

Study Guide for Teachers

The Phoenix Woodwind Quintet
Peter and the Wolf
presented by
Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern PA
(866) 500-9265
www.yanjep.org



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This classic musical story is brought to stirring life as instruments “play” the voices of Peter and his animal friends. Through theatrical devices including mask and mime, students participate to help create the characters. Students learn about woodwind instruments and musical concepts while sharpening their listening skills.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will

- Be introduced to the woodwind quintet, including the similarities and differences among the instruments and the instruments’ distinctive tone colors.
- Learn to recognize instrumental sounds and become aware of the differences between melody and accompaniment.
- Be acquainted with the twentieth-century classic *Peter and the Wolf*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Both the music and narration of Peter and the Wolf were written by Sergei (pronounced, Sair-gay) Prokofiev (1891–1953). Its educational purpose is to teach the sounds of the instruments through identification with the characters of the story.

The narrator introduces the characters and the instruments which represent them before the story begins. Thereafter, whenever a character is mentioned, its music is played both to reinforce the listener’s memory of the instrument and to tell the story:

Flute: Sasha, the bird (chirping; high and fast)

Oboe: Sonia, the duck (nasal; lower and slower)

Clarinet: Ivan, the cat (smooth, on velvet paws; played in instrument’s low register)

Bassoon: Grandfather (stern-sounding; also played in instrument’s low register)

Clarinet, bassoon, and horn ensemble: the wolf (deep, dark, and sinister!)

Note that Prokofiev’s original instrumentation calls for Peter to be represented by the strings. However, he is well-represented in this performance by the woodwind ensemble. Likewise, Prokofiev’s wolf is played by an ensemble of horns, whereas the Woodwind Quintet portrays him by using the three lower instruments: the clarinet, bassoon, and horn.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Get the music teacher involved! Play a narrated recording of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* for your students. Use this as a teaching tool and stop the recording frequently to ask students to name which instruments represent which characters. Have them discuss why Prokofiev chose each instrument to represent their respective characters. As the story progresses and the music changes, have students discuss how the music changes and what it reflects in the story.

2. Get the art teacher involved! Have students read the story of Peter and the Wolf. Have each student create an image of at least one of the characters. They can draw, paint, sculpt, or even make a puppet that could be used for their own performance of the story.

RESOURCES

Listening:

Clarinet: "On the Trail" from *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe or "The Cuckoo" from *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns

Flute: "Irlandaise" from *Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano* by Claude Bolling.

Oboe & Bassoon: "Hornpipe" from *Water Music* by G. F. Handel.

Woodwind Quintet: *Trois Pieces Breves* by Jaques Ibert

Reading:

Mirra Ginsburg, *Three Rolls and a Doughnut: Fables from Russia*.

Mark Stoltzenberg, *Exploring Mime*.

Ema Voigt, *Peter & the Wolf*.

Lee Wyndham. *Russian Tales of Fabulous Beasts and Marvels*.

ARTIST INFORMATION

The Phoenix Quintet has been in existence for more than twenty years and has entertained audiences of all ages. Currently their focus is entirely on music education. Their *Peter and the Wolf* program has brought fun and information to school children throughout the tri-state area.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Give students the opportunity to discuss the performance. If they listened to an orchestral version of *Peter and the Wolf* prior to the performance, did they notice the instrumental differences when it was performed by the woodwind quintet? What were the differences between listening to a recorded performance and seeing it live? How did the narrator/mime enhance the performance?

2. The end of the story is left open-ended. Have students discuss what will happen next. Will the duck escape from the wolf's stomach? Will the entire group make it to the zoo? Have the students write their own ending and read or perform them for their classmates.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Brass: Musical instruments that are made of brass. They are not played by blowing air into the instruments. The players learn to buzz air on the mouthpiece so that the air inside the instruments vibrates. Lips are held tightly together and air is forced between them to make vibrations.

Mood: The feeling created by a work of art, such as a piece of music
Program Music: Music that tells a story or paints a picture, such as *Peter and the Wolf*. Other examples are *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns, *Peer Gynt* by Edvard Grieg, and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas.

Pantomime: A way of telling a story or illustrating an event through movement, without using language or sound.

Theme Music: The repeating melody that identifies a character or a performer. A theme can also identify a whole show, as the theme to your favorite television program does.

Woodwinds: Musical instruments that are (or originally were) made of wood. They are played by blowing air into the instrument and either have no reed (flute), one reed (clarinet), or two reeds (oboe, bassoon).