

# STUDY GUIDE

## *Peter and the Wolf*

A Co-Production with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra!

Adaptation by Abe Reybold

Music by Sergei Prokofiev

**BCT Mission:** BCT seeks to be a source of empowerment, inspiration and wonder for our audience, providing educational and cultural enrichment through the magic of professional theater.

**Teaching Goals:** Birmingham Children's Theatre is committed to bringing you and your student high quality theatre with educational activities that link directly to your curriculum. The BCT staff consulted the State Arts Council of Alabama to help us understand what you, as teachers, need in order to teach Theatre Arts effectively.

We hope that this guide will help you understand that integrating theatre in your curriculum encourages kinetic learning. Participation in the Kinesthetic Arts (dance, drama, mime and theatre) stimulates implicit learning.

### **CHARACTERS**

Most of the actors will be playing more than one part. This is called doubling.

Sergei Prokofiev

Natalya Satz- Manyusha Prokofiev- Hunter

Oleg-Young Prokofiev- Peter

Louise-Cat

Sviatoslav- Serazha- Bird

Father-Grandfather

Marfusha- Duck- Hunter

Gilere-Wolf

### **SYNOPSIS**

Maestro Prokofiev, the famous Russian composer, is visiting the Moscow Children's Theatre with his two young sons. The director of the theatre, Natalya Satz, has asked Prokofiev to compose a symphonic work for children. The Maestro is very interested in the idea. He grew up on a farm and remembers well his first trip to Moscow. His parents took him to the opera and when he returned home he began putting on musical plays for the family.

It is agreed. Prokofiev will create a musical fairy tale for the Moscow Children's Theatre. He and Natayla create the characters and which instrument of the orchestra that will represent them. The duck will be an oboe, the bird a flute and the cat will be a clarinet. The wise grandfather will be a bassoon, the hunters will be the timpani, the wolf will be the horns and the whole string section will represent the boy-hero. The boy's name will be Peter and he will capture the wolf!

At first Prokofiev imagines the story being played in the living room of his boyhood home and then he sees it performed at the Moscow Children's Theatre with costumes and scenery and with Natayla as the narrator. Our audience will be watching the same story and hearing the same music that delighted Russian children some seventy years ago.

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES:

### READING

There are several editions of *Peter and the Wolf* available. Read the story to your class. Explain that a different instrument of the orchestra will represent the characters. Your students might enjoy making their own sounds for the characters.

### *Peter and the Wolf* Script Vocabulary

**Orchestra** – A large body of people playing various musical instruments, including stringed, wind and percussion instruments.

**Woodwind** – Any of the wind instruments of an orchestra that are (or were originally) made of wood, such as the clarinet and oboe.

**Percussion** – A musical instrument (such as drum, cymbals, tambourine) played by striking.

**Opus** – A musical composition numbered as one of a composer's works (usually in order of publication).

**Conservatory** – A school for training musicians and composers.

**Villain** – A character in a story or play whose evil actions or motives are important in the plot.

**Peasant** – (in some countries) A member of the class of farm laborers and small farmers.

### Theatre Vocabulary (separate list for K-3 and 4-6)

#### Grades K-3

**Action** – Events which happen physically in a play and involves a distinct beginning, middle, and, an end.

**Backstage** – Stage area beyond the acting area.

**Cast** – To choose a person to perform a theatrical part (verb); group of people to perform a theatrical work (noun).

**Center stage** – The center area of the stage.

**Costume** – Clothing worn by an actor during a performance.

**Makeup** – Cosmetics worn by male and female actors to create a character or reflect a historical period.

**Musical theatre** – Genre that includes opera, operetta, musical comedy, and musical plays.

**Play** – A dramatic composition; bringing an action or story to life on a stage.

**Rehearsal** – Session where actors and technicians practice for a performance.

**Scenes** – A portion of a play, usually part of an act.

**Script** – The text of a theatrical production.

#### Grades 4-6

**Antagonist** – Either of two opponents in conflict or the character who opposes the protagonist.

**Articulate** – To speak distinctly.

**Backdrop** – Pieces of scenery that are hung over the stage and often “fly” in and out; often painted but can also be full wall units with doors and windows.

