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'Peter and the Wolf' makes symphonic overtures at Covey



Amber Foote Correspondent Mar 18, 2015 Updated Dec 17, 2018 0



The Utah Symphony, shown in this file photo, announced Monday a new partnership with Utah Valley University at the school's new Noorda Center for the Performing Arts. File photo, courtesy of Utah Symphony



The classic orchestral tale of boy versus wolf is coming to the Covey Center for the Arts for one night only.

The Utah Symphony brings "Peter and the Wolf Live!" to Provo on Friday night in a multimedia concert featuring the symphony and a live screening of the 2006 Oscar-winning animated short film of the tale.

"Peter and the Wolf Live!" is part of Utah Symphony's Family Series of concerts. It marks the first appearance of the Utah Symphony at the Covey Center and what Nick Bean, Covey marketing rep, hopes is the first of many visits.

"We think perhaps this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship," he said. "This is the symphony's first time coming to the Covey, and I think it really broadens our reach with the community to host them."

Friday night's program will be performed under the baton of returning guest conductor Emmanuel Fratianni, known for his compositions on the award-winning score of the video game "Advent Rising."

Bean said Sergei Prokofiev's classic composition and the new model animation film by Suzie Templeton (which will show on a big screen above the symphony), all synced up through Fratianni's conducting, is the ideal entry concert for parents looking to introduce children to musical symphony.

"This will be a fresh experience for parents to rediscover 'Peter and the Wolf' and the perfect way for them to introduce it to their school-aged children," Bean said. "It isn't the 'Peter and the Wolf' adults experienced as a child. It's more creative, dynamic and full-fledged in that it's a dual-media experience — perfect for today's attention-challenged audiences."

Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf," a Russian tale about a boy who pits his courage against a grey wolf, is designed to introduce listeners to orchestral instruments. Each character in the tale is represented by an instrument and a musical theme. For example, Peter is portrayed by the strings, his grandfather the bassoon, hunters are the woodwinds and timpani/bass drum, and the wolf is the French horns.

Leon Chodos, associate principal bassoon player with Utah Symphony, assumes the role of the concerned but grumpy grandfather in the tale. Chodos said it's not that hard to portray a character and tell a story with an instrument when you've got good music to play.

"Prokofiev wrote really perfect music," he said. "All you have to do is play the notes on the page and then go the extra step and think about how the grandfather is acting, like waving his cane or stomping on the ground, and it just takes care of itself."

Chodos said "Peter and the Wolf" has become a timeless musical tale for two reasons.

"People are familiar with the story because of the music," he said, "but this piece isn't made great just because of the great music writing. It's also a great story."

Also on the program for Friday's concert is Daniel Dorff's "Three Fun Fables," which are based on Aesop tales "The Fox and the Crow," "The Dog and his Reflection" and "The Tortoise and the Hare." Jim Christian, director of musical theater studies at Weber State University, will narrate the fables.



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