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Peter and the Wolf



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The concert

Discover the sounds of the various instruments in the orchestra in this fun, fresh take on the beloved classic, *Peter and the Wolf*.

Peter is a dreamer, dealing with the pressures of everyday life when he suddenly finds himself in the middle of an exciting adventure: a mission to capture a wily wolf! Two dancers, colourful sets, and incredible masks

make for a modern and humorous re-telling of this enduring story that was written in 1936.

The first part of the concert explores the notion of character through music, and the second half brings listeners in on the action as they help Peter catch the mangy marauder once and for all!

Did you know that the word *platypus* refers to an unusual-looking mammal that lives both in the water and on land? This is the name chosen by the theatre company because it, too, exists simultaneously in two worlds: music and theatre.



The artists



Dina Gilbert

OSM assistant conductor

Dina Gilbert approaches the orchestral repertoire as a whole with great passion, while reserving a special place for musical creation. A native of Quebec's Beauce region, she was appointed assistant conductor at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal in April 2013. Her role is to assist Kent Nagano at rehearsals, concerts, and recordings. In addition to conducting rehearsals of the works presented during the Orchestra's European tour, she also leads the OSM in the concerts for young audiences.

Dina Gilbert is the founder and artistic director of Ensemble Arkea. In 2012, she made her debut with the Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra. That same year, she was assistant conductor of the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra and the Kawartha Youth Orchestra. Overseas, she has conducted in Romania and Estonia. She has also collaborated many times with young Canadian composers, premiering over 30 works.

Dina Gilbert holds a bachelor's degree in Clarinet and a master's degree in Conducting. She earned a doctorate from the Université de Montréal, where she studied with Jean-François Rivest and Paolo Bellomia. She honed her conducting skills with numerous prominent international conductors.



Peter Duschenes

artistic director
Platypus Theatre

Scores of young classical music lovers owe thanks to Peter for introducing them to symphonic music. In 1989, he and his brother founded Platypus Theatre, a company dedicated to bringing symphonic music to young audiences. An award winning playwright, Peter wrote not only all eight of Platypus Theatre's symphonic plays but also the television adaptation of the production *How the Gimquat Found Her Song*, which won the award for Best Children's Program at the prestigious Banff World Television Festival in 2008. On top of his roles in Platypus Theatre productions, Peter has worked as an actor and director with companies across Canada and the United States.

Platypus Theatre

Since 1989, more than one million young people have been introduced to classical music through Platypus Theatre. After over 500 performances with more than 60 orchestras worldwide, Platypus has established itself as North America's premiere music education theatre company, thanks to the original and engaging storylines it presents in an intelligent and interactive way, with music always taking the lead role. Children laugh, sing, and empathize with the characters while learning new musical concepts. In addition to having had one of its shows produced for television, Platypus was the subject of a documentary and also a full-performance television broadcast in 2000.



Amelia Griffin

dancer

In addition to her roles in many of Platypus Theatre's productions, Amelia dances with various professional troupes, and she recently choreographed and performed a solo work at the Canada's National Arts Centre in Ottawa. She also works as an Ashtanga yoga instructor and yoga therapist. In *Peter and the Wolf*, she will perform the roles of the bird, the duck, the cat, the custodian, and the dreaded wolf.



Mélissa Roy

dancer

Mélissa is the latest member of the Platypus Theatre troupe. In this production of *Peter and the Wolf*, she will play the role of Peter, and also the bird and the cat. Since completing her dance studies in 2010, she has worked as a dancer and choreographer for several prominent companies in Montréal and Ottawa. Mélissa has a particular fondness for the duet between Peter and the duck in *Peter and the Wolf*, because that's the part in the show that invariably makes the children shriek with laughter, reminding her each time why she loves to dance.

The story of Peter and the Wolf

Did you know?

The text of Prokofiev's musical tale has been translated into dozens of languages.



One morning, Peter opened the garden gate and walked out into the big green meadow. **On a branch of a big tree sat a little bird, Peter's friend.** "All is quiet!" chirped the bird gaily. Just then, a duck came waddling round. She was glad that Peter hadn't closed the gate and decided to take a nice swim in the deep pond in the meadow.

Seeing the duck, the little bird flew down upon the grass, settled next to her and shrugged his shoulders. "What kind of bird are you if you can't fly?" he said. To this the duck replied, "What kind of bird are you if you can't swim?" and dived into the pond. They argued and argued, the duck swimming in the pond, the little bird hopping along the shore.

Suddenly something caught Peter's attention. It was a cat crawling through the grass.

The cat thought, "The bird is busy arguing. I'll just grab him." Stealthily she crept toward him on her velvet paws.

