

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

# Peter & the Wolf

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

**Feel free to make as many copies as needed.  
Feel free to contact us for more information.**

**PUPPET ARTS THEATRE**

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# **PETER & THE WOLF**

## **COMPOSER**

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV** was born in 1891 in Russia and was 9 years old when he created his first opera! He entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory when he was only 13 and had already written a great deal of music. He composed for a wide range of musical genres, including symphonies, concerto, film music, operas, ballets, and program pieces.

In 1934, he wrote PETER AND THE WOLF as a way to introduce children to the joy of classical music -- not aware that it would become the most popular children's score of all time, being performed by symphonies all over the world nearly 300 times a year!

## **VOCABULARY**

**Opera** - is a play where people sing the words.

**Symphony** - is a long piece of music in four parts played by 30 to 130 musicians.

**Concerto** - is a shorter piece of music written for one or more singers or instruments.

The story of Peter and the Wolf is told through the sounds from musical instruments. Each character is represented by a different musical instrument in the orchestra. But first, there is

## **CONDUCTOR**

Conductor is responsible for instructing the musicians on what music to play, and how to play it.

Orchestras are generally divided into four sections:

## **STRINGS**

Violins, violas, cellos, and any instrument whose sound is created by drawing a bow across strings.

## **BRASS**

Tubas, trumpets, french horns, or any instrument that is generally made of brass. The main sound from these instruments come from the vibration of the musician's lips against a mouthpiece.

## **WOODWINDS**

Flutes, clarinets, bassoons, or any instruments whose sound is generally created by the vibration of one or two reeds. They are called "Woodwinds" since most of these instruments were originally made of wood, although today flutes are made of metal!

## **PERCUSSION**

Kettle drums, pianos, xylophones, or any instrument whose sound is created by striking two items together.

## **In the story of Peter & the Wolf**

The Bird's musical theme is played by a flute.

The Duck's musical theme is played by an oboe.

The Cat's musical theme is played by a clarinet.

Peter's Grandfather's theme is played by a bassoon.

Peter's theme is played by the violins.

Wolf's musical theme is played by the horns.

And the shooting of the hunters is played by the kettle drums.

## **THE STORY**

Early one beautiful sunny morning, Peter went out on a big green meadow to play. Everything is quiet, chirped the Bird merrily.

Soon the Duck came waddling out, he was glad that Peter has not closed the gate and decided to take a nice swim in a pond.

The Bird said to the Duck, "What kind of a bird are you if you cannot fly?" To this the Duck replied, "And what kind of a bird are you if you cannot swim?"

While they argued, the Cat came out. The Cat thought to herself, "The Bird is busy arguing, if I only could grab her!"

Then Grandfather came out. He was angry because Peter had gone to the meadow. He told Peter many times that the meadow was a dangerous place and what if the wolf came out of the forest, what would happen then?!

Peter only laughed. Boys like Peter are not afraid of wolves!

But Grandfather took Peter by the hand, took him home and closed the gate.

Soon after, from the forest, a big gray Wolf stepped out. He chased the Bird, he chased the Cat, and then he chased the Duck. The Duck ran and ran, but the Wolf was faster, he caught up with him and jumped into the bushes after him. Only feathers flew around.

And this is how things stood. The Cat was sitting on one branch of the tree, and the Bird on the other ... but not too close to the Cat! And the Wolf walked around the tree looking at them with his greedy eyes.

In the meanwhile, Peter, without a slightest fear, stood behind the wall and watched what was going on. He ran home, got a strong rope and climbed up the tree.

Peter told the Bird, "Fly down and circle around the Wolf's head ... but make sure he doesn't catch you!" The Bird flew down and teased the Wolf. Wolf kept jumping and jumping but could not catch the Bird.

In the meanwhile, Peter made a lasso and carefully let it down. He caught the Wolf by the tail and the Wolf's jumping only made the lasso tighter.

Just then, two hunters came out of the forest, following the Wolf's trail and shooting as they went. Peter called out, "Hey, you don't have to shoot - Peter and the Bird has already caught the Wolf! Just help us take him to the Zoo."

Now, imagine the triumphant procession with Peter at the head.

Closing the procession was the Grandfather and the Cat. Grandfather was still very angry. "This is all very well," said the Grandfather. "But what if Peter has not caught the Wolf, what would happen then?"

High above them flew the Bird chirping merrily, "Look at Peter and me. Look what we have caught!"

And that would be the happy end of our story, - except for the Duck. ... But look, he was hidden in the bushes and is still alive!

**Play a recording of PETER & THE WOLF and talk about the story. Any recording with narration will keep children interested. During the music ask children their vision of what is happening.**

## **PREPARING THE SHOW FOR YOU**

Many people are involved in making Peter and the Wolf a successful stage production. When you are watching the performance see what each one contributed:

The Musicians are playing the music you hear.

