

# Performer's Guide to *Concerto in E Minor* by Antonio Vivaldi

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## Composer

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi (1678-1741) was one of the most important Baroque composers and violinists, although he died in poverty. His works were mostly forgotten until the 20th century when many of his works were found in Turin and other collections. He wrote over 500 concertos, most of which were for violin (230). The second largest group of solo concertos is his 37 bassoon concertos. He also wrote many chamber concertos that included bassoon (see appendix). His works often feature compound melodies, ritornello forms, and Lombardic rhythms ("Scotch snap"). Many describe his works as lively and flamboyant. He influenced J.S. Bach so much that Bach arranged some of his concertos for keyboard.

## *Concerto in E Minor RV484*

This concerto was written while Vivaldi worked at an orphanage in Venice called the Ospedale della Pietà. The manuscript is located in the Turin Library. This is one of Vivaldi's most popular bassoon concertos.

## Resources

Ross, David. "Ornamentation in the Bassoon Music of Vivaldi and Mozart (Part 1)" *Double Reed* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 26-31.

- Talks about ornamentation in Vivaldi's Concertos. Has some examples from RV 484

Ewell, Terry B. "Proportional Tempos in the Concertos of Antonio Vivaldi" *Double Reed* 24, no.2 (Summer 2001): 113-21.

- Talks about choosing tempos in general, and about proportional tempos in Vivaldi's concertos (not RV484 however).

Goranson, Todd A. "The Bassoon Concertos of Antonio Vivaldi: A Survey of Performance Tempos and Proportional Relationships." *Double Reed* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 122-132.

- Gives performance tempos of all concertos and analyzes whether the tempos have a proportional relationship.

Lyman, Jeff. "Table of Concordances: The Vivaldi Concerti for Bassoon."  
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jlym/pages/vivaldi.html>. Accessed July 9, 2018.

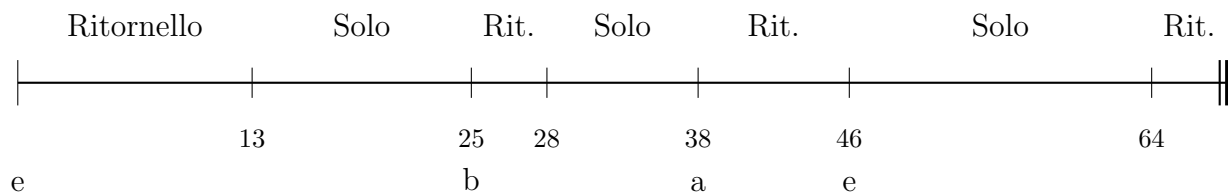
- Has all of Vivaldi's Concertos and what the different catalog numbers are.

## Recordings

- “Vivaldi Concerti per Fagotto I” Sergio Azzolini with Aura Soave Cremona (period instruments)
- “Vivaldi Bassoon Concertos” Klaus Thuneman with I Musici
- “Vivaldi Concertos” Milan Turkovic with English Concert
- “The Art of the Bassoon” Bram van Sambeek with Sinfonia Rotterdam

## Movement 1

### Ritornello Form



## Pedagogical Issues

In the first statement of the bassoon, the first arpeggio of each group should be lightly accented, and the last arpeggio should lead into the next one. In the B major arpeggio just use the forked fingering for the D sharp.

In measure 15, some editions make the rhythm the same as the following measure. However they should be grace notes before the beat in measure 15 to contrast the Lombardic rhythm in the next measure.

It may be tempting to use the same shape for the arpeggios in measures 17 through 19, but there is a stepwise line underlying these arpeggios and the quarter notes that can be brought out more by starting the arpeggios softly with a crescendo to the accented passing tones. The line starts with the B in measure 16, then goes through the A to the G and F sharp. Then the line starts over with the G that moves to F sharp and E.

Measure 21 can be abruptly slower and free until the third beat of measure 22. Then the accompaniment parts reset the tempo with their eighth notes.