"Look out!" shouted Peter, and the bird immediately flew up into the tree, while the duck quacked at the cat, from the middle of the pond. The cat walked around the tree and thought, "Is it worth climbing up so high? By the time I get there the bird will have flown away."

Just then Grandfather came out. He was angry because Peter had gone into the meadow.

"It is a dangerous place. If a wolf should come out of the forest, then what would you do?"

But Peter paid no attention to his grandfather's words. Boys like Peter aren't afraid of wolves. But Grandfather took Peter by the hand, led him home, and locked the gate.

No sooner had Peter gone, than a big grey wolf came out of the forest. In a twinkling, the cat climbed up into the tree. The duck quacked, and in her excitement jumped out of the pond. But no matter how hard the duck tried to run, she couldn't escape the wolf. He was getting nearer, nearer, catching up with her. Then he got her and with one gulp, swallowed her.

And now, this is how things stood: the cat was sitting on one branch, the bird on another, not too close to the cat, and the wolf was walking round and round the tree, looking at them both with hungry eyes.

In the meantime, Peter, without the slightest fear, stood behind the gate watching all that was going on. He ran home, got a strong rope, and climbed up the high stone wall. One of the branches of the tree around which the wolf was walking stretched out over the wall. Grabbing hold of the branch, Peter lightly climbed over on to the tree. Peter said to the bird: "Fly down and circle over the wolf's head. Only take care that he doesn't catch you."

The bird almost touched the wolf's head with his wings while the wolf snapped angrily at him, this side and that. How that bird teased the wolf! **And how the wolf wanted to catch him! But the bird was clever, and the wolf simply couldn't do anything about it.**

Meanwhile, Peter made a lasso and, carefully letting it down and down and down, caught the wolf by the tail and pulled with all his might. Feeling himself caught, the wolf began to jump wildly trying to get loose. **But Peter tied the other end of rope to the tree, and the wolf's jumping only made the rope around his tail tighter.**

Just then the hunters came out of the woods, following the wolf's trail and shooting as they went. But Peter, sitting in the tree, said: "Don't shoot! Birdie and I have already caught the wolf. **Now help us take him to the zoo.**"

Now just imagine the triumphant procession: Peter at the head, after him, the hunters leading the wolf, and winding up the whole procession, Grandfather and the cat. Grandfather shook his head discontentedly. "Well, if Peter hadn't caught the wolf? What then?"

Above them flew the bird chirping merrily. "My, what brave fellows we are, Peter and I! Look what we have caught!"



Prokofiev and the musical tale



Sergei Prokofiev

(1891 – 1953)

Russian-born, Sergei Prokofiev was not only a composer but also an accomplished pianist and conductor. He was born in 1891 in Sontsovka, a city in the former Russian Empire, now in Ukraine. He received his first piano lessons from his mother. He displayed musical abilities early, writing short pieces when he was very young. At age nine, he penned an opera for children, *The Giant*. The young Prokofiev considered the works of the great classical composers such as Mozart and Beethoven somewhat outmoded. At 23 years old, to obtain his diploma from the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he was studying, he elected to perform his own *First Piano Concerto* for the jury rather than play the work of another composer.

Prokofiev travelled extensively during his life, living in Russia, the United States, and in Paris, France. He toured Germany, the United States, Cuba, Italy, and even Canada. In 1933, he, his wife, and his two children finally returned to the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, a country that was dissolved in 1991) for good.

Besides writing both the text and the music to the celebrated musical tale *Peter and the Wolf*, Prokofiev also composed several operas, seven symphonies, nine concertos, the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, and music for film. He was hailed as a creative and innovative composer.

Peter and the Wolf

After taking his sons to see a performance at the Moscow Children's Theatre, Prokofiev began to compose a musical tale for children. He not only composed the music but also wrote the words to *Peter and the Wolf*! The piece was conceived as a way of introducing youngsters to the instruments in the orchestra. Conducted by the composer himself, the premiere of the work met with immediate success. Prokofiev's famous tale has since been translated into dozens of languages. There have been theatre, puppet, dance, and also big-screen adaptations of the work, including a famous animation version, produced by Walt Disney in 1946.

Did you know that *Peter and the Wolf* was written in 1936, in only one week?



Just what is a musical tale?

In a musical tale, the music and story are one. The music describes the characters' traits and expresses their emotions throughout the course of the story.

Various animals and characters are depicted in *Peter and the Wolf*. Each moves through the piece differently and is given a distinctive voice to suit its personality. Their differences, conveyed through music, enrich the texture of the story.

Each character is represented by one specific instrument or a group of instruments, chosen by the composer for their timbre.

