



BY SERGEI
PROKOFIEV
1936

PETER AND THE WOLF



THE STORY

Peter lives with his grandfather and his cat in a forest. Peter goes out, leaving the gate open. We are introduced to Duck and Bird who argue with each other while Cat stalks them quietly. When Peter returns home, his grandfather tells him off because a wolf could have attacked him. Soon a wolf comes along and creeps up to Duck and swallows her whole. Peter, who watches from the house, runs down to the pond with a rope and creeps up the nearest tree. Bird distracts Wolf by flying round his head and Peter slowly lowers the rope. He has made a loop in the end and catches the wolf by the tail. Some hunters, who have been tracking the wolf, come out of the forest and get ready to shoot. Peter stops them and gets the hunters to take the wolf to the zoo instead.

Timbre	This describes the quality of sounds e.g shimmering, dull, bright, harsh
Opera	A dramatic work set for singers and instrumentalists.
Time signature	This tells you how many beats to count when you play. We often count in 4

THE MUSIC

- In Peter and the Wolf, a narrator tells a children’s story (see above), while the orchestra illustrates it
- Each character in the story has a particular instrument and a musical theme.
- The timbre of the instrument and the way the musical dimensions work in each theme, help to describe the characters. For example, the grandfather is slow and grumbly whereas Peter sounds like he is skipping and is light and happy
- Bird is described by the flute, Duck by the oboe, Cat by the clarinet, the grandfather by the bassoon, the wolf by the French horns, the hunter’s guns by the timpani drum and Peter by the strings
- Many famous people have narrated the story during performances of this music including Richard Attenborough, David Bowie and Sting

THE COMPOSER

- Prokofiev was a child prodigy and had written 2 operas by the time he was 11
- He was bored at school and often disagreed with his teachers. He had the same famous teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, as Stravinsky (see Key Composer 6), but he was bored of him also
- Like Stravinsky, he wrote ballets for the Ballet Russes. Prokofiev loved Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring
- His music was like marmite. He wrote music in unusual time signatures and keys and people either enjoyed his work or not
- Prokofiev died on the same day as the dictator, Stalin

