

# Peter Knell

## *Virvatuli* *for orchestra*

Duration: ca. 11 minutes

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## *Virvatuli*

2 Flutes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling Piccolo)  
2 Oboes (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling English Horn)  
2 Clarinets (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling Bass Clarinet)  
2 Bassoons (2<sup>nd</sup> doubling Contrabassoon)

4 Horns  
3 Trumpets  
3 Trombones  
Tuba

Timpani  
3 Percussion

Harp

Strings

Duration: ca. 11 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

*Virvatuli* was composed between February and July, 1997, while I was a Fulbright Fellow in Finland. The title is the Finnish word for “will-o’-the-wisp”, the phosphorescence of methane gas in swamps. It also means a delusive and illusory hope, goal, or aim. I tried to capture the eeriness and otherworldliness of the first aspect of the title, while at the same time realizing the second aspect structurally. The opening insect calls represent reality; the orchestra, hope and idealism. A battle ensues in which hope emerges triumphant, yet before a final resolution can be achieved, it reveals its illusory nature and disintegrates, leaving only the insects... and emptiness. Cynical? Possibly, but it is only in those moments of idealism that we can approach beauty, and that in itself is a kind of truth.

*Virvatuli* received First Prize in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra New Music Competition and Second Prize in the International Witold Lutoslawski Composers Competition.

C Score

# Virvatuli

Peter Knell (1997)

Misterioso  $\text{♩} = 60$

5

Timpani *pppp* (sempre) *ca. 5"*

Percussion 1 *ca. 5"* 4 wood blocks with wire brushes *ppp* press brushes against block and flick wrist *ppp*

Percussion 2 *ca. 5"* egg rattle *ppp* 3

Percussion 3 *ca. 5"* small caxixi (basket rattle) *ppp* 5 *pp*

10

Timpani

Perc. 1 ord. *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* 3 *pp* vibra slap *ppp*

Perc. 3 *ppp* 3 *pp* sand blocks *ppp* 3 *ppp* 9 *ppp* 9

15

Timpani

Perc. 1 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp* 9

Perc. 3 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp*

20

Bn. I

Bn. II/C-Bn

Timpani

Perc. 1 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp*

Perc. 3 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp*

Harp *ppp*

Vel. muted only half *ppp* *tr* *pp*

D.B. *ppp* *pp* sul pont. 6 6 6 6 *ppp*

The notated pitches should be fingered, but the fundamental should not sound. A whispering sound with the notated contour should result.



50

Timp. *pppp* (sempre) 4 wood blocks

Perc. 1 *ppp* 5 egg rattle

Perc. 2 *ppp* 6

Perc. 3 *ppp* 7 caxixi

55

Timp.

Perc. 1 *p*

Perc. 2 *p*

Perc. 3 *p*

Vel. *pp* sul pont. *p*

D.B. *pp* *p*

60

Ob. I *p* *ppp*

Ob. III/E.H. *p* *ppp*

Cl. I *p* *ppp*

Cl. II *p* *ppp*

Bn. I *p* *ppp*

Timp.

Perc. 1 *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp*

Perc. 3 *ppp*

Harp *pp* *p* *pp*

Vln. II *p* *mp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *p* *pp*

Vel. *ppp* ord. *ppp* tutti ord. *ppp*

D.B. *ppp*

65

70

L'istesso tempo

Fl. I *mp* *ppp*

Fl. II/picc. *mp* *ppp*

Ob. I *mp* *ppp*

Tpts. I, II, III *pp* (sempre)

Timp.