We can say that **timbre** is the "colour" of a sound. Every musical instrument has a particular timbre, just as every human being has his or her own unique voice. A flute, for example, has a "bright" or "shrill" timbre, whereas a French horn is "deep" and "mellow."

How would you describe the timbre of a violin? A clarinet?

In Prokofiev's symphonic tale, each character is represented by a particular musical theme that conveys the character's personality or temperament. What is **temperament**?

Perhaps you've heard someone described as being "temperamental," or having a "bad character." In and of themselves, temperament and character are neither good nor bad. When we talk about someone's temperament or character, we are referring to the combination of mental, emotional, and even physical traits of a person. When describing someone's temperament or character, we will use expressions like "easygoing," "sunny disposition," or "brimming with confidence."

Movement Activity



To properly understand each character in the story, listen to each one's musical theme and try to imitate them physically.

How does the cat move?

How does Grandfather walk?

In music, character is conveyed through a number of musical elements, such as timbre, but also rhythm, dynamics, tempo, and harmony. For example, the music associated with the bird in *Peter and the Wolf* is quite different from that of Grandfather. The teasing character of the little bird as it flutters and flies about is wonderfully embodied in the flute's theme, with its lively tempo, high-pitched sound, and virtuoso rhythms. The grumpy Grandfather, on the other hand, is perfectly personified by the laborious, faltering, and deep-sounding theme of the bassoon.

What do you think should be the musical characteristics of the theme that portrays the duck? The wolf? And Peter?

To each instrument its own character

Each character in the story is represented by a different instrument in the orchestra.

The clarinet expresses the cunning and craftiness of the greedy cat.

The slightly more nasal sounding oboe conjures the somewhat lumbering duck.



The horns' dark chords evoke menacing images of the wolf, who is only waiting for the chance to gobble up another animal.



The light and lively flute is the bird.



The deep pitch of the bassoon is perfect to represent the grumpy Grandfather.



Peter's lyrical, cheerful theme is played by the strings.



The brass and percussion announce the jubilant hunters, even if they arrive after Peter succeeded in catching the wolf through his cunning ruse.

Each instrument has its own, unique sound colour

It's impossible to confuse a bassoon for a violin, for example, because their **timbre** is so different. This allows the composer to overlay one character on top of another in the music. Prokofiev was a brilliant orchestrator who used this technique to great effect in recounting the adventures of Peter and his friends.

Visit the OSM's website at osm.ca/matinees to listen to excerpts that will help you identify characters in the story.

You be a character in the story!

What about you? If you had to choose an instrument to represent you, what would it be? What would be the characteristics of your musical theme that would effectively express your character?

The concert program

During this concert, in addition to Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, you'll also hear works by great composers from several different countries.

In the first half, the host will use the pieces played by the orchestra to explain how music can embody and express a character, an attitude, an emotion, or a particular mood or adventure.

Here are the works you'll hear during the concert:

Prokofiev

Symphony No. 1 in D major, Op. 25
"Classical," 4th movement

Grieg

Peer Gynt, Suite No. 1, "In the Hall of the Mountain King"

Rimsky-Korsakov

"Flight of the Bumblebee,"
orchestral interlude from the opera
The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Schumann

Scenes from Childhood, "Dreaming"
(orchestral version)

Beethoven

The Creatures of Prometheus, Overture

Prokofiev

Peter and the Wolf



Imagine your own story!

Listen to the excerpt of Edvard Grieg's piece. What character springs to mind? What is this character's story? Compare your story with your friends' stories. Notice how each one is different!

The composers



Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Scenes from Childhood, "Dreaming"
(orchestral version)

Robert Schumann, a pianist and composer of the Romantic period, wrote *Scenes from Childhood* in 1838. Born in Germany in 1810, Schumann was working towards a brilliant career as a virtuoso pianist, until he paralyzed one of his fingers in an unfortunate accident, thus putting an end to his dreams. He turned to composition, and dedicated himself heart and soul to his new pursuit. He penned several pieces for orchestra, including four symphonies, as well as a number of splendid works for piano, such as the *Scenes from Childhood* suite.

"Dreaming" is the most popular in the set of 13 short pieces that make up the work. It depicts the innocence and imagination of childhood. You'll hear the orchestrated version. This means that the original piano piece was fleshed out so that it could be played by all the instruments in the orchestra.

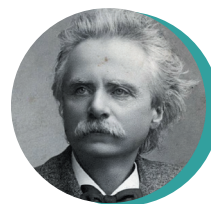


Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844-1908)

"Flight of the Bumblebee," orchestral interlude from the opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*

Rimsky-Korsakov was a particularly gifted orchestrator, who earned the nickname 'the magician of the orchestra.' Greatly inspired by the popular folklore and stories of his native Russia, he had a strong influence on other composers, including one of his students, the young Sergei Prokofiev. Among his best-loved works are *Sheherazade*, *Capriccio espagnol*, and "Flight of the Bumblebee."

