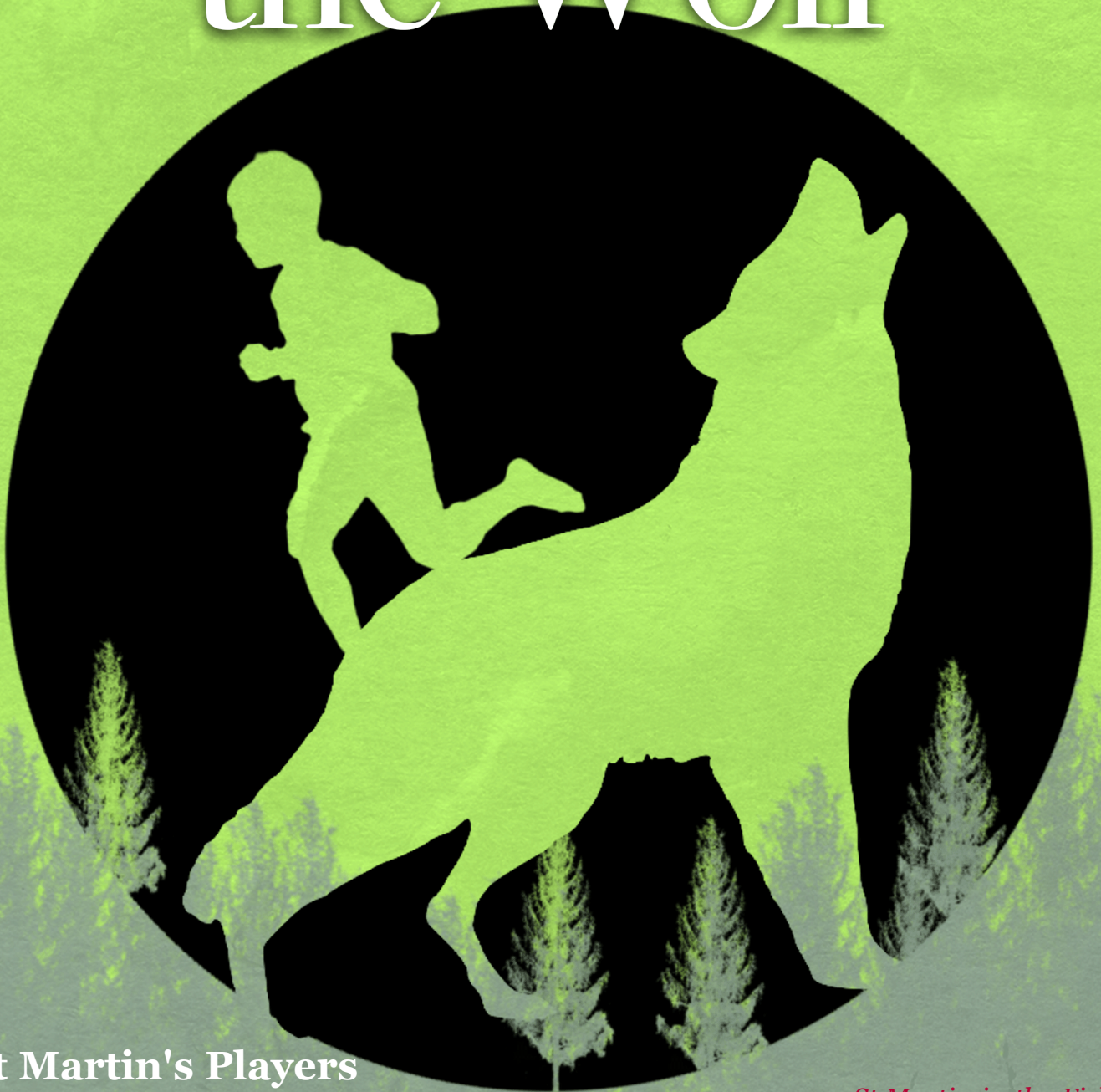


St
Martin
in
the
Fields

Peter and the Wolf



St Martin's Players
Gabriella Noble *Director*
Zeb Soanes *Narrator*

*Available to watch as many times as you like until
Friday 4 June 2021*

*St Martin-in-the-Fields
Trafalgar Square
London
WC2N 4JJ
020 7766 1100
www.smitf.org*



PROGRAMME

Peter and the Wolf – Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)



St Martin's Prayers in rehearsal with Gabriella Noble (c.) Andrew Earis



PROGRAMME NOTES

by Sarah Maxted

Peter and the Wolf is a much-loved work of musical storytelling by composer Sergei Prokofiev. It is enjoyed by audiences all over the world, thanks to its unique ability to stir the imagination and introduce younger listeners to the timbres and traits of different musical instruments in the orchestra.

