

In this unit the children are introduced to Prokofiev's piece, *Peter and the Wolf*. Prokofiev was Russian and wrote the piece (described as a "symphonic fairy tale for children") in 1936. In the piece, a narrator tells the story of Peter who captures a wolf while an orchestra illustrates it by using different instruments to play a theme that represents each character. It is Prokofiev's most frequently performed work and one of the most frequently performed pieces in classical music. He wrote it to introduce children to different instruments in the orchestra.

By listening to different parts of *Peter and the Wolf*, and composing a piece, as a class, based around it the children explore how composers can use themes (or musical ideas), using different instruments to represent different characters. By exploring the themes they encounter how the different dimensions of music contribute to the character of a theme, whether by using particular patterns in pitch and rhythm (for example the dotted rhythm of Peter's theme which is based on a triad, or a set of three pitches) or a heavy beat/pulse (such as the one used for the Grandfather's theme) and how the atmosphere or feeling that a piece of music creates can be altered by a change in speed (tempo) or volume (dynamics). They work together as a class to develop their own music which incorporates these elements, using tuned and untuned percussion.

Whilst composing their own music, this is the first time in the curriculum the children encounter notation to show pitch. This builds on their understanding of stick notation to show rhythm encountered in Autumn B of year 2 whilst studying *Beat Music*. Whilst exploring Peter's theme they learn that the symbol of a dot can be used in music to represent different pitch patterns.

## Lesson Sequencing

**In lesson 1** the children listen to the introduction to the piece and learn how Prokofiev uses different themes (musical ideas) played by different instruments to represent different characters in the story. They learn about the instruments used to represent the bird and the duck and go on to explore how Peter's theme uses dotted rhythms (where two adjacent notes are of unequal length, e.g. long, short) to portray a happy, skipping boy. In preparation for starting to build their own composition over the course of the unit, they clap and imitate dotted rhythms.

**In lesson 2** the children continue to explore Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, listening to the next section of the piece which describes a dialogue between the bird and the duck and the subsequent attack of the cat. They continue to study Peter's theme and discover how it uses the triad (a set of three notes or pitches) of C, E and G. They use this knowledge to create patterns in pitch using the same triad on the glockenspiel/xylophone.

**In lesson 3** the children listen to the theme which represents the Grandfather in *Peter and the Wolf*. They explore how this uses a heavy, slow, beat to illustrate the deliberate steps of the old man, in contrast to the dotted, skipping theme which represents Peter. They go on to use the rhythm of Peter's theme to explore how the symbol of a dot can be used in music to represent different pitch patterns. This is the first time in the curriculum the children encounter notation to show pitch.

**In lesson 4** the children continue to listen to *Peter and the Wolf* and investigate the wolf's theme, exploring how Prokofiev uses alternating pitches which are close together and increasing volume (a 'crescendo') to create suspense. They practise doing this themselves as a class to create their own 'wolf' theme. Changes in volume in music are called 'dynamics'.

**In lesson 5** the children listen to the part of *Peter and the Wolf* where Peter captures the wolf. They go on to explore how excitement can be built up in a piece of music by using an 'accelerando'. This means gradually increasing the speed (tempo) of the music. They use this information to create a third section for their piece of music by combining the themes for Peter and the wolf.

**In lesson 6** the children perform and record the music which they have created throughout the course of the unit based on *Peter and the Wolf* and evaluate their performance. In doing so, they learn that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the piece so it is ready for performance they develop their skills in playing together as a group and watching their teacher who acts as a conductor to guide them.

## Musical Focus

### *Pitch*

·Using a major triad to create pitch patterns

### *Representation*

·Musical themes/instrumentation to show different characters

## *Notation*

·Dot notation to show pitch patterns

## *Dynamics*

·Crescendo means gradually getting louder

## *Tempo*

·Accelerando means gradually getting faster

## **Links to Prior/Following Units**

### **Year 1**

Spring A—*Animals in Music* (Pitch—high, low instruments which create high/low sounds; Representation and symbols—music can represent things, symbols can represent sounds; Instrumentation—strings, wind and tuned percussion)

Summer A—*What can you hear?* (Representation using sound)

Summer B—*Stories in Sound I* (Representation using sound/Structure and Form—creating a different feeling or character using speed and articulation, motifs)

### **Year 2**

Spring B—*Gamelan* (Pitch and Melody—gamelan music built around a melody based on a 5 or 7-note scale;

Dynamics—contrast of loud and quiet)

Summer A—*Emotions in Sound* (Representation using sound—sources of inspiration, motifs)

### **Year 3**

Autumn B—*Pachelbel's Canon* (Pitch— Contrasting pitch of violin/'cello, hand signals and symbols to show pitch, using letter A-G for

a musical scale; Notation—Using notation for F, A and C on the staff)

Spring A—*Vivaldi's Winter* (Structure/Form and Texture— Music which uses motifs to describe a scene, event or emotion; Notation—Reading/Writing dot notation for a minor triad on the staff)

Spring B—*Sounds of the Sea* (Instrumentation—different sections of the orchestra, representation of the sea using different instruments; Structure and form—musical themes that return (rondo form); Dynamics/Tempo—changes in dynamics/tempo to create change of mood)

Summer A—*Stories in Sound II* (Stories in sound—tone poem; Structure/Form—motifs, structure created by repetition of motifs; Dynamics/Tempo—loud and soft; fast and slow to create change in mood; Notation—reading dot notation for pitch in do-mi range on the staff)

## Outcomes

Create music in the style of Peter's/wolf's theme using major triad, dotted rhythms, crescendo and accelerando. Read dot notation for pitch patterns.

## Key Learning Points

- Prokofiev was a Russian composer who wrote a piece which tells the story of Peter and the Wolf.
- The piece uses different instruments which play themes to represent different characters in the story. A theme is like a musical idea.
- A triad, in music, is a set of three notes or pitches which are like building blocks in music. We can use triads to make patterns in pitch. Peter's theme is based on the triad of C, E, and G.
- We can use hand signals with words to represent pitch. We can use symbols to represent pitch patterns.
- 'Dynamics' in music means how loudly or quietly a piece of music is played. When music gets gradually louder and louder this is called a 'crescendo'.
- Tempo means the speed of a piece of music. Gradually increasing the tempo is called an 'accelerando'.

## Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

## Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture hold, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression. The children use the songs which they sing at the beginning of the lesson to develop their skills in using hand signals from the sol-fa system to identify changes in pitch, which they then relate to lower and higher written dots, also indicating pitch variation.

## Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing their technical skills of feeling and moving to the beat, identifying what the music makes them feel and identifying the different instruments/themes used for different characters. By listening to *Peter and the Wolf* they begin to have conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of pitch, tempo, rhythm, and dynamics. By studying this music, they begin to develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from a particular culture/genre, and in particular an increasing understanding how music can tell a story.

## Practising

Practising singing and playing tuned and untuned percussion instruments develops technical motor skills and an internal sense of rhythm and pitch. Creating a three-part composition centred around different themes, develops knowledge of handling pitch, tempo, rhythm, dynamics and structure as component dimensions of making music. Practising the skills required for building a composition gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

## Performing

Working towards performance of a composition over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely in an ensemble, following the teacher who acts as a conductor.