

Peter Knell

Ferry Bluff

for SSAATTBB chorus

Duration: ca. 6 minutes

Peter Knell

www.peterknell.com

Biography

Praised for being “gratefully idiomatic” (*Los Angeles Times*) and for its “subtle virtuosity” (*MusicWeb International*), Peter’s music is meticulously crafted for both instruments and voices, making full use of their expressive and coloristic potential. He is deeply invested in musical structure as a crucible to intensify the affective experience of the listener, and he has consistently been rewarded by the enthusiastic reception of his work by audiences and performers.

Peter’s music has received awards in numerous national and international competitions, including First Prizes in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's 10th New Music Festival International Composers Competition, the Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival/Louisville Orchestra Prize, and the Omaha Symphony Guild International New Music Competition, as well as Second Prizes in the Fourth International Witold Lutoslawski Composers Competition, the First International Composers' Competition "In Memoriam Zoltán Kodály", and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's Young Composers Competition. Peter was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, a BMI Student Composer Award, two ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composers Awards, grants from the Paloheimo Foundation and Meet the Composer, and commissions from the Fromm Music Foundation/Ying Quartet, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, Utah Arts Festival, Lyris Quartet, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and Dale Warland Singers, among others.

Peter’s music has been performed by ensembles such as the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Kremlin Chamber Orchestra, Filharmonia de Stat “Transilvania”, the Winnipeg, Omaha, Richmond, Memphis, and Oakland East Bay Symphony Orchestras, the Doric String Quartet, Ying Quartet, Lyris Quartet, Onyx String Quartet, Verdi Quartet, Jacaranda, Southwest Chamber Music, Volti Chamber Chorus, counter)induction, by soloists including James Dunham, Martin Chalifour, Peabody Southwell, Vijay Gupta, Markus Pawlick, and Ingeborg Danz, and at numerous music festivals. It has been broadcast in Russia, Canada, Hungary and Finland, as well as in several American cities. His orchestral work *LINES/ANGLES* was the American selection for the ISCM World Music Days 2009 and was performed in September 2009 by the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Peter’s solo violin work *Seven Last Words*, based on paintings of German artist Rolf Stein, is available in a book/CD format from Valve-Hearts, Cologne. A CD featuring his orchestral work, “...the weakening eye of day” in a live performance by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra is available on the Artisjus label, a CD featuring German pianist Susanne Kessel performing two of his *Four Snapshots* is available on OehmsClassics, a CD of Peter’s complete piano music performed by German pianist Markus Pawlik was released by Sono Luminus in 2013, and a CD of the Lyris Quartet performing his *Intimate Voices* was released in the summer of 2016 on the ARS Produktion label. A new CD featuring his *Canciones de Agua, String Quartet No. 2* and *Seven Last Words* is planned for released in early 2022.

Peter holds degrees from Princeton University (BA), the Juilliard School (MM), and the University of Texas at Austin (DMA), and he was a Fulbright Fellow at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. His principal composition teachers have included Dan Welcher, Donald Grantham, and David Diamond. He is currently based in Los Angeles.

Program Note

Ferry Bluff was commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers and composed during March and April 1999. It is a setting of a poem by Virginia poet Thomas Gardner. The poem describes an autumn day in Wisconsin when the poet, standing on a sandstone bluff above a river, loses his sense of self. The music attempts both to capture the atmospheric sense of the text and to portray many of the specific images. Below is the poet's response to hearing my setting of his poem:

"*Ferry Bluff* is really lovely. You've taken some very simple words and almost transformed them to wind and water, to elements. Mostly I found myself thinking of contrasts--the liquid layers of sound, voices dropping down through veils of them, in contrast to solid things and bursts of clarity; the play between the temporarily stable "I" and the dissolving, shifting world outside; and so on. It's a "contest" or debate or negotiation I think about (teach about) all the time, so I'm not surprised to find it in this poem, but how much richer it seems put in musical terms."

