

Peter and the Wolf



Peter and the Wolf is a piece of orchestral music written by Sergei Prokofiev. This piece contains a children's story and as the narrator speaks, the orchestra accompanies them. The composer uses a different instrument and melodic motif for each character. This type of music is called programme music because the music specifically represents the characters and is used to make the story come to life.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953)

Prokofiev was a Russian composer who wrote his first piece of music aged 5. He went on to study music at St Petersburg Conservatoire aged 13 where he was taught by some of the best Russian composers of the time such as Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (The Flight of the Bumblebee). Some of Prokofiev's famous works include the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*. He also wrote operas and many works for orchestra, the violin, and the piano.

In 1936, the Children's Theatre in Moscow asked Prokofiev to write a new symphony for children. They wanted a piece of music that would appeal to children and create an interest in orchestral music. Prokofiev wrote the story and music in just four days! It was first performed in 1936 but did not attract very much attention. Today, it is one of the most well-known and well-loved pieces of orchestral music.

The characters

Peter
Bird
Duck
Cat
Peter's Grandfather
Wolf
Hunters

Match the character to the correct instrument...

1. Peter

Timpani



2. Bird

Bassoon



3. Duck

Flute



4. Cat

Oboe



5. Hunters

Horns



6. Wolf

Strings



7. Peter's grandfather

Clarinet



1. How would you describe Peter's mood and movement when you hear the strings?

2. Describe the **pitch** of the bird.

3. Is the flute a good choice for this animal? Why?

4. Describe the **timbre** of the oboe (duck).

5. Why do you think Prokofiev chose the oboe for the duck?

6. Describe the movement of the cat (clarinet).

7. Describe the **pitch** of the bassoon. Does this suit the grandfather? How?

8. What atmosphere do the horns (wolf) create when they first appear?

9. Why do you think Prokofiev chose timpani to represent the hunters?

10. Which orchestral instrument would you use to represent **you** and why?
