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Petya and the Wolf (Russian Season 2012) Review

By [Jane Frere](#) - Posted on **12 August 2012**

Show details

Venue: [Assembly Roxy](#)**Company:** Theatre La Pushkin**Running time:** 45mins**Production:** Co-devised by Oleg Zhukovskiy and Andrey Rubtsov**Performers:** Oleg Zhukovskiy, Andrey Rubtsov

With its timeless appeal and loved by children all over the world, everyone knows the story of Peter and the Wolf, the words and music constructed as a child's introduction to the orchestra written by Sergei Prokofiev in 1936.

Brave Peter in spite of his concerned grandfather's protestation catches a wolf with his friends, a bird and a cat. The wolf has swallowed a duck whole, but with the help of hunters has been taken to the zoo where the duck is finally rescued.

Reminiscent of the manner of Prokofiev's inventiveness introducing each character with a musical theme and different instrument, actors Oleg Zhukovskiy (formerly of multi award winning DEREVO group) and Andrey Rubtsov, using clowning technique, puppetry, dance and mime turn the story into a pocket-sized visual treat.

With breathtaking dexterity, using minimal means, a simple hand movement with two sticks becomes a bird, red whiskers combined with ginger tufts of wool possibly from an old nylon rug a cat (with a most distinctive character), not to mention the variety of tails donned by the wolf.

The piece finishes with an epilogue outside of the story. Peter has grown up and in a tradition of Russian storytelling, little boys in fairy tales often go on to become great heroes. The hat that has characterised Peter throughout is turned around into a WW2 pilot's cap, and with a total change of music and mood Peter flies.

This additional section more of a cultural divergence, is obscure without an easy interpretation. Possibly it might be a reflection on

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the moral of the tale you can't be a hero if you don't take risks, but equally it invites the audience to dream and as the performers with their rigorous training and physical skills are a joy to watch, overall they offer a unique kind of magic that can only belong to live theatre.

It may be questionable whether the dark edge to the production is suitable for children as young as age four, it certainly is the antithesis of the Disney cartoon version, but Theatre La Pushkin liberates our imagination so often cluttered with sanitised images nowadays, and with their ingenious simplicity offers both children and adults a chance to be stimulated by sheer audacity and wit.

Times: Til 27th August, 10.30am

Tickets: £9 (£8)

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