Perc. 1 glockenspiel *ppp*

Perc. 2 egg rattle *ppp* *pp*

Harp *mp* *pp* C' D' G' E G B *pp*

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *p*

Vcl. *ppp*

D.B. *pp*

**L'istesso tempo**

pizz. *pp*

pizz. *pp*

pizz. *pp*

pizz. *pp*

*pp*

intenso *mf*

ord. intenso *pp* *mf*

75

Fl. I *pp* *pp*

Fl. II/picc. piccolo *pp* *pp*

Cl. I *pp* *pp*

Cl. II *pp* *pp*

Bn. I *pp* *pp*

Tpts. I, II, III *pp* *pp*

Timp. *ppp* *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* *pp*

Perc. 3 caxixi *ppp* *pp*

Vcl. *pp* *f* *pp*

D.B. *pp* *f* *pp*



FL I  
 FL II/picc.  
 Ob. I  
 Ob. III/E.H.  
 Cl. I  
 Cl. II  
 Bn. I  
 Perc. 1  
 Perc. 2  
 Perc. 3  
 Vln. I  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vcl.  
 D.B.

**Sempre l'istesso tempo e misterioso**

FL II/picc.  
 Ob. I  
 Ob. III/E.H.  
 Bn. I  
 Tbn. I, II  
 Tbn. III/Tba.  
 Timp.  
 Vln. I  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vcl.  
 D.B.



Musical score for page 115, featuring woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The score is written in 3/2 time and includes the following parts:

- Fl. I:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Fl. II/picc.:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Cl. I:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p*.
- Cl. II:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure.
- Bn. I:** Bass clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Bn. II/C-Bn:** Bass clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Perc. I:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Harp:** Treble and Bass clefs, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *p* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Vln. I:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *mp* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Vln. II:** Treble clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *sfp* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Vla.:** Bass clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *sfp* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- Vel.:** Bass clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *sfp* and a sixteenth-note rest.
- D.B.:** Bass clef, starting with a sixteenth-note figure marked *sfp* and a sixteenth-note rest.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings (*p*, *mp*, *sfp*). A large watermark "SAMPLE" is visible across the page.











155

Brillante ♩ = 160

Fl. I

Fl. II/picc.

Ob. I

Ob. III/E.H.

Cl. I

Cl. II

Bn. I

Bn. II/C-Bn

mf

tr

f

Hrn. I, III

Hrn. II, IV

stopped

f

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

tr

mf

f

ratchet

f

cabasa

mp

f

maracas

p

f

slapstick

f

Brillante ♩ = 160

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vel.

D.B.

mp

mf

f

f

f

f

ff

\* Bartok pizz.

160 **Con fuoco**  $\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  ( $\text{♩} = 120$ )

165

FL I

FL II/picc.

Ob. I

Ob. III/E.H.

Cl. I

Cl. II

Bn. I

Bn. II/C-Bn

Hrn. I, III

Hrn. II, IV

Tpts. I, II, III  
straight mute(s)

Tbn. I, II

Tbn. III/Tbn.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Harp

**Con fuoco**  $\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  ( $\text{♩} = 120$ )

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.



**Pesante** ♩ = 60

180

CI. I  
*pp*

CI. II  
*pp*

Bn. I  
*pp*

Bn. II/C-Bn  
*pp*

Tbn. I, II  
*ppp*

Tbn. III/Tba.  
*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

**Pesante** ♩ = 60

Vln. I  
*pp*

Vln. II  
*pp*

Vla.  
*pp*

Vcl.  
*pizz.*

D.B.  
*pizz.*  
*pp*

**Piu mosso** ♩ = 69

185

Fl. I  
*p*

Fl. II/picc.  
*p*

Cl. I  
*p*  
flute-like

Harp  
*pp*  
non arp.

**Piu mosso** ♩ = 69

Vln. I  
*pp*  
2 soli  
non vib.

Vln. II  
*pp*  
sola  
non vib.

Vla.  
*pp*

Vcl.  
*pizz.*

D.B.  
*p*



Capriccioso ♩ = 152

205

210

Fl. I, II, III

Ob. I, II, III

Cl. I, II (Eb Clarinet ad lib.)

Bn. I, II/III

Hrn. I, II, III

Harp

Capriccioso ♩ = 152

Vln. I, II

Vla.

Vcl.

D.B.