**Blocking** – Term given to the staging of the actual movements of each cast member or actor

**Cast** – To choose a person to perform a theatrical part (verb); group of people to perform a theatrical work (noun).

**Criticism** – Verbalized response to the play or script that is meant to enrich the experience for others.

**Cue** – Audible, verbal, or physical signal indicating that an action will occur.

**Dialect** – Regional or ethnic speech, sometimes necessary for an actor in a particular role

**Enunciation** – Articulation; to speak or pronounce words clearly.

**Genre** – A category of plays—comedy, tragedy, melodrama, or farce.

**Gesturing** – The movement of body or limbs to suggest thought or feeling.

**Improvisation** – The impromptu portrayal of a character or scene without any rehearsal or preparation.

## **POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES:**

### **The Themes of *Peter and the Wolf***

Review the story of *Peter and the Wolf* with your class. Explain to your class that in *Peter and the Wolf*, Peter chooses to disobey his grandfather. He does not like the boring safety of the garden, but chose instead to have fun with his friends in the dangerous meadow. Have your class form small groups and choose one of the following questions to discuss. Have the groups share their thoughts.

#### Discussion questions

1. Do you think Peter really understood how unsafe it was to play in the meadow? Was grandfather's rule to only play in the garden a good one? Are there times when you have to obey rules even if you don't understand why they are there?
2. If you were Grandfather, how would you have felt about Peter's actions? Would you feel proud of Peter because he captured the wolf, or would you be angry because he disobeyed you? Is it possible to feel two different ways about the same thing?
3. Peter was courageous in capturing the wolf, but do you think he might have been just a little afraid? Should he have been afraid? Would you be afraid? In order to be courageous, do you think one has to be at least a little afraid?
4. Can you think of another way Peter could have captured the wolf?

### **History**

Art in Soviet Russia was required to serve the State and subjected to careful governmental scrutiny. In the story, Peter is a Pioneer, which is the Soviet version of the Boy Scouts, although the Pioneers were more of a political organization run by the government. This association, which is not stated in the story itself, was no doubt made simply to please the communist government authorities that regulated all artistic events. Students should go online or go to the library to research the history of Russia and the Soviet Union.

What is the capital of Russia?

When was the Soviet Union established?

The Soviet Union was formed as a result of what war?

When did the Soviet Era end?

### **Meeting Language Arts, Theatre, and History Content Standards in Alabama**

#### **Key to the citation is as follows:**

1<sup>st</sup> letter represents subject: T=Theatre, H=History, LA=Language Arts

1<sup>st</sup> number represents grade level: 0=K, 1=1<sup>st</sup>, etc.

All numbers following the grade level number separated by commas represent content standard covered within the grade level for that subject.

Kindergarten (level 0) Content Standard Covered:

T-0: 3,5,6,7,9

LA-0: 4,9,12,13,14,15,17,18,20,23

H-0: 1,3

First (level 1) Content Standard Covered:

T-1: 3,7,8,9,10,12

LA-1: 3,6,8,11,13,15,16,17,18

Second (level 2) Content Standard Covered:

T-2: 1,3,4,5,7,8

LA-2: 3,4,7,10,13,14,16,17

Third (level 3) Content Standard Covered:

T-3: 1,3,6,7,8,10

LA-3: 1,2,3,5,7,16,17,19

Fourth (level 4) Content Standard Covered:

T-4: 1,2,3,4,5,6,10

LA-4: 1,2,4,5,7,12,16,17,18,20

Fifth (level 5) Content Standard Covered:

T-5: 1,2,4,8

LA-5: 1,2,4,5,7,13,17,18,19,20

Sixth (level 6) Content Standard Covered:

T-6: 1,2,4,5,6,11

LA-6: 1,5,6,7,12

**\*Please send your pictures, stories, writing, or comments to our actors! They love hearing from the kids and everyone at BCT loves seeing their artwork—It will be on display at our office.**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS TO SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE A PERFORMANCE:**

#### **Audience Participation...a magical good time**

What do you think it takes to be a good audience member? The audience is a very important part of a great performance. You can actually make the play better by being a good listener and by using your imagination. Here are some tips that will help make all performances better for everyone...

- When you arrive at the theatre, please stay on your bus until a Birmingham Children's Theatre representative greets you.
  - When you enter the lobby, please wait to be seated.
  - No screaming when the lights go down.
  - During the performance, please stay seated.
  - The actors love to hear your laughter when they do or say something funny, but please no talking or whispering during the performance unless you are helping the actors.
  - Absolutely no gum, eating or drinking inside of the theatre.
  - No cameras, laser lights or recording devices may be used during a performance.
  - Please turn off all cell phones and beepers.
  - Actors love to hear applause! Show your appreciation by clapping at the end of the play.
  - After the performance is over, please remain seated until your school is dismissed.**
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