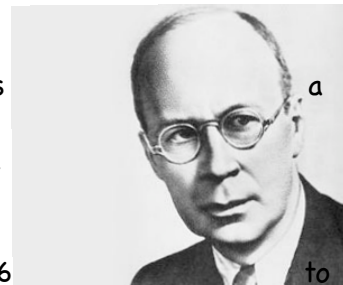


Peter & the Wolf

PETER AND THE WOLF STUDY GUIDE



Sergei Prokofiev was born in the Ukraine in 1891. He was a child prodigy, composing for piano when he was five and writing an opera at the age of nine. He attended the St. Petersburg Music Conservatory and won the Rubenstein prize for best student pianist. After traveling all over Europe and living in Paris for a time, he returned to live in the Soviet Union. Shortly after he returned, he was asked by the Moscow Children's Theater to compose a piece of music that would introduce children to the instruments in the symphony orchestra. He thought it would be fun to wrap the information around a story, and quickly he wrote Peter and the Wolf.



The Story

The story concerns a "Young Pioneer" (the communist equivalent of a Boy Scout), Peter. Peter lives with his grandfather, who has told him to stay in the yard. The boy however, leaves the yard, goes into the meadow, and encounters a wolf who has left the forest. The wolf attacks Peter's pet duck and Peter, with the help of a friendly bird, captures the wolf. The story ends as Peter, his grandfather, and a hunter take the wolf to the zoo (in the Eulenspiegel version, the wolf goes to the Nature Center).

The Music

Prokofiev gives each character a musical theme played by a different instrument or section of the orchestra. He tells the story by cleverly interweaving the themes. Although the story is told by a narrator with a text written by Prokofiev himself, it would be equally understandable by simply listening to the music and watching the puppets. The instruments are as follows:

Bird: Flute



Duck: Oboe



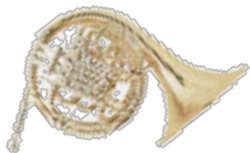
Cat: Clarinet



Grandfather: Oboe



Wolf: French Horns



Peter: Strings (Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass Viol)



Hunter: Woodwinds



Gun: Timpani Drum

You can listen to each of the themes so your students will recognize them at this website:

<http://www.philtulga.com/Peter.html>



Before the Show:

- Listen to the music, pointing out the individual themes and discussing the instruments
- Read some folktales, such as Little Red Riding Hood, the Three Little Pigs, The Wolf and the Seven Kids, and/or Hansel and Gretel.
- Although Peter and the Wolf is author story, not a folk tale, it incorporates several common folk tale elements:
 1. Danger is encountered by an innocent in the forest.
 2. Evil is represented by a wolf.
 3. Disobeying a parent can be dangerous.

In the case of Peter and the Wolf, the story also presents the conflicting idea that taking a risk, even if it involves disobedience, can be rewarding.

Discussion Questions Before the Show

1. Read Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs (English fairy tale) and The Wolf and the Seven Kids (Grimm).
What do they have in common? (evil is represented by a wolf)
2. Read Hansel and Gretel and Snow White (both Grimm).
What do they have in common with Little Red Riding Hood ? (danger is encountered in the forest).
3. What do all of these stories have in common? (Good conquers evil).

After the Show:

1. Discuss the music:
 - Do you think the instruments sounded like the characters they were meant to represent?
 - Give an example (you might want to listen to the music again and ask your students to identify each character as it's introduced)
2. Discuss the story:
 - Who was your favorite character? Why?
 - Did the story teach any lessons? (stranger danger, obeying your parents, courageousness)
3. Discuss the play:
 - What kinds of puppets did you see? How did the puppeteers work them?
 - How many different puppets of each character were used?
 - Why did the puppeteers have large and small versions of each puppet?
 - Did you notice other puppets besides the main characters? What were they? Why do you think they were in the show?
4. Character Education Connections:
 - Was Peter trustworthy? Was Grandfather? Explain
 - Did Peter take responsibility? Did the bird, Grandfather? For what? How?
 - Which characters showed caring for others? How?
 - Do any of the characters show courage? Explain

ABOUT WOLVES

Wolves are the largest members of the dog family. Gray wolves are the most common and were once found all over the Northern Hemisphere. Though they almost never attack humans, wolves are commonly believed to be dangerous villains. They do attack domestic animals, and, because of this, countless wolves have been shot, trapped, and poisoned. Gray wolves were hunted to near extinction, though some populations survived and others have since been reintroduced. Watch this fascinating video to see how things change when wolves come back: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/03/10/video-wolves-transform-rivers-yellowstone-national-park-153933>

Wolves live and hunt in packs of around six to ten animals. They cooperate on hunting animals such as deer, elk, and moose. All of a pack's adults help to care for young pups by bringing them food and watching them while others hunt.

SUGGESTED FOLKLORE-RELATED READINGS

- The Brothers Grimm, Little Red Riding Hood and any others.
- Jon Scieszka, The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, by A. Wolf, Scholastic, Inc, N.Y., 1989 (A well-known fairy tale, fractured).
- Yolen, Jane, Favorite Folktales From Around the World, Pantheon Books, New York, 1986
- Harrison, Michael and Stuart-Clark, Christopher, The Oxford Treasury of World Stories, Oxford University Press, 1998

Check your library for collections of folk tales. The Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folktale Library is especially recommended for excellent writing and interesting, insightful introductions.

Some theoretical books for those of you interested in the significance of folk literature:

- Jack Zipes, Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales, Methuen, N.Y., 1984 (Historical and political interpretations of fairy tales)
- Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, Vintage Books, N.Y., 1989 (Psychological interpretations of fairy tales).

A FEW USEFUL PUPPETRY BOOKS

- Champlin, Connie, Puppetry and Creative Dramatics in Storytelling, Nancy Renfro Studios, 1980
- Currell, David, An Introduction to Puppets and Puppet-Making, Chartwell Books, Edison, NJ, 1992
- Engler, Larry and Fijan, Carol, Making Puppets Come Alive, Dover Publications, 1973
- Grater, Michael, Puppets, Jumping Jacks, and Other Paper People, Dover Books, 1969.
- Henson, Cheryl, The Muppets Make Puppets!, Workman Publishing, 1994
- Latshaw, George, The Complete Book of Puppetry, Dover Publications, 1978
- Sinclair, Anita, The Puppetry Handbook, Richard Lee Publishing, 1995

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