

# Peter and the Wolf by Sergei Prokofiev

## *Characters - Instruments - Musical Themes*



Peter's musical theme is played by the String Family: **VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO** and **BASS**. The music sounds light, bouncy and happy, as Peter walks through the meadow to greet his animal friends. The theme changes to a slower and more cautious sound as Peter is working to trap the wolf without getting himself caught. At the end of the story, the full orchestra plays Peter's theme as a triumphant march to the zoo with the captive Wolf.

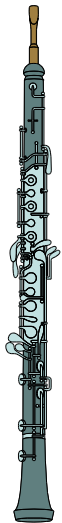


The high sounds of the **FLUTE** are the perfect imitation of a singing **Bird**. This theme uses very fast rhythms to represent the Bird flying about as she plays with Peter, argues with the Duck, escapes from the Cat, and helps to capture the Wolf.

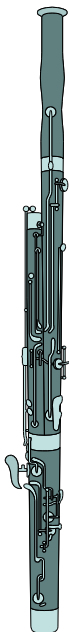
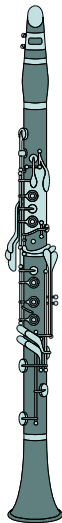




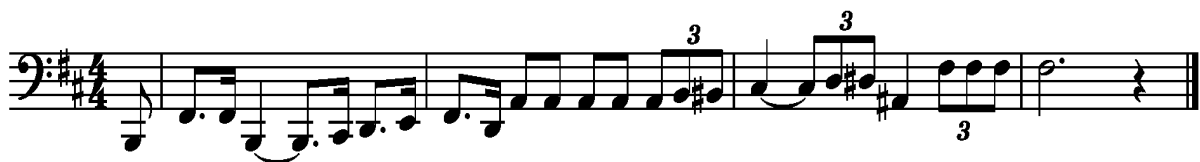
The double reed sound of the OBOE represents the quacking voice of the Duck. The short "grace notes" remind us of the waddling walk of the Duck, and the smooth gliding sounds represent her swimming in the pond. It is important to listen carefully for the Duck's theme all the way until the end of the piece, to find out what happens after the Wolf's attack.



The Cat's theme on CLARINET does not represent a "meow" sound. It is the quiet steps of the Cat's paws as she tiptoes through the tall grass in an effort to sneak up on the Bird and the Duck. Later, the music is very fast and goes up very high as the Cat scampers up the tree to escape the prowling Wolf.

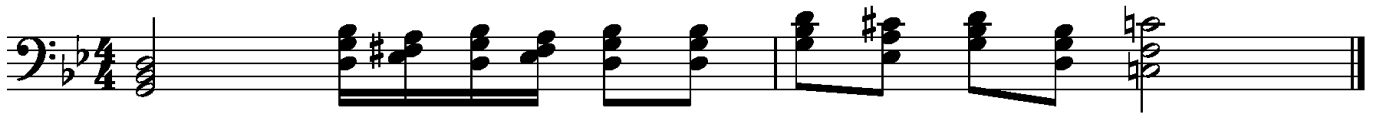
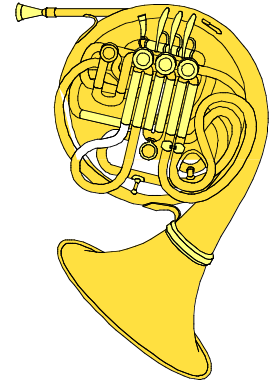


The low, deep sounds of the BASSOON are a perfect choice to represent the voice of Peter's Grandfather. He is kind, but scolds Peter for putting himself in danger. The theme moves rather slowly to represent the footsteps of an old man as he leads his grandson back inside the gate to safety.

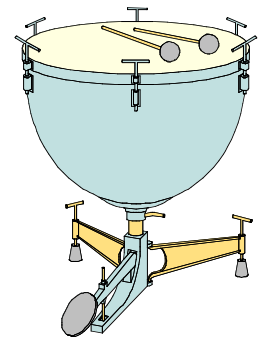




Don't be frightened when you hear this theme, it's not a real **Wolf** - only three **FRENCH HORNS**. The dark harmony of the chords played by the horns creates an ominous feeling that something bad is about to happen.



Near the end of our musical story, we hear the approaching footsteps of **The Hunters**, who are tramping through the woods, searching for the Wolf that has put their neighbors in danger. As they walk, the hunters fire their guns into the air (that's when we hear the **TIMPANI DRUMS** play) to scare the Wolf away. But by the time the Hunters arrive in the meadow, **Peter** and the **Bird** have already caught the **Wolf**!



