum autum au-tum tum tumtum

B II

2

3

30"

cue only; do not conduct; singers keep strict sixteenth-note pulse.

S *tacet*

5+7 / 16 16 *tongue clicks*

A sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh

T — tumn earth
autumn earth au-tumn earth au-tumn

B I tumtum earth
autumn earth earth tumn autumn

B II *random cluster in lowest register*
oer (as in 'earth') *sustain into cue*
oer oer

B II add one additional beat rest with each repetition, i.e. 5 6 7 etc. 444

4 15'' 5 10'' 6 8''

S
 hand claps*
 $\frac{5+7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$
 tongue clicks

A (x)

T (•)

B I
 hand claps*
 $\frac{6+3}{16}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{7}{16}$
 autumn earth earth tumnautumn

B II (x)

section leader
 use pitch pipe,
 if needed, to
 find entry pitch

1^o $\text{♩} = 50$
pp
 n-n-n
 (hum)

*hand-clapping or foot-stomping must be precisely coordinated

†hand claps may be replaced by foot stomps

7 6'' 8 7'' 9 6'' 10 10''

S
 cue $\frac{3}{6}$ material stops; cue $\frac{6}{6}$ continues, adding one singer at a time

A
 stop abruptly

T
 stop abruptly

B I
 stop abruptly

B II
 stop abruptly

mf all parts as at 3

3

3

3

3

3

stop abruptly

stop abruptly

stop abruptly

stop abruptly

stop abruptly

1^o $\text{♩} = 50$
pp
 n-n-n
 (hum)

11 5''

12 3''

13 3'' $\text{♩} = 50$

S

A

T *mf*
6/16
autumn earth

B I *mf*
6/16
autumn earth

B II

stop abruptly

pp *pp*

*solo voice** *another solo voice**

n-n-n n-n-n

tiny wisps of sound

*the same voices as at $\frac{4}{4}$ Movement I

ca. 2' 50''

Total duration ca. 14' 15''

—San Francisco, 1978