There are no articulations given for the sixteenth notes going into the cadence. A good option is alternating long and short notes. This brings out the two distinct voices well. The last two notes can be more accented to prepare the arrival of the downbeat. The same thing should be done at the cadence in measure 63.

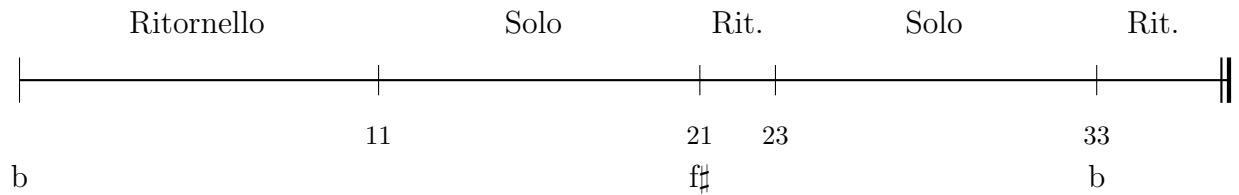
At the second bassoon entrance, these are all short, independent ideas, each with a growth and decay.

The long, short articulation can also be successfully applied to the section starting at measure 46. Clipping the second of the slurred pairs achieves the same result. It also works well in the descending lines after the quick arpeggios as in measure 51.

The first eighth notes in each group of measure 58 should be accented with lots of weight. Coupled with a decay on the second eighth note, this makes a wonderful sigh motive before the fiery finish.

## Movement 2

### Ritornello Form



### Pedagogical Issues

The motion into the first and third beats of every measure from the beginning of the first movement should continue here; however the arrivals should not be very strong, only the motion to them. The arrival of B on beat 3 in measure 12 is the main arrival. The arpeggio after should decay as it descends.

The repetition of the opening in measure 13 is a great spot for ornamentation (see the Thunemann recording for some examples).

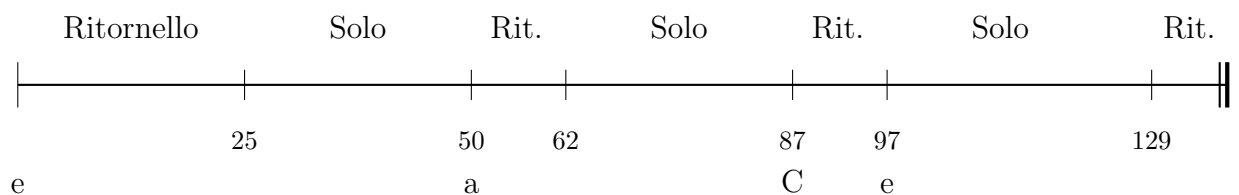
The performer should create a logical articulation and dynamic scheme for measures 15 through 17. There should be differences between the upper and lower groups, as well as the ascending triplet and descending triplet. The eighth note ascent should soar to the high note.

The gestures beginning in measure 25 should all be front ended gestures. Accent the first note of the triplet and decay to the quarter note. Then use the eighth note to get across the barline to the triplet again.

There should be a little bit of space after the third beat of measure 30 to let the cadence sound before starting the final phrase. Measure 31 can be quite free with the tempo.

## Movement 3

### Ritornello Form



## Pedagogical Issues

The dotted quarter notes at the beginning should be separate from each other. Give more weight to the downbeat and decay through the note. All of the measures that begin with the thirty-second note motives should be accented.

Measure 35 begins a sequence of two-measure phrases that should all begin softly and grow to the arrival of the second measure. The performer can also create interest by making the second group an echo of the first group.

The articulations leading to the cadence of measure 50 can use the same principle of long, short as the cadences in the first movement with some small adjustments. The second beat needs to be reversed, with the thirty-second notes slurred together. This makes the measure go long, short, short, long (slurred notes), long, short.

Measure 74 can be taken almost as a slow cadenza. This is foreshadowed by the change of pace in measure 67 from the lively, rhythmic entrance before. Then the fire returns with the trills in measure 78. There's really only time for one trill on each note.

The sigh motives in measures 80 through 82 should be brought out. One way to achieve this is to make the preceding note quite short. Also deemphasize the downbeats.