## Peter and the Wolf - STORY Synopsis

On a fine summer day, Peter walks through the meadow, playing with his friend the Bird. The Duck comes out into the meadow and waddles to the pond for a swim. The Bird and Duck argue about what birds are really supposed to do: fly or swim?

Seeing the two arguing, the Cat creeps through the grass, hoping to sneak up and catch the Bird. Peter shouts a warning, and the Bird flies up into a tree, while the Duck quacks angrily at the Cat. As the Cat circles the tree, trying to decide about climbing up after the Bird, Peter's Grandfather comes into the meadow.

Grandfather scolds Peter for going outside the gate, reminding him that it is dangerous to play in the meadow, because a Wolf could come out of the forest. Peter replies that he is not afraid of wolves, but Grandfather takes him back home to stay inside the locked gate.

Suddenly, a large gray Wolf does come out of the forest. As he creeps towards the pond, the Cat quickly climbs the tree where the Bird is perching. The Bird shouts a warning to the Duck, but in her excitement she jumps out of the pond. The Wolf chases the Duck across the meadow, and then catches and *swallows* her in one huge gulp!

As the Bird and Cat sit nervously together in the tree, the Wolf circles around the trunk looking at both with a greedy expression. Peter is watching everything from behind the gate, and makes a plan to save his friends. He grabs a strong rope and climbs up the stone wall and then onto a branch of the tree.

Peter asks the Bird to help by flying in circles around the Wolf's head. As the Bird distracts the Wolf, Peter makes a lasso and lowers it down around the Wolf's tail. With a mighty pull, Peter tightens the rope and catches the Wolf! As he struggles to get away, the Wolf only makes the rope around his tail tighter.

Just then, a group of Hunters come out of the forest, shooting their guns in the air to frighten away the Wolf. But Peter says, "Don't worry, the Bird and I have caught the Wolf, now you can help us take him to the zoo!"

Peter leads the procession as the Hunters carry the Wolf, Grandfather and the Cat walk along behind and the Bird flies around overhead. And if you listen very closely, you can hear the Duck *quacking* inside the Wolf's belly, for he had swallowed her alive . . .

. . . and as often happens in folk tales, we find that the Duck may be miraculously rescued and live happily in the meadow with Peter and his friends.

## RESOURCES

### *Peter and the Wolf* – MUSIC – BOOKS - VIDEO

#### **AUDIO RECORDINGS**

*Music Textbook Series* – Most elementary music textbook series include recordings of this music classic, usually in grades K-1-2. Lesson plans, character and instrument visuals and musical themes may also be included.

*Bernstein Favorites Children's Classics* – Sony label

*Prokofiev Peter and the Wolf* – Philadelphia Orchestra, David Bowie, narrator

*Peter and the Wolf* – Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Sting, narrator

*Peter and the Wolf* - London Philharmonic, Stephen Simon – Magic Maestro Music series

\* Some internet retailers offer MP3 downloads

\* Some of the Books listed below include an audio CD

#### **BOOKS**

*Peter and the Wolf* retold and illustrated by Vladimir Vagin (themes in music notation)

*Peter and the Wolf* adapted by Janet Schulman, **with music CD**

*Peter and the Wolf* by Carin and Joan Dewhirst, **with Leonard Bernstein music CD**

*Peter and the Wolf* retold and illustrated by Ian Beck – folk art style illustrations

*Peter and the Wolf* by Chris Raschka – NON-traditional version – *sound* words and line art

#### **VIDEOS**

*Peter and the Wolf* DVD - Royal Ballet School – **Ballet** performance with music & narration

*Peter and the Wolf* - *Jim Gamble Puppet Classics* (Laserlight Video)

Disney's *Make Mine Music* Video - *Peter and the Wolf* and other animated musical stories

*Elmo's Musical Adventure* – *The Story of Peter and the Wolf* – Sesame Street characters

*Peter and the Wolf* – animated by Chuck Jones, narrated by Kirstie Alley

*Peter and the Wolf: A Prokofiev Fantasy* - narrated by Sting, mixing puppets and live actors

*Peter and the Wolf* - animated by Suzie Templeton (contemporary, dark setting)

### **BALLET Resources**

**ORLANDO BALLET Website** <http://www.orlandoballet.org/>

Learn more about this professional dance company and the Orlando Ballet School.

