



Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers to Childsplay’s Production of

Peter and the Wolf

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your students for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you’ll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

By Allison Gregory

Music Composition by Hummie Mann

Lyrics by Allison Gregory and Hummie Mann

Adapted from the story and music by Sergei Prokofiev

Directed by **Gary Minyard**

Scenic Design by **Katherina Burton**

Costume & Puppet Design
by **Connie Furr-Soloman**

Lighting Design by **Michael J. Eddy**

Musical Direction & Sound Design
by **Robertson Witmer**

Stage Manager: **Sam Ries**

The Cast:

Cat. Jessica Blaszak
Duck/Huntsman. Michael Arbuckle
Peter. Michael Sample
Bird. Jenn Taber
Grandfather/Wolf. Jon Gentry

Tempe Performing Arts Center
February/March, 2007

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Arizona Commission on the Arts
Bashas’ Markets

City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts Commission
Wells Fargo

The Story:

The story of *Peter and the Wolf* explores the age-old struggle between man and animal, the value of friends, and finding bravery to overcome obstacles. It is the story of a boy named Peter, his Grandfather, a cat, a duck, a bird, some hunters and a wolf! The story takes place at Grandfather’s house, behind which there is a beautiful lush meadow, a sparkling pond and beyond that a dense forest. Overlooking the meadow there is a large, sturdy tree and a high stonewall. Grandfather warns Peter not to go into the meadow, for even though it is tempting, it is dangerous. There is a wolf that prowls through the meadow and forest. However, Peter is a curious young man and goes into the meadow as soon as Grandfather’s back is turned. The duck, who lives in their yard, is grateful to Peter for opening the gate to the meadow, for he loves to swim and flap his wings in the pond. Grandfather sees Peter in the meadow and quickly hauls him back to the yard closing the gate behind him. Meanwhile a little bird flies in to investigate the duck. While the two argue over the merits of swimming versus flying, they are oblivious to the cat creeping towards them. Not wanting the small feathered friend to become lunch for the cat, Peter advises the bird to fly into the tree. Distracted by the cat circling the tree, the bird flying frantically and the duck flapping around the pond, none of them notices the wolf slinking into the meadow. In a single moment, the wolf has swallowed the duck whole. Peter decides he must do something about the wolf! He quickly finds some rope, climbs the tree alongside the cat and bird and starts to tell them of his plan. Before Peter can finish, the hunters arrive, and a chase ensues. Finally the wolf hides from the hunters. Peter senses the still present danger and with the help of the bird distracting the wolf, Peter catches the wolf and ties him to the tree. The hunters return for their prey, but Peter talks them into not killing the wolf but taking him to a nearby zoo. A mini-parade follows with Peter and the wolf, the hunters, the cat, the bird, the duck and a very proud Grandfather.

Arizona Academic Standards:

Your visit to the theater as well as the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to standards in several areas. *If you would like help with standard connections for your particular grade we would be happy to assist.* Simply email Katie McFadzen at kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org or call 480-350-8105. Check out the newly updated Arts Standards at www.ade.az.gov/asd/arts/ArtsStandards.asp

Things to Talk About Before Seeing the Performance...

Theater Etiquette:

It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance.

~Stay seated during the performance.

~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.

~ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.

~Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras and any other recording device are not allowed in the theater at any time!

About the Symphony and Prokofiev:

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a Russian composer who mastered numerous musical genres and came to be admired as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. Commissioned by the Moscow Central Children's Theater not long after Prokofiev returned to Russia after years of living and composing in America and Europe, *Peter and the Wolf* was written over four days in 1936 shortly after Stalin established a repressive "Composers Union" that determined what kind of music was acceptable for the masses. The intent in writing *Peter and the Wolf* was to cultivate musical tastes in children from the first years of school and to introduce children to various instruments in an orchestra. *Peter and the Wolf* is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, 3 horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, castanets, snare drum, bass drum and strings. Each character in the story has a particular instrument and a musical theme, or leitmotif:

~Bird - Flute

~Duck - Oboe

~Cat - Clarinet
~Grandfather - Bassoon
~Wolf - 3 French Horns
~Hunters (gunshots) - Timpani and Bass Drum (The hunters' theme is actually introduced by the woodwinds)
~Peter - Strings

About This Production:

Allison Gregory's *Peter and the Wolf* is a theatrical adaptation of Sergei Prokofiev's symphony with narration. Read the story and listen to the music of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* before seeing the play. How do you think the play will be different? How will the music be different?