This last piece is taken from the opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, composed by Rimsky-Korsakov in 1899-1900. At this point in the opera, the Prince is transformed into a bumblebee so that he can fly away to visit his father. The orchestral interlude is easy to recognize with its frantic pace and uninterrupted ascending and descending runs. The piece has become a standard showcase for solo instrumental virtuosity.



Edvard Grieg
(1843 - 1907)

Peer Gynt, Suite No. 1, "In the Hall of the Mountain King"

The music of Edvard Grieg, another a composer and pianist of the Romantic era, evokes the landscapes of his native land of Norway. His compositions were heavily influenced by Norwegian folk traditions and dances.

Peer Gynt was originally a play written by the well-known Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. The work tells the story of the young, self-centred Peer Gynt, an anti-hero with dubious values who is always looking out for himself first. Ibsen invited Grieg to compose the incidental music to accompany his play.

Grieg subsequently penned an orchestral suite using the pieces he had written for the play as his base. In the piece "In the Hall of the Mountain King," the listener is transported to the frantic scene where Peer Gynt is being chased by the Mountain King and his army of gnomes and trolls.



Did you know that "Flight of the Bumblebee" has secured a place in the Guinness World Records? The current record for the fastest playing time is held by a violinist who played the piece in under one minute, clocking in at 20 seconds less than the time indicated time in the score.

In-class activities

True or false?

Listen or read attentively the story of Peter and the Wolf and circle the right answer.

1. The duck and the bird are good friends.

True False

2. Peter is a young boy who is afraid.

True False

3. Grandfather likes Peter to wander about alone in the forest.

True False

4. The duck teases the bird because he doesn't know how to swim.

True False

5. The cat chases the bird to the top of a tree.

True False

6. The little bird is sad that the wolf is finally caught.

True False

7. The wolf bites Peter.

True False

8. The bird distracts the wolf to help Peter catch him.

True False

9. The hunters refuse to help Peter.

True False

10. Peter makes a lasso to catch the wolf.

True False

Who are they?

Match the musical characteristics to the right character.

1. High notes and fast tempo



2. Dark harmonies and ominous crescendo



3. Skipping, joyful melody



4. Slow tempo and velvety sound



5. Steady pulse and booming percussion



6. Nasal, melancholy sound



7. Low, grumpy sound, slow tempo



Which one doesn't belong?

1) Imagine a musical tale that opens with a gentle, unhurried melody played on a flute. Circle the character that wouldn't fit this music:



2) A low, ponderous theme played on the tuba, an instrument from the brass family, indicates that other characters are making their entrance. Circle the animal that wouldn't have the same musical qualities as the others.



Perform a new version of *Peter and the Wolf* with your class!

Divide the class into seven teams, each of which will play the part of one of the characters in the story. Each team must find or build a musical instrument with a sound that suits their character.

Ask your teacher to read you the story of *Peter and the Wolf*. Each team plays their instrument when their character appears in the story. When several characters appear together, you'll be playing duets and trios!

Don't forget to play your instrument in different ways to illustrate all the characters' various adventures and to express their emotions. Try varying certain musical characteristics, such as the tempo or the dynamics. When the wolf goes after the duck, the music gets faster and faster, and more and more jerky, illustrating both the chase and the fear experienced by the poor duck.

If you like this game, play it again using other stories. You could choose other tales that have a wolf in them, like *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Little Pigs*. Perform your musical tale for the other students in your school!

To know more

Visit the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal's website at www.osm.ca/matinees for:

- Access to the playlist of all the excerpts played during the concert
- The complete story of *Peter and the Wolf*
- Walt Disney's 1946 animated short film

For some beautifully illustrated versions of *Peter and the Wolf*:

- Éditions Gallimard Jeunesse Musique, French version read by Bernard Giraudeau and illustrated by Olivier Tallec

Other musical tales in the classical repertoire:

- *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, (The Child and the Spells), Maurice Ravel
- *La sorcière du placard aux balais*, Marcel Landowski

Answers to games

True or false?

1 - F; 2 - F; 3 - F; 4 - V; 5 - F; 6 - F; 7 - F; 8 - V; 9 - F; 10 - V

Who are they?

- 1) b) Bird
- 2) d) Wolf
- 3) a) Peter
- 4) c) Cat
- 5) g) Hunters
- 6) f) Duck
- 7) e) Grandfather

Which one doesn't belong?

- 1) Roaring lion
- 2) Mouse

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514 840-7400

OSM / 1600 Saint-Urbain Street,
Montréal QC H2X 0S1

jeunesse@osm.ca

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