About the composer

Sergei Prokofiev was born on 27 April 1891 in Sontsovka, a small village in Ukraine, which became part of the Soviet Union. His mother was a talented pianist who taught Prokofiev to play and encouraged his early attempts at composing music. The young Prokofiev was clearly gifted and ambitious – he wrote his first opera at the age of just nine! He studied at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and then travelled around Europe and the USA to broaden his musical horizons. Whilst travelling the world, Prokofiev became famed for his distinctive orchestral compositions and ballet music. He also met and married the Spanish singer Lina Llubera in 1923 and they had two children together.

In 1936 Prokofiev and his family moved back to the Soviet Union. This is when he wrote his famous *Peter and the Wolf* for Moscow's Children's Theatre. Prokofiev lived and composed in Moscow for the rest of his life. He died on 5 March 1953, coincidentally the same day as Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union. Enormous crowds gathered to mourn Stalin's death, making it impossible to hold a large funeral for Prokofiev. Only a small group of about thirty people were able to attend and pay their respects to the great composer and his fantastic musical legacy.

Throughout his career Prokofiev composed an amazing range of orchestral music, including seven Symphonies, five Piano Concertos, and several soundtracks for films. His other famous works include the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and an opera based on Tolstoy's classic Russian novel *War and Peace*.



Sergei Prokofiev

About the music

Peter and the Wolf is a 'symphonic fairy tale for children' written by Prokofiev for Moscow's Children's Theatre in 1936. The piece is performed by a narrator and orchestra, using cleverly chosen instruments to represent each of the characters in the story.

The first character we meet is Peter, represented by the string instruments (violin, viola, cello and double bass). Together they play a cheerful melody, sounding just like a young boy off to explore the world, humming a jolly tune with a spring in his step.

As Peter sets out on his adventure, he meets various animals. The first is a friendly bird, as played by the flute. The flute is a woodwind instrument with a bright, light, chirping sound. You can imagine the bird flitting and swooping happily around Peter, enjoying the calm atmosphere of a beautiful morning.

Next we are introduced to the duck, depicted by another instrument from the woodwind family, the oboe. The melody played by the oboe gently slips and slides, like a duck waddling her way towards a comfortable swim around the pond.

The peace is disturbed by the sneaking arrival of a cat, brought to life by the clarinet. The clarinet is also a woodwind instrument, but with a darker, sultry sound. You can hear the sly, purposeful pawprints of the cat as she creeps closer to the chirping bird.

The next character to appear is Peter's grouchy grandfather, played by one of the lowest instruments in the woodwind family, the bassoon. The cantankerous, plodding low notes of the bassoon sound almost cartoonish. Perhaps this makes it difficult to take grandfather's warning of danger seriously – but Peter and his animal friends should watch out!

The wolf is the villain of the tale, portrayed by not one, but three French horns. The French horn is a brass instrument with a rich sound. Playing in harmony, the trio of French horns demonstrate how powerful and threatening the wolf is as he prowls into the scene.

Will the day be saved by the hunters with their guns, represented by the kettle drum and bass drum of the percussion family...?

There is tragedy, courage and cunning as the story unfolds. Prokofiev's vivid orchestration allows us to follow the progress of each character, recognising the melodies of their representative instruments and fully imagining the drama as brave Peter outwits the hungry wolf.

Our thanks to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, for supporting the online concert series at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

This concert was pre-recorded in the church and edited together before broadcast. The performers and technical crew carefully adhere to all current government regulations for COVID-19.



PERFORMERS

St Martin's Players
Gabriella Noble Director
Zeb Soanes Narrator

Violin I

Richard Milone

Violin II

Hilaryjane Parker

Viola

Jon Thorne

Cello

Adrian Bradbury

Piano

Ben Giddens

Double bass

Jan Zahourek

Flute

Ian Mullin

Oboe

Lydia Griffiths

Clarinet

Thomas Lessels

Bassoon

Dominic Tyler

Horn

Kira Doherty

Percussion

Tristan Fry

St Martin's Players is a newly established ensemble bringing together some of London's finest musicians for concerts and broadcasts from St Martin-in-the-Fields, in the heart of the city. Since their premiere performances for the Sound of St Martin's inaugural Summer Online Festival in 2020, St Martin's Players have delighted audiences with their versatility and flair in programmes ranging from Haydn's *Nelson Mass* to Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. Through these performances, they have played a key role in the reimagining of concerts from St Martin's during the period of Covid-19 and lockdown, bringing digital engagement to the fore and championing creative programming and fresh musical arrangements.

