

## Peter and the Wolf- Activity 2- Who wrote Peter and the Wolf? What's it about?

**Lesson Time:** 20-30 Minutes

### **Materials Needed:**

- The story of Peter and the Wolf (Additional Resources)
- Composer Fact Page/About Peter and the Wolf Page
- Character Picture Cards (Print separately)
- Instrument Pictures (Optional- Resource from Activity 1)

**Objective:** To review instrument families and introduce the characters/piece of Peter and the Wolf

### **Activity/Assessment:**

- If you participated in Activity One, ask students/review Instruments and their families
  - “Does anyone remember the four different instrument families we discussed?”
  - “What Instruments belong in those families?”
- Transition into the story of Peter and the Wolf and introduce Sergei Prokofiev and share the fact sheets and Information about the composer.
  - “Today we are going to be talking about the famous composition of Peter and the Wolf by Sergei Prokofiev.”
- Once you discuss the piece and facts about the composer, you will need access to YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuDmepj8uyhdOY-ehbhPL1UABHyVXfo-s>
  - The link above will give you a play list of each individual theme and character.
- Hold up a character card, play the theme, and talk about characteristic that the kids might hear and can assign to the characters. For younger students, the card give specific moves and instructions. Older students that might not be interested in moving around can talk about the movement or characteristics of the characters. Listen/talk about the themes first, then incorporate movement. Sample provided below:
  - Peter- Peter is represented by the strings. The music is light and bouncy, reflecting the innocence of a child and their eagerness to explore.
  - Grandfather- The Grandfather is represented by the bassoon (woodwind family). The grandfather would scold Peter for wandering off and not seeing the danger of going into the meadow alone. The bassoon is a low sound that simulates someone talking and shaking their head or sounding angry.
  - Wolf- The wolf is represented by the French horn (brass). Wolves are seen as big, scary animals that are often villains in classic children’s stories. The music has a menacing sound that could tie into the wolf lurking or stalking.
  - Bird- The bird is represented by the flute (woodwind family). Birds are light and flutter, which is simulated by the flute’s sound throughout the theme.
  - Cat- The cat is represented by the clarinet (woodwind family). Cats can be mischievous animals and like to slink around. The clarinet plays the theme as if the cat is exploring outside.
  - Duck- The duck is represented by the oboe (woodwind family). If you listen to the oboe, it is easy to imagine the duck waddling and swimming around.

- Hunters- The hunters are represented by the Timpani. Instead of focusing on the sounds of the guns, you can focus on the hunters stomping to be intimidating to the wolf.

# Peter and the Wolf

## Composer Information



### Sergei Prokofiev

**Born:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1891

**Birthplace:** Sontsovka, Ukraine

**Died:** March 5, 1953

### Fun Facts about Prokofiev

- Sergei Prokofiev had musical gifts at a young age. His mother played piano and saw his talent and encouraged him to play.
- Prokofiev composed his first piece at the age of 5 and wrote his first opera by the age of 9.
- When he was older, Prokofiev and his mother moved to St. Petersburg. Sergei loved to carry a notebook in case he needed to write down a melody that came to mind.
- World War I and the Russian Revolution made it difficult to live and work in Russia, so Prokofiev moved in 1918. He spent his time living and composing in Paris, the United States, and the Bavarian Alps.
- In 1936, Prokofiev returned to the Soviet Union and continued his compositions. This was the year he wrote *Peter and the Wolf*.
- Prokofiev wrote a lot of compositions and was very famous for his time. Alongside “Peter and the Wolf”, he composed the ballets, “Romeo & Juliet”, “Cinderella”, and over 100 other compositions.
- Prokofiev died in 1953 and did not get much press for his death due to famous dictator, Josef Stalin dying on the same day.

## About Peter and the Wolf

Peter and the Wolf was a children's story written in 1936 after Prokofiev's return to the Soviet Union. The composer got the idea from Natalya Sats, who was the leader of the Moscow State Theatre for Children. The theatre commissioned Prokofiev to write the piece. The concept was to tell a story while introducing children to different instruments that make up an orchestra. Each character has an assigned instrument and musical theme:



Bird: Flute (Woodwind)



Duck: Oboe (Woodwind)



Cat: Clarinet (Woodwind)



Grandfather: Bassoon (Woodwind)



Wolf: French Horns (Brass)



Peter: Various String Instruments



Hunters: Timpani (Percussion)

Peter and the Wolf has picked up fame and interest. In 1946, Walt Disney produced an animated version of the piece and it was released on video tape in the 1990's. To this day, many theatres and orchestras still perform Peter and the Wolf. We are excited to see the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra and Grand Rapids Ballet work together to bring this wonderful classic alive!

## ACTIVITY 2 Resource

### The Story of Peter and the Wolf

Peter, a young boy, sits in the meadow outside his grandfather's house. It is the last day of his visit with his grandfather, and Peter is thinking how much he will miss all his animal friends that live nearby. He will especially miss the little bird and the duck. He spots his two friends, but they are having an argument, as friends sometimes do. The duck says he is the better fowl, because he can swim. The little bird says that he is better, because he can fly. While they are arguing, who should appear but the cat. The cat quietly sneaks up on the bird. Suddenly the cat springs from the tall grass, aiming right for the bird. "Watch out!" cries Peter. The bird barely escapes by flying into a tree.

Soon, Peter's grandfather comes out to the meadow. He warns Peter about wolves that might be around. "Stay inside the garden gate, and don't play in the meadow!" grandfather tells Peter. Peter goes with his grandfather into the safety of the garden. Grandfather locks the gate, and goes back into the house.

Peter soon gets bored. He misses his friends who are still playing in the meadow. "I'm not afraid of the big bad wolf!" says Peter. He hops over the gate, and joins the cat, bird, and duck in the meadow.

The friends are together for only a few minutes when who should appear? It is the wolf with his sharp teeth and burning red eyes. The cat and the bird manage to escape the wolf, but the poor duck is not so lucky. With one big gulp, the duck is gone!

Peter realizes that he must act to save his other friends. But what can he do? Peter then gets an idea. He grabs a rope and tells the bird to distract the wolf by flying over his head. Peter climbs the tree with his rope and makes a lasso. While the wolf is watching the bird, Peter swings the rope around the wolf's tail, and gives the rope a big tug. Up goes the wolf so that he is hanging by his tail from the tree. Peter did it! He captured the wolf.

Shortly after, some hunters come looking for the wolf. "Don't shoot," yells Peter, "I've already captured the wolf!" They soon agree that the zoo would be the best place for him. They have a wonderful little parade as they triumphantly march the wolf away. The duck can be heard quacking inside the wolf because he swallowed him whole. Meanwhile, Peter's grandfather doesn't know what to think because, after all, Peter did disobey him. On the other hand, he is proud of Peter for catching the wolf. "But what would have happened if he DIDN'T catch the wolf?" grandfather wonders. "What would have happened indeed?"