FL I  
FL II/picc.  
Ob. I  
Ob. III/E.H.  
Cl. I  
Cl. II  
Bn. I  
Bn. II/C-Bn.  
Hrn. I, III  
Hrn. II, IV  
Tpts. I, II, III  
Tbn. I, II  
Tbn. III/Tba.  
Timp.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Perc. 3  
Harp

open bells up  
a2  
ff  
bells up  
ff  
bells down  
stopped  
bells down  
stopped  
harmon mute(s), stem removed  
mf  
tr  
mf  
tr  
p  
mf  
mf

♩ = 176 Disciogliendo (dissolving) ♩ = 184

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Via.  
Vcl.  
D.B.

ff  
ff  
ff  
ff  
mf  
mp  
mf  
mp

245 250 rit. -----

Fl. I  
Fl. II/picc.  
Ob. I  
Ob. III/E.  
Hrn. I, III  
Hrn. II, IV  
Tpts. I, II, III  
Tbn. I, II  
Tbn. III/Tba.  
Perc. 2

rit. -----

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vcl.  
D.B.

Tempo I  $\text{♩} = 60$  255

260

Timp.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Perc. 3

4 wood blocks with wire brushes  
egg rattle  
caxixi

Timp.   
 Perc. 1   
 Perc. 2   
 Perc. 3   
 Vel.   
 D.B.

Musical score for measures 265-270, percussion and double bass section. The percussion parts (Timp., Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Perc. 3) feature complex rhythmic patterns with various note values and rests. The double bass (D.B.) part includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*, along with performance instructions like "sul pont." and "muted div. sul pont." in the latter part of the page.

Ob. I   
 Ob. III/E.H.   
 Cl. I   
 Cl. II   
 Bn. I   
 Timp.   
 Perc. 1   
 Perc. 2   
 Perc. 3   
 Harp   
 Vln. II   
 Vla.   
 Vcl.   
 D.B.

Musical score for measures 270-275, woodwinds, strings, and harp section. This page includes parts for Oboe I, Oboe III/E.H., Clarinet I, Clarinet II, Bassoon I, Harp, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines with various dynamics like *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*. The harp part features arpeggiated figures. The double bass part includes performance instructions such as "sul pont.", "muted", "ord. tr.", and "tutti tr.".

275

Timp. *pppp* (sempre)  
 Perc. 1 *ppp* 7 *ppp* 7 *pp*  
 Perc. 2 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp* 9 *pp* *ppp* 2  
 Perc. 3 *ppp* 3 *pp* sand blocks *ppp* 5 *ppp* 7

280

285

Timp.  
 Perc. 1 *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp* *ppp* 3 *pp* *ppp* *ppp*  
 Perc. 2 *pp* 3 *ppp* 5 *pp* *ppp* *ppp* 3 *pp*  
 Perc. 3 *pp* *ppp* 3 *ppp* 5 *pp* *ppp* 5 *ppp* 5 *ppp* 5 *pp*  
 D.B. sul pont. *ppp* 6 *pp* 6

290

Cl. I *pp* *ppp*  
 Cl. II *pp* *ppp*  
 Bn. I *pp* *ppp*  
 Bn. II/C-Bn. bassoon *pp* *ppp*  
 Timp.  
 Perc. 1 *pp* *ppp*  
 Perc. 2 *ppp* *ppp* 7 *ppp* *ppp*  
 Perc. 3 *ppp* 5 *ppp*  
 Harp *pp* 6  
 Vla. *pp* *p* 6  
 Vcl. *ppp* 6 *ppp* *pp* *pp*  
 D.B. *ppp* 6 3 3

295 300

Timp. *ppp*

Perc. 1 *ppp* *ppp* *pp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp*

Perc. 3 *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

305

Timp. *ppp*

Perc. 1 *ppp* *ppp* *pp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *pp*

Perc. 3 *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *pp*

D.B. *ppp* *pp* *sul pont.*

morendo 310 315

Timp. *ppp*

Perc. 1 *ppp* *ppp*

Perc. 2 *ppp* *ppp* *pppp*

Perc. 3 *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

D.B. *ppp* *ppp*