

# Peter Knell

## *Vortex*

*for string orchestra (arr)*

Duration: ca. 5 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

*Vortex* was originally composed in 1995 for Pierrot ensemble plus percussion and was later arranged for string orchestra. It is a short, energetic piece that begins with a burst of energy. A mysterious passage ensues, punctuated by occasional outbursts, and builds gradually until the opening intensity is regained. At that point, the opening outburst is juxtaposed with two contrasting ideas--a disjunct triplet motive and a restless, hovering motive--in rapid succession. The opening outburst returns to close off the section, leading into a dreamlike passage that features the strings in triple-octaves, accompanied by the marimba and piano. As this intensifies, the cello takes the lead in its lowest octave, ushering in a return of the opening outburst. This subsides into the triplet idea, which becomes an ostinato in the piano. From here the intensity builds to the end of the piece, with all of the main ideas returning in varied form. The concluding peroration is the final embodiment of the opening outburst.

# Vortex

## for string orchestra

Presto (♩ = 152)

rit. ----- Misterioso (♩ = 54)

Violin 1 *ff*

Violin 2 *ff*

Viola *ff*

Violoncello *ff* *tr* *tr* *murmuring tr* *pp* *murmuring tr*

Double Bass *ff* *pp*

⑥

non vibr. *pp* (sempre)

non vibr. *pp* (sempre)

*tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6

*tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6 *tr* 6

⑫

Presto

*ff*

*ff*

sola *p*

tutti *ff*

*ff* *pp* *ff*

*ff* *pp* *ff*

17

pp

sola

p

tr

6

f

p

pp

tutti

pp

tr

6

f

pp

tr

6

pp

tr

6

f

pp

tr

6

21

p

mp

pp

tutti

pp

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

28

p

pp

p

mp

mp

pp

mp

pp

tr

6

tr

6

tr

6

arco

cresc.

accel.

36

*mf* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc.* *mp cresc.*

40 **Presto** (♩ = 152)

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *p* *sul pont*

44

*mp* *mp* *ff* *ff*

48

mf

ord.

mf

mf

mf

ff

ff

ff

ff

51

55

L'istesso tempo

pizz

arco

ff

ff

pp (sempre)

pp (sempre)

ff

ff

ff

ff

sul pont

pp (sempre)

pp (sempre)

sul pont

pp

sul tasto

pp

sul tasto

pp

61

pizz *p*

arco sul tasto *pp*

3

*pp*

pizz *p*

67

*p*

*pp*

*mp* *p*

*p*

*pp*

*mp* *p*

73

3

ord. *pp*

ord. *pp* 5

ord. 5 *pp* 5

pizz *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

arco *p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

79

*molto* *molto* *pp* *mf* *ff*

83

*ff*

87

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

92

Musical score for measures 92-96. The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 92 starts with a triplet in the Violin I part marked *p*. Measure 93 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *pp* and *pizz*. Measure 94 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *cresc.*. Measure 95 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *p*. Measure 96 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *p*. The Violin I part has a triplet marked *f* in measure 93. The Viola part has a triplet marked *p* in measure 93. The Double Bass part has a triplet marked *p* in measure 93. The score includes performance instructions such as *sul pont* and *pizz*.

97

Musical score for measures 97-100. The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 97 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *f*. Measure 98 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *mp*. Measure 99 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *mp*. Measure 100 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *mf*. The Violin I part has a triplet marked *f* in measure 97. The Viola part has a triplet marked *mp* in measure 97. The Double Bass part has a triplet marked *mp* in measure 97. The score includes performance instructions such as *sul pont* and *ord.*.

101

Musical score for measures 101-104. The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 101 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *ff*. Measure 102 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *ff*. Measure 103 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *ff*. Measure 104 has a triplet in the Cello part marked *f*. The Violin I part has a triplet marked *ff* in measure 101. The Viola part has a triplet marked *ff* in measure 101. The Double Bass part has a triplet marked *ff* in measure 101. The score includes performance instructions such as *snap pizz* and *sempre*.

105

ff

f

f

ff

ff

*p*

*ff*

*p*

110

ff

f

ff

f

ff

*p* (sempre)

115

*mp*

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

119

Musical score for measures 119-121. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and a double bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 119 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 120 features a *cresc.* marking in the bottom-most bass staff. Measure 121 has a *mf* dynamic. The music includes triplets and various articulations such as accents and slurs.

122

Musical score for measures 122-124. The score is written for five staves. Measure 122 starts with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 123 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 124 has a *f* dynamic. The music includes triplets and various articulations such as accents and slurs.

125

Musical score for measures 125-128. The score is written for five staves. Measure 125 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 126 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 127 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 128 has a *piu f* dynamic. The music includes triplets and various articulations such as accents and slurs.

Prestissimo

129

Musical score for measures 129-131. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, one bass clef, and two more bass clefs. The first two staves are marked *piu f*. The other three staves are marked *fff*. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many accents and slurs.

132

Musical score for measures 132-134. The score is written for five staves. The music continues with a complex rhythmic pattern, featuring many accents and slurs.

135

Musical score for measures 135-137. The score is written for five staves. The music continues with a complex rhythmic pattern, featuring many accents and slurs. The final measure of the system includes a *harmonic gliss* instruction and a *fff* dynamic marking.