Ferry Bluff

Peter Knell (1999)
Text by Thomas Gardner

Languid $\text{♩} = 40$

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. It includes the following parts:

- Soprano 1**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout.
- Soprano 2**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout.
- Alto 1**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout.
- Alto 2**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout.
- Tenor 1**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout.
- Tenor 2**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature, rests throughout. In the final measure, there is a *pp* dynamic marking and the instruction "Off".
- Bass 1**: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Starts with a rest, then enters in the second measure with a *pp* dynamic and "Off" instruction. Features a triplet in the second measure and a triplet in the fourth measure. Dynamics change to *p* in the fourth measure.
- Bass 2**: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Starts with a rest, then enters in the second measure with a *pp* dynamic and "Off" instruction. Features a triplet in the second measure and a triplet in the fourth measure. Dynamics change to *p* in the fourth measure.
- Piano (rehearsal only)**: Two staves in bass clef, 3/4 time signature. The top staff begins in the second measure with a *pp* dynamic and "Off" instruction, mirroring the Bass 1 part. The bottom staff begins in the second measure with a *pp* dynamic and "Off" instruction, mirroring the Bass 2 part. Both staves feature triplets in the second and fourth measures.

The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the second, third, and fourth measures are in 4/4 time. A large "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid diagonally across the page.

5

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

pp 3 this

p 3

p 3

ppp 3 this

p 3

5

Pno.

ppp 3

p 3

8

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

sand

sand

8

Pno.

11

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

stone,

stone,

stone,

stone,

stone,

stone,

stone,

stone,

an au - tumn

pp

pp

p

p

p

p

p

pp

11

Pno.

p

p

14

Musical score for voices and instruments, measures 14-17. The score is written for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), Bass 2 (B2), and Piano (Pno.). The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The tempo is marked *p* (piano). The lyrics are: "an au - tumn flo - wer ang - les the breeze; an au - tumn flo - wer ang - les".

S1: an au - tumn
S2: flo - wer ang - les the breeze;
A1: an au - tumn flo - wer ang - les
A2: -
T1: -
T2: -
B1: -
B2: -

14

Piano accompaniment for measures 14-17. The piano part is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The melody is primarily in the right hand, with some accompaniment in the left hand.

Pno.:

18

S 1
flo - wer ang - les the breeze;

S 2

A 1
the breeze;

A 2
p
an au - - - tumn

T 1
p
an

T 2

B 1

B 2

18

Pno.

21

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

flo - wer ang - les the breeze;

au - - - tumn flo - wer ang - les the breeze;

p an au - tumn flo - wer ang - les ang - les the breeze;

p an au - - - tumn flo - wer

p an au - tumn flo - wer

21

Pno.

24

mf *pp*

S 1 three cir - - -

S 2 hawks cir - - -

A 1 laze cir - - -

A 2

T 1

T 2 ang - les the breeze;

B 1 ang - les the breeze;

B 2 ang - les the breeze;

24

mf *pp*

Pno.

27

S 1
S 2
A 1
A 2
T 1
T 2
B 1
B 2

cles;
cir - - - - - cles; cir -

cles;
cir - - - - - cles; cir -

cles;
cir - - - - - cles; cir -

pp
cir - - - - - cles;

pp
cir - - - - - cles;

pp
cir - - - - - cles;

27

Pno.

sempre pp

29

S 1
cles; cir - - - - - cles;

S 2
cles; cir - - - - - cles;

A 1
cles; cir - - - - - cles;

A 2
cir - - - - - cles; cir - - - - -

T 1
cir - - - - - cles; cir - - - - -

T 2
cir - - - - - cles; cir - - - - -

B 1
mp
men wade in

B 2
mp
men wade in rolled pants,

29

Pno.
mp

31

Musical score for voices and piano, measures 31-34. The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal parts (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, Bass 2) and Piano part are shown. The lyrics are: "cir - - - - - cles; cir - - - - -", "cles; cir - - - - -", "cles; cir - - - - -", "cles; cir - - - - -", "cles; cir - - - - -", "cles; cir - - - - -", "rolled - - - - - pants, rolled", "rolled - - - - - pants, their". The piano part includes a dynamic marking of *mf*.

