

SERGEI PROKOFIEV



Sergei Prokofiev was a Russian composer and pianist who was born in a small village in Ukraine in 1891. His mother -- herself a talented pianist -- was his first piano teacher. He began composing at the age of five and had written his first opera by the age of nine. When he was thirteen, his mother took him to St. Petersburg to study music at a conservatory.

When the Russian Revolution began to make life difficult for him in Russia, he left for the United States. American audiences weren't quite ready for his modern music, so he then moved to Paris, where he was well received. He missed Russia dearly, however, and moved back in 1936 for the final 19 years of his life.

Prokofiev composed many symphonies, ballets, operas and music for films. At the time of his death in 1953, he was one of the most well-loved composers in the world.

COMPOSING PETER AND THE WOLF

In 1936, the Central Children's Theatre in Russia asked Prokofiev to write a musical symphony for children. The goal was to introduce children to different instruments of the orchestra. Initially, a poet wrote a rhyming verse to accompany Prokofiev's music, but Prokofiev felt it was too distracting to the music. He ended up writing his own simple narration for the story. Peter and the Wolf has been adapted for ballet and made into an animated film by Disney.