

Seasonal Music: Songs About Spring



AP

Cherry blossom trees bloom along the Tidal Basin in Washington. The city holds an annual Cherry Blossom Festival. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the gift of the original trees from Japan

BARBARA KLEIN: Welcome to THIS IS AMERICA in VOA Special English. I'm Barbara Klein.

STEVE EMBER: And I'm Steve Ember. This week on our program, we play some favorite songs about spring.

(MUSIC: "Spring"/Antonio Vivaldi)

BARBARA KLEIN: On earlier shows, we have brought you some of our favorite songs about summer, autumn and winter. Now it is spring in the northern part of the world so it is time to celebrate that season. Many people think of this classical music piece when they think "spring." It is Allegro from Concerto Number One "Spring" from "The Four Seasons." Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi wrote it in the seventeenth hundreds.

(MUSIC: "Spring"/Antonio Vivaldi)

STEVE EMBER: Spring is a wonderful season to celebrate rebirth and new life. The long, cold winter is over. The weather is warmer and sunnier. The trees

again have leaves and the flowers are blooming. The season represents hope, joy and beauty.

However, not all songs about spring are happy. This song by K.D. Lang is about dreaming of spring in cold dark places. She recorded "I Dream of Spring" in two thousand eight.

*She arrives like autumn in a rainstorm
The threat of thunder above
I'll return from the streets of Melbourne
I'll return my love*

*This world is filled with frozen lovers
The sheets of their beds are frightfully cold
And I've slept there in the snow with others
Yet loved no others before*

BARBARA KLEIN: Unlike the other seasons, there are not many rock songs about spring. Most of the songs about this season were written in the nineteen thirties and forties by famous modern composers. The songs became "standards," popular songs recorded by many singers.

Here is one example, "It Might as Well Be Spring." Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein wrote the song for the movie "State Fair" in nineteen forty-five. Frank Sinatra sings about having "spring fever." This is not a real sickness. It is a feeling of restlessness or excitement brought on by the coming of spring.

*I'm as restless as a willow in a windstorm,
I'm as jumpy as a puppet on a string.
I'd say that I had spring fever,
But I know it isn't spring.*

*I'm starry-eyed and vaguely discontented
Like a nightingale without a song to sing.
Oh, why should I have spring fever
When it isn't even spring?*

*I keep wishing I were somewhere else,
Walking down a strange new street.
Hearing words that I have never heard
From a man I've yet to meet*

STEVE EMBER: Richard Rodgers also wrote "Spring Is Here," this time with Lorenz Hart. Ella Fitzgerald sings this song about feeling lonely during this season.

*Once there was a thing called spring
when the world was writing verses
like yours and mine.*

*All the lads and girls would sing
when we set a little tables
and drank May wine.*

*Now April May and June
are sadly out of tune
life has stuck the pin in the balloon.*

*Spring is here!
Why doesn't my heart go dancing ?
Spring is here!
Why isn't the waltz entrancing?
No desire, no ambition leads me*

BARBARA KLEIN: Frank Loesser wrote this sad song, "Spring Will be a Little Late This Year." Why has the season been delayed? Because the singer's lover has left her. Sarah Vaughn released her version of the song in nineteen fifty-three.

*Spring will be a little late this year
A little late arriving in my lonely world over here
For you have left me and where is our April of old?
You have left me and winter continues cold*

As if to say spring will be a little slow to start

STEVE EMBER: By now you may be thinking: "Enough with the sad songs, already!" OK, then how about a cowboy song? Gene Autry was one of America's most famous singing cowboys. He recorded "When It's Springtime in the Rockies" in nineteen thirty-seven.

*When it's springtime in the Rockies
I'm coming back to you
Little sweetheart of the mountains
With your bonnie eyes of blue*

Once again I'll say I love you

*While the birds sing all the day
When it's springtime in the Rockies
In the Rockies far away*

BARBARA KLEIN: In most of the United States, spring is a warm and pleasant season. But this is not the case in the northwestern state of Alaska. According to Johnny Cash, it can be extremely cold. He sings "When It's Springtime in Alaska (It's Forty Below)."

*I mushed from point barrow through a blizzard of snow
been out prospectin' for two years or so
pulled into Fairbanks, the city was a-boom
so I took a little stroll to the red dog sea-loon*

*as I walked in the door, the music was clear
the purtiest voice I had heard in two years
the song she was singin' made a man's blood run cold
when it's springtime in Alaska, it's forty below*

*it was redhead lil who was singin' so sweet
I reached down and took the snow packs off my feet
I reached for the gal who was singin' the tune
we did the eskeemo hop all around the sea-loon*

*where the caribou crawl and a grizzly bear hug
we did our dance on a kodiak rug
the song she kept singin' made a man's blood run cold
when it's springtime in Alaska it's forty below*

STEVE EMBER: We leave you with a sunny song called "Up Jumped Spring." Freddie Hubbard wrote this jazz song and the Billy Taylor Trio performs it.

(MUSIC: "Up Jumped Spring"/Billy Taylor Trio)

BARBARA KLEIN: This program was written by Shelley Gollust and produced by Cathy Weaver. I'm Barbara Klein.

STEVE EMBER: And I'm Steve Ember. Our programs are online with transcripts and MP3 files at voaspecialenglish.com. Join us again next week for THIS IS AMERICA in VOA Special English.