

Peter and the Wolf

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A very special performance of Sergei Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" took place Thursday night at the Stolyпин Theater in Moscow. (Throughout April and May there will be celebrations to commemorate the 120th birthday of the great Russian composer.) Children around the world have cherished this narrated symphonic fairy tale for generations: the story of brave "Pioneer Petya," boldly defying his grandfather and capturing the menacing wolf (who had just eaten the imprudent duck). I am honored to say that I was one of Thursday night's co-producers. This production was sponsored by Ochenochenbank and performed in cooperation with Moscow city authorities. We purposefully made the tickets expensive, and there was face control, too. The concert was intended for the children of Moscow's elite — that is, (as we appropriately billed it) "for tomorrow's aristocracy and for tomorrow's leaders." For this reason, the promoters correctly (re)titled the piece, "Peter and the Wolf: Preparing Moscow's Elite Youth for Being Leaders of an International Financial Center." We adjusted the music and plot somewhat, but to great effect. I can't stand classical music, so I got rid of the symphony. Instead, we incorporated the whole rock-opera concept — very Andrew Lloyd Webber. Here was an important leitmotif — a sort of musical bridge between two international financial centers, London and Moscow. The plot needed some real forward

planning too: Instead of playing in a forest as in the original (too pod-Moskvoi), in this production we had Peter playing in a giant gated community. We also dressed him up like an elite English schoolboy. The wolf had now evolved into a carnivorous donkey, and one with the head of Boris Nemtsov. And the plot: It begins with Peter playing in a gated community in an elite neighborhood of Moscow with his friend, the duck (Peking duck? Not on your life! It's a Hong Kong duck. ... Hong Kong, also an international financial center — like Moscow. That's terrific symbolism). The donkey-wolf comes in and eats the duck. Young Peter takes control by calling in his father's security and having them beat the crap out of the donkey. They then force the donkey-wolf to regurgitate the duck, which he does, but in front of the Carnegie Moscow Center. A dutiful police officer then tickets the donkey-wolf for leaving his post-regurgitant on the sidewalk, and then Carnegie Center for not having the public-spiritedness to clean it up. When both the donkey-wolf and Carnegie director try to bribe the police officer, the officer — furious and rightfully insulted — has them arrested and placed in the zoo. Meanwhile, the puddle — which once had sadly been Peter's friend, the duck — now strangely resembles oil. But oil is more useful stuff than ducks, so this is really a story about rebirth. That's when this production goes very "Jesus Christ Superstar" (besides being tremendously entertaining, it also ties up the Prokofiev-Webber, Moscow-London, international financial themes really beautifully). It was improved Prokofiev for an improved Moscow.

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