Peter And The Wolf
The Art of Puppets & Marrionettes

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev was the leading Soviet composer of his time. Peter and the Wolf, written in 1936 in the USSR, is a children’s story with both music and text by Prokofiev, and spoken by a narrator accompanied by the orchestra. This symphonic fairy tale, ranks among the most popular compositions of the 1900s.

Peter and the Wolf is a work written specifically to introduce children to musical instruments. Prokofiev wanted a work whose characters would be easily understood by a child. He chose to feature a child named Peter, a wolf, bird, cat, duck, and some hunters. The story depicts the concepts of good and evil. Prokofiev wanted each character to have its own "leitmotif," a recognizable tune associated with a character or idea in the story. In composing the piece, he used the usual string section composed of first and second violins, violas, violincellos and double basses. The wind instruments he selected are a flute, an oboe, a clarinet and a bassoon. The horns include a trumpet, three French horns and a trombone. Two musicians play all the percussion instruments. In his score Prokofiev states: “one plays the kettle drums, triangle, tambourine and cymbals; the second, the castanets, snare drum and bass drum.” He wrote his score for a small theatre orchestra, enabling his child listeners to hear the individual instruments more easily. When you listen to Peter and the Wolf, you will hear how Prokofiev used these instruments to make the story come alive to the delight of audiences, young and old alike.

THINK ABOUT IT
Which musical instrument featured in the performance did you most enjoy? Why?

What skills were required for one puppeteer to manipulate so many puppets?

DIG DEEPER
To learn how to create your own puppets and masks to tell stories inspired by your community, take a look at The Music Center’s Artsource Curriculum, “Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre.”
www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/In-the-Heart-of-the-Beast-Puppet--Mask-Theatre/

TRY THIS CHALLENGE
A hand puppet is easy to make. To begin, put a bandanna or cloth over your hand. Let your first and middle fingers be the "head," and put a rubber band around them for the neck. Your thumb and little finger are the arms. Put rubber bands around them in order to hold the cloth in place. Imagine that your hand is the actor and begin to rehearse. Make your “puppet” clap its hands, shake its head, and fall down. Explore ways your puppet can express feelings as you manipulate it. Try to find ways of showing that your puppet feels these contrasting emotions: happy/angry; sad/curious; shy/scared; tired/hungry.