A long, short articulation going into the cadence at measure 87 works quite well.

The passage at measure 108 is the beginning of a long build up culminating in measure 116. To create variety the performer can subtly accent the first triplet of each measure, decay, and then grow to through the last triplet to the next measure.

## Appendix: Other Solo and Chamber Works by Vivaldi for Bassoon

### Concerto

Concerto in C Major RV 466  
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Concerto in C Major RV 476  
Concerto in C Major RV 477  
Concerto in C Major RV 478  
Concerto in C Major RV 479  
Concerto in C Minor RV 480  
Concerto in D Minor RV 481  
Concerto in E Flat Major RV 483  
Concerto in F Major RV 485  
Concerto in F Major RV 486  
Concerto in F Major RV 487  
Concerto in F Major RV 488  
Concerto in F Major RV 489  
Concerto in F Major RV 490  
Concerto in F Major RV 491  
Concerto in G Major RV 492  
Concerto in G Major RV 493  
Concerto in G Major RV 494  
Concerto in G Minor RV 495  
Concerto in G Minor RV 496  
Concerto in A Minor RV 497  
Concerto in A Minor RV 498  
Concerto in A Minor RV 499  
Concerto in A Minor RV 500  
Concerto in B Flat Major RV 501  
Concerto in B Flat Major RV 502  
Concerto in B Flat Major RV 503  
Concerto in B Flat Major RV 504

## Chamber Concerto

Concerto in G Major for Oboe and Bassoon RV 545  
Concerto in F Major for Flute, Oboe, and Bassoon RV 570  
Concerto in D Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, and 2 Violins RV 564a  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, 2 Bassoons, and 2 Horns RV 573  
Concerto in g Minor for 2 Recorders, 2 Oboes, Bassoon, and Violin RV 577  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, 2 Horns, and Violin RV 568  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, 2 Horns, and Violin RV 569  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, 2 Horns, and Violin RV 574  
Concerto in C Major for 2 Recorders, 2 Oboes, Bassoon, and 2 Violins RV 557  
Concerto in D Minor for 2 Recorders, 2 Oboes, Bassoon, and 2 Violins RV 566  
Concerto in G Minor for 2 Recorders, Oboe, Bassoon, 2 Horns, and Violin RV 576  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, 2 Horns, Violin, and Cello RV 571  
Concerto in C Major for 2 Recorders, 2 Oboes, Bassoon, and 2 Trumpets RV 556  
Concerto in G Minor for Recorder, Oboe, Bassoon, and Basso Continuo RV 103  
Concerto in D Major for Recorder, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 92  
Concerto in G Minor for Flute, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 106  
Concerto in F Major for Flute, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 100  
Concerto in D Major for Flute, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 91  
Concerto in D Minor for Flute, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 96  
Concerto in G Minor for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 107  
Concerto in G Minor "La Notte" for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 104  
Concerto in D Major "Del Gardellino" for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 90  
Concerto in G Major for Recorder, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 101  
Concerto in G Minor for Recorder, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 105  
Concerto in C Major for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 88  
Concerto in D Major for Recorder, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 94  
Concerto in F Major for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 99  
Concerto in D Major "La Pastorella" for Recorder, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 95  
Concerto in F Major "La Tempesta di Mare" for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, and Basso Continuo RV 98  
Concerto in F Major for 2 Oboes, Bassoon, 2 Horns, Viola d'Amore, and Basso Continuo RV 97

## Other Chamber Works

Sonata in A Minor for Recorder, Bassoon, and Basso Continuo RV 86  
Sonata in B Flat Major for Cello (Arranged) RV 47  
Sonata in F Major for Cello (Arranged) RV 41  
Sonata in A Minor for Cello (Arranged) RV 43  
Sonata in B Flat Major for Cello (Arranged) RV 45  
Sonata in E Minor for Cello (Arranged) RV 40  
Sonata in B Flat Major for Cello (Arranged) RV 46  
Aria "Ch'alla colpa fa' traggitto" for Tenor, Bassoon, Cello, and Basso Continuo