Director Gary Minyard says, "*Peter and the Wolf* will be a fast-paced show with an old-world circus feel, complete with cartwheels, acrobatics, and, yes, trampolines. The actors, several of them playing animals, will be using the space very creatively (and physically) to define their characters by using circus elements. In other words, from the costumes to the gags to the physicality of the characters, the show will be using circus tricks and classical magic to help tell both the story of the play and of each character's journey in the play. Puppets will be used along a puppet wall to help tell the story, creating an interesting perspective of live actors and puppets. Both 2D and 3D puppets will be used, along with other puppet elements, to help create magical entrances and exits, disappearances, and of course, humor. In the end, a giant parade will engulf the space to celebrate Peter's success at capturing the wolf, and the wolf's new life of luxury at the zoo."

Another element incorporated into this production is that of narrator. The characters serve as their own narrators, often speaking about themselves in third person. This "voice" of the play helps establish point of view.

Even though our production does not have a full orchestra or use the exact score

from the symphony, many of the instruments are used to represent different characters. You will here original tunes from Prokofiev's work but with some variations in style. Lyrics have been added to the music to help tell the story and move the plot forward. Review the sounds of the instruments that represent the characters from the original version of *Peter and the Wolf* before seeing the play. Can you hear any of the instruments in the music created for this production?

About Wolves:

Wolves are not the vicious creatures they are portrayed as in fairytales. They are actually smart and social beasts who live in packs and have quite the social hierarchy. Before the arrival of European settlers in North America, the land belonged to the wolves. Hundreds of thousands of the skilled predators roamed the continent, feeding primarily on such large wild animals as deer, moose, and elk. As the human population increased, however, numbers of the wolves' natural prey decreased, and many people became convinced that their livestock was in danger from the carnivorous mammals. Determined to eradicate wolves from the continent, people instituted legally sanctioned wolf hunts, and eventually the animals were hunted and poisoned nearly to extinction.

In recent years, however, a number of recovery plans have been developed, with the goal of returning wolves to their natural habitats and ultimately removing them from the endangered and threatened species lists.

~Linda Starr, Education World



Wolves are very playful! Did you know that wolves actually play tag? One wolf will chase another and nip it in the behind and that wolf will in turn chase another wolf and "tag" it. Just like kids!

Things to Talk About and Do After the Performance:

✳️ All plays have three P's: *People* in a *Place* with a *Problem*. Where does the play take place (setting)?

Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end?

✳️ If you got to play one of the characters in *Peter and the Wolf* which one would it be and why?

✳️ Peter's Grandfather tells him to not go into the meadow or the forest because it is dangerous. The wolf is there. Grandpa is trying to keep Peter safe and out of harm's way. What kind of things do your parents do to keep you safe?

✳️ All of the characters in Prokofiev's version of *Peter and the Wolf* have a theme instrument that lets the audience know which character is on stage and helps in defining the character's traits and movements. If you could have a theme instrument, what would it be and why?

✳️ There are many design elements in the show (costumes, lights, scenery, etc) which ones did you like best? and why?

✳️ How was the music in the show *Peter and the Wolf* different from the Sergei Prokofiev version? Did you like it better or not as much? Why?

✳️ Conflict between man and animal is one of the themes in the play. Do you ever have conflicts with the animals in your life? How about conflicts with other people (siblings, parents, friends)? How do you resolve your conflicts?

What's YOUR interpretation?

Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* was originally written to tell a story using music. After listening to parts of the symphony, see what other interpretations are possible. Discuss and then write down different story ideas that could evolve from the music. Try listening to other pieces of classical music written to tell a specific story, such as; *Firebird Suite*, *The Fairie's Kiss*, the *Nutcracker* or *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Write stories or draw illustrations that could fit these pieces of music.

Puppet Peter and the Wolf:

After seeing the show or listening to Sergei Prokofiev's composition, create character puppets. Use simple materials such as paper bags, paper plates or socks. Review the story, making sure to touch on the major plot points. Then, as a class or in small groups, re-create the story using your puppets. Use bits of Prokofiev's music or create your own. Rehearse your play and then share it with an audience. Creating a puppet production, from concept to performance, develops creative writing skills, constructive expression, cooperation, and builds self-esteem.

Building a Six Note Water

Bottle Xylophone: Start by getting six glass bottles of the same size. Fill each bottle with different amounts of water. Mark your bottles carefully at the water level with a permanent marker. Number your bottles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 and arrange them in the order above (1 on your left and 6 on your right). Gently tap the middle of the bottle with a metal spoon. You'll notice that more water produces a lower pitch, and less water produces a higher pitch. Can you play a song on the xylophone?

Storytelling:

Peter and the Wolf is a Russian folk tale that tells the story of a brave little boy and his love for his grandfather. All cultures have stories, legends and myths that they share through the generations. Storytelling started as an oral tradition and eventually stories were documented in various ways: drawings, signals and sign language, through music or dance, and, of course, written language. Stories are told for entertainment, to teach a lesson, to pass-along information and to help explain why things happen. Write, tell or draw a story about a difficult time in your life when you had to be very brave.