33

S 1
----- cles;

S 2
----- cles;

A 1
----- cles;

A 2
----- cles;

T 1
----- cles;

T 2
----- cles; *mf*
their words are

B 1
mf
pants, their words are loose

B 2
words are loose

33

Pno.
mf

36

S 1 *mf* their words are

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1 *mf* their words are loose

T 2 loose

B 1

B 2

36

Pno.

39

S 1 loose

S 2 *mf* their words are loose

A 1 *f* laid ov-er the

A 2 *f* laid ov-er the

T 1 *f* vow-els

T 2 vow - els

B 1 vow - els

B 2 vow - els

39

Pno.

42

rit.

S 1
vow-els

S 2
vow-els

A 1
wa-ter,

A 2
wa-ter,

T 1
f the wind a low voice drift - - - - - *p* ing.

T 2
f the wind a low voice drift - - - - - *p* ing.

B 1
f the wind a low voice drift - - - - - *p* ing.

B 2
f the wind a low voice drift - - - - - *p* ing.

42

rit.

Pno.

47

Tempo I ♩ = 40

f (sempre)

S 1 Off this sand - stone, an au-tumn flo-wer ang-les the breeze; three

S 2 Off this sand - stone, an au-tumn flo-wer ang-les the breeze; hawks

A 1 Off this sand - stone, off this sand - stone, laze

A 2 Off this sand - stone,

T 1 Off this sand - stone, and au-tumn flo-wer ang-les the breeze;

T 2 Off this sand - stone, and au-tumn flo-wer ang-les the breeze;

B 1 Off this sand - stone, off this sand - stone,

B 2 Off this sand - stone,

47

Tempo I ♩ = 40

f

Pno.

51

Musical score for voices and basses. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), and Bass 2 (B2). The lyrics are: "cir - cles, their words are loose" for the upper parts and "men wade in rolled pants, their words are loose" for the lower parts. The second system includes parts for Bass 1 (B1) and Bass 2 (B2) with the same lyrics. The music is written in 2/4 time and features various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

51

Piano accompaniment (Pno.) for the first system. The score is written in 2/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a simpler pattern in the left hand. The lyrics are: "cir - cles, their words are loose".

56

Musical score for voices and piano, measures 56-59. The score is written for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), Bass 2 (B2), and Piano (Pno.). The lyrics are: "vow - els laid ov - er the wa - ter, the wind a low voice". The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 and then to 5/4. A large watermark "SAMPLE" is visible across the score.

56

Piano accompaniment for measures 56-59. The piano part is written for the right and left hands. The lyrics are: "vow - els laid ov - er the wa - ter, the wind a low voice". The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 and then to 5/4.

60

S 1
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and I

S 2
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and I

A 1
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and am

A 2
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and am

T 1
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and

T 2
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and

B 1
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and

B 2
drift - - - - ing. This sand bluff, and

Pno.
60

ff

ff

63

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

f

the

f

one

63

Pno.

f

66

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

mf

sound

mf

up

66

Pno.

mf

70

mp *pp*

S 1
my

S 2
my

A 1
my

A 2
p
breath

T 1
p
breath

T 2

B 1
mp
right,

B 2
mp *p*
right, breath

Pno.
mp *p*

73

S 1 *p parlando* I am the one sound up

S 2 *p parlando* I am the one sound up

A 1

A 2 *ppp*

T 1 *ppp*

T 2 *pp* said

B 1 *pp* said

B 2 *pp* said

73

Pno. *p*

75 *calando*

S 1 *pp* right, my breath, my breath said *ppp* ov - er, ov - er.

S 2 *pp* right, my breath, my breath said *ppp* ov - er, ov - er.

A 1 *ppp* my breath, ov - er.

A 2 *ppp* my breath, ov - er.

T 1 *ppp* my breath, ov - er.

T 2 *ppp* ov - er, my breath, ov - er.

B 1 *ppp* ov - er, my breath, ov - er.

B 2 *ppp* ov - er, my breath, ov - er.

75 *calando*

Pno. *ppp*