The Actors/Puppeteers from Puppet Arts Theatre are performing the various parts in the story.

The Composer composed the music for the musicians to play.

The Conductor is setting the tone and tempo of the music.

The Director instructed the actors and puppeteers where to move.

The Writer created the lines for the characters to say.

The Choreographer created and taught the dances.

The Set Designer planned out what the stage should look like during the show.

The Costume Designer created the costumes that the actors wear on stage.

The Lighting Designer set and focused lights to set the mood for the show.

The Puppet Makers build puppets, and

the Administrative Staff to sell tickets and organize the event all worked together to create "Peter and the Wolf" just for YOU!

## **MORE MUSICAL TERMS**

In PETER AND THE WOLF, tunes have fast and slow tempos to help convey the emotions of the story. Have your class experiment with the tempo of a song. Start singing a familiar tune such as Ring Around the Rosy at a normal speed. Then try singing it LARGO or very slow. Then try singing it PRESTO or very fast. How does the song change? Does it convey a different emotion or feeling? Why?

## MUSICAL EXERCISE

When playing in an orchestra, a musician must know when to play and when to “rest” or stay silent. Using this exercise, lead your class through a song and see if they can develop a successful musical “inner-ear!” First, take a piece of poster board and draw an open mouth on one side, and a closed mouth on the other. Next, instruct your students that when the side with the open mouth is shown to the class, they are to sing with sound, but when the side with the closed mouth is shown, they are supposed to sing "inside" their heads. Try singing Jingle Bells; Row, Row, Row Your Boat; or any other tune that students are familiar with. See how well they can keep the song going and sing in the right place!

You may also want to add signs for different sections in your classroom. Then, you can “conduct” them with section 1 singing and section 2 quiet, both quiet, both singing, etc. If you really want to have fun, and don’t mind your classroom becoming TOO noisy, assign a section of students to keep rhythm by tapping pencils on their desks! Anything that makes sound can be called an instrument. Why not have your class make their own instruments and create a new symphony!

### **Here are a few examples of “home-made” instruments to get your students started!**

WRAP SOME PAPER AROUND A POCKET COMB AND HUM THROUGH YOUR OWN HARMONICA!

STRETCH THREE OR FOUR RUBBER BANDS ACROSS A SHOE BOX AND STRUM YOUR VERY OWN GUITAR!

PLACE SOME PEAS IN A CUP, COVER WITH A TOP, AND SHAKE YOUR VERY OWN MARACAS!

TAKE TWO STICKS AND TAP ON A PLASTIC BARREL TO BECOME A ONE-MAN PERCUSSION SECTION!

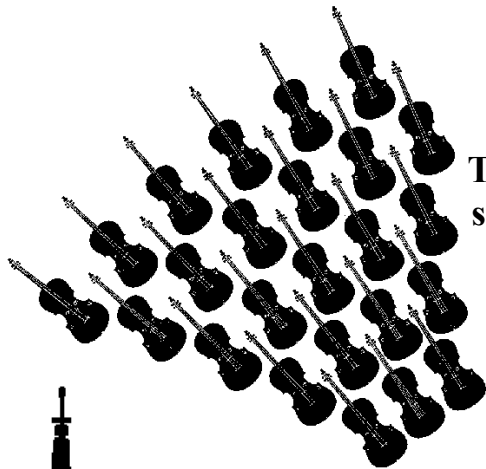
COVER ONE END OF A STRAW AND POKE SOME HOLES IN THE TOP FOR YOUR VERY OWN FLUTE!

FILL GLASSES WITH WATER AND TAP WITH A STICK TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN XYLOPHONE!

### **INTERNET PAGES TO VISIT FOR YOUR STUDENTS:**

<http://www.nyphilkids.org/>

Every character in the story of Peter & the Wolf is represented by different musical instruments.



The music for Peter's theme is played by the strings: violins, violas and cellos.



Bird is represented by a flute.



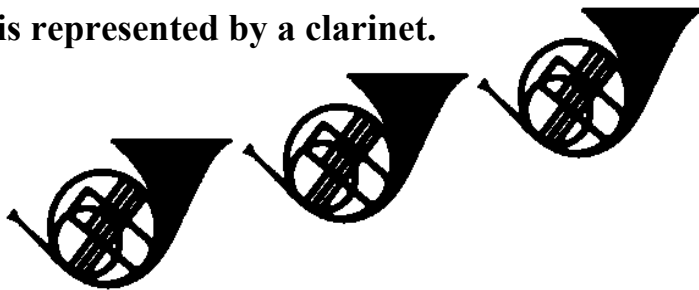
The music of the duck is played by an oboe.



Grandpa's theme is played by a bassoon.



The cat is represented by a clarinet.



The music for the wolf is played by three french horns

The shooting of the hunters is played by the timpani or kettle drums