Animal Characters:

Choose an animal that you would like to portray as a character. Research the animal and find out where it lives, what it eats, when

and where it sleeps, what behaviors it has and if it is a predator. Now, use all of the information you've collected and create a human version of your animal. Choose a name, age, job, walk, posture and physical habit for your character. Rehearse your creation and share it with the rest of the class.

Safety Public Service Announcements:

In the play, Peter's grandfather tells him not to go into the meadow. What sorts of dangers do your parents and grandparents warn you about? Come up with a short commercial (sixty seconds or less) that teaches about an element of safety. Write your ideas down, rehearse the commercial and then share it with your class. If you can, record them with a camcorder and then watch them all.

Wolf Stories:

As a class, read other stories that have wolves in them (*Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Little Pigs* for example). Talk about ways that you could turn those stories into plays. Talk about what styles of music you would add to the story. Try and add the convention of narrator to your project. Is there a way you could combine two or three wolf stories into one? Write down and rehearse your piece and then share it with an audience.

Move Like...

Think about adjectives that describe the characters in the play. Move around the room in a way that suggests the following:
~Free and easy spirit of Peter
~Fluttering bird
~Swimming and waddling duck
~Creeping hunters
~Slinky cat
~Sly, trickster, wolf
~Gentle, old grandfather

To the Zoo, or To the Wild:

The Wolf is put on trial to decide what his punishment should be. Divide into two groups, one in favor of sending him to the zoo and one in favor of releasing him to the wild, and have a debate to decide the fate of the wolf. After the two sides are presented, have a vote to decide the outcome.

Peter and the Wolf Booklist

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham,
Youth Services Coordinator for the
Maricopa County Library District



There are a number of different illustrated books that retell the story of *Peter and the Wolf*. A couple of good versions are:
Peter and the Wolf illustrated by Vladimir Vagin
Peter and the Wolf illustrated by Selina Hastings

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Orchestral Music

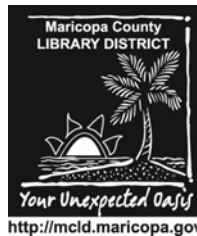
The Story of the Orchestra by Robert Levine
Meet the Orchestra by Ann Hayes
The Philharmonic Gets Dressed by Karla Kuskin
The Story of the Incredible Orchestra by Bruce Koscielniak

Animal Characteristics

Why Am I A Bird? By Greg Pyers
Make Way For Ducklings by Robert McCloskey
Across the Stream by Mirra Ginsburg
Three Stories You Can Read to Your Cat by Sara Swan Miller

Predators

Beware of the Storybook Wolves by Lauren Child
Little Wolf's Book of Badness by Ian Whybrow
Predator! By Bruce Brooks
Wolves by Jim Arnosky
Wolves by Seymour Simon



Safety

Crinkleroot's Guide to Waling In Wild Places by Jim Arnosky
Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann
I Can Be Safe: A First Look At Safety by Pat Thomas

Friendship

Mis Amigos/My Friends by George Ancona
Nice New Neighbors by Franz Brandenburg
Baby Mouse: Queen of the World by Jennifer L. Holm

About Childsplay:

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is *to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder; the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.*

We love to hear from our audience members!



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1-800-583-7831 (in-state)
Email us at: info@childsplayaz.org
Web Site: www.childsplayaz.org

Want Some Drama in Your Classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum by having an actor teach in your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of artist-in-residence and teacher training experiences. We can also help with pre- and post-show activities related to the production. For more information, contact Patricia Black, Director of Education, at: pblack@childsplayaz.org or 480-350-8129

Interesting Web Sites:

www.peterwolf.org/home.html

-*Peter & The Wolf* by Gavin Friday and the Friday-Seezer Ensemble and illustrated by Bono is a modern take on Prokofiev's children's tale

<http://library.thinkquest.org/17321/data/esmusic.html>

-a great interactive site where you can read the story and hear the music at the same time

www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson110.shtml

-activities that deal with wolves

www.prokofiev.org/index.cfm

-a site FULL of information about Sergei Prokofiev complete with photos and interviews

www.classicsforkids.com

-a great interactive site on classical music, complete with interactive games

www.mudcat.org/kids

-this site offers ideas for making your own musical instruments



*Check out additional facts about the production on our new "Backstage Fact Sheet" that you can access on our website (available late January). Go to www.childsplayaz.org and click on "For Schools," then "Preview and Student Activity Guides," and finally, "Peter and the Wolf-Backstage Notes!"