Highlights have included concerts in collaboration with renowned broadcaster and author Zeb Soanes, as well as recording the Christmas Morning broadcast for BBC Radio 4 in December 2020. St Martin's Players also perform regularly in close partnership with St Martin's Voices, infusing larger scale choral works with chamber music vibrancy, including a special performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria* in its original arrangement for upper voices



Gabriella Noble is a conductor and singer based in London. In 2017 she graduated with a First Class degree in Music from Oxford University, where she conducted Oxford University Chorus and held a conducting scholarship with Schola Cantorum of Oxford. She went on to study solo voice ensemble singing under Robert Hollingworth at York University, where she conducted new music with the Chimera Ensemble.

As a fellow of the National Youth Choir, Gabriella enjoyed leading workshops with young musicians and taking part in outreach work. She continues to work as on the music staff for NYCGB, directing young musicians and exposing them to choral music. Gabriella conducts the Kingston Singers, The Cares Family (charity) choir, and Port Meadow Sinfonia, an amateur orchestra she co-created for musicians who have chosen to work in other fields. Gabriella was the 2019/20 conducting scholar for Genesis Sixteen, The Sixteen's Young Artist Programme.

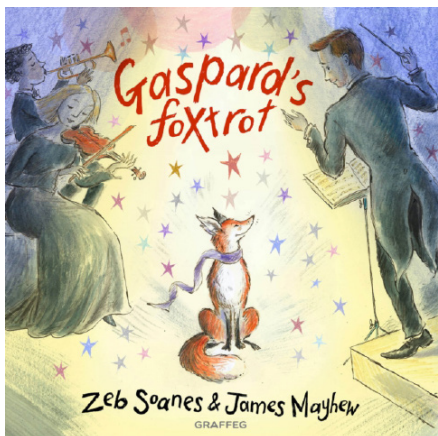
Zeb Soanes is a trusted newsreader and reassuring voice of the Shipping Forecast to millions of listeners on BBC Radio 4. He is a regular on *The News Quiz*, has reported for *From Our Own Correspondent* and read for *Poetry Please*. *Sunday Times* readers voted him their favourite male voice on UK radio. On television he launched BBC Four, where he presented the *BBC Proms*.

He studied Creative Writing and Drama at UEA and has written for *The Observer*, *Country Life* and *The Literary Review*. His best-selling first book for children, *Gaspard the Fox*, illustrated by James Mayhew, began a series of stories inspired by his remarkable encounters with a real urban fox, for which he was made the first patron of The Mammal Society.



Zeb Soanes

He trained as an actor and has earned a reputation as 'the go-to person for music narration' (Daily Telegraph) performing favourite works for children with the UK's leading orchestras, including *Peter and the Wolf*, *Babar the Elephant* and *Paddington*; his third book in the Gaspard series, *Gaspard's Foxtrot*, has been adapted as a major new concert work by Jonathan Dove, touring the UK in 2021.



Gaspard's Foxtrot is available to purchase for £12.99 from our [online shop](#).

Gaspard accidentally boards the Number 38 bus and has a thrilling fox-eye view of the sights, sounds and smells of London, but how will he ever get home? At Hyde Park he finds himself at a classical concert celebrating the city's wildlife, and becomes front-page news when he trots out on stage.

'The wonderful thing about Gaspard the Fox is that it's hard to imagine a time when he was never there.'

Other online concerts from St Martin-in-the-Fields:



We are delighted to offer two other family concerts, available later this year.

Paddington Bear's First Concert!

Available for 60 days from Saturday 22 May 2021

The Wind in the Willows




Available for 60 days from Monday 31 May 2021

Tickets £5. www.smitf.org



As the impact of COVID-19 continues, we need people like you to keep supporting us and helping the musicians we work with.

To help us keep playing on, please consider making a donation today: www.smitf.org/donate

 @stmartins_music
 St Martin's Music
 @stmartins_music