#### BALLET POSITIONS

Visit a website to see online photos of the basic positions of the feet and arms in classical

ballet: *The Ballet Site* <http://www.freewebs.com/theballetsite/basics.htm>

*Beginners Ballet* <http://www.artofballet.com/class2.html>

## BOOKS About Ballet – more examples available in school or public libraries

*The Illustrated Book of Ballet Stories* by Barbara Newman (with audio CD)

*A Child's Introduction to Ballet* by Laura Lee and Meredith Hamilton (with audio CD)

## BALLET VIDEOS

- *Peter and the Wolf* by the Royal Ballet School, a DVD by Image Entertainment
- *The Nutcracker* with music by Tchaikovsky – many versions available

RESOURCES are available from school and public libraries, retail and online stores that sell books, music and video. These catalogs also include resources for music and dance:

**Music In Motion** (1-800-445-0649, [www.musicmotion.com](http://www.musicmotion.com))

**Friendship House** (1-800-791-9876, [www.friendshiphouse.com](http://www.friendshiphouse.com))

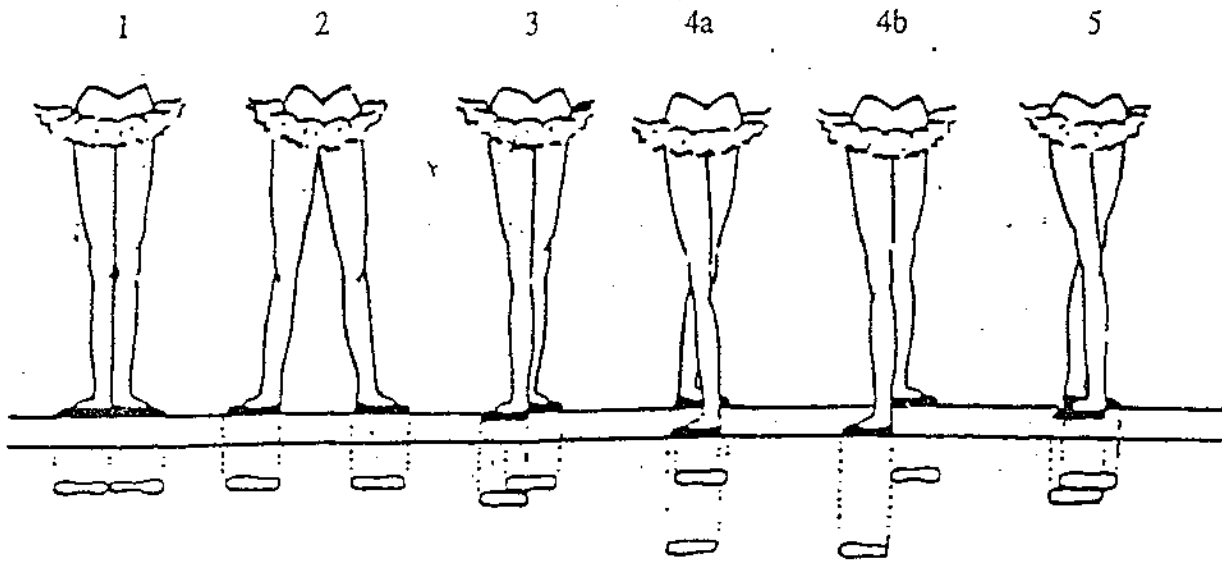
### ***Pantomime***

Pantomime (or mime) is using actions or gestures without words as a means of communication. In ballet it helps the audience better understand the story and what the characters are feeling. Here are some of the most familiar gestures used in ballet:



Anger	Fist shaken
Ask	Hands clasped together in pleading gesture
Beautiful	Hand circling face
Death	Arms straight in front, crossed at wrists with hands in fists
Love	Hands over heart
Marriage	Index finger pointing to ring finger on left hand
Money	Counting coins in hand or rubbing thumb & fingers together
No/never	With palms down, hands waving over each other crossing at wrist
Pray	Hands flat, palms together in front of chest with arms extended
Remember/Think	Touch or point to temple
Royal	Hand circling top of head to indicate crown
Sad	Finger tracing tears down face or wiping cheek
Sleep	Hands in praying position, held on side of face with head inclined
Why/Where/What	Hands open, palms up, arms opening from in front of body outward

## FIVE POSITIONS OF THE FEET IN BALLET



First Position: In this position the feet form one line, heels touching one another (1).

Second Position: The feet are on the same line but with a distance of about one foot between the heels (2).

Third Position: One foot is in the front of the other, heels touching the middle of the other foot (3).

Fourth Position: Classical fourth position is the same as third position, but with the feet about a foot apart known as crossed fourth position (4a). The feet in first position and separated by the space of one foot is known as open fourth position (4b).

Fifth Position: Cecchetti position (5) the feet are crossed so that the first joint of the big toe shows beyond either heel. In the French and Russian Schools, the feet are completely crossed so that the heel of the front foot touches the toe of the back foot and visa versa.