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Lancaster, David (2017) The Dark Gate -
for soprano and piano. [Composition]

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The Dark Gate



For soprano and piano

By David Lancaster

Poetry by David Vogel



The Dark Gate

This music sets five poems by David Vogel (1891-1944), sung without a break:

- 1) On Summer Evenings
- 2) How Can I See You Love
- 3) An Autumn Day will Breathe
- 4) With Gentle Fingers
- 5) There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

In his work and life Vogel was always an outsider. In Vienna (during WWI) he was imprisoned as a Russian subject; he subsequently adopted Austrian nationality then emigrated to Palestine before returning to settle in Paris. At the outbreak of WWII Vogel was arrested in France as an Austrian subject; on the Nazi invasion of France he was released and then re-arrested as a Jew before being transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered in 1944.

Today Vogel is chiefly remembered for two short novels but there are also some thirty poems. The only anthology published in his lifetime was *Before the Dark Gate* (Vienna, 1923) from which I take my title, but some of the poems I have set were written later. With the benefit of hindsight they seem deeply imbued with the horror of the impending holocaust but this is only made explicit in the final poem, which is probably his last work.

I learned about Vogel and his poetry two or three years ago but after visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau in January 2016 I felt compelled to compose this piece, to re-tell Vogel's words and to reflect on my own memories of that place.

1

On summer evenings
the blue mists rise
From streams, and hang trembling
Among evening whispers.

At the edges of forests
Young girls sit alone
Their hair hanging loose
Weeping tears over nothing

2

How can I see you love
Standing alone
Amid storms of grief
Without feeling my heart shake (tremble)

A deep night
Blacker than the blackness of your eyes
Has fallen silently
On the world

And is touching your hair.

Come,
My hand will clasp your dreaming
Hand
And I shall lead you between the nights,
Through the pale mists of childhood.

3

An autumn day will breathe.
With a pale, trembling hand
It will slowly strip the black dress
From your sleeping village.

In front of your white house
He naked linden will stand
Sadly swaying.

I shall return, lonely,
Out of the night
Bow gently to her and say:
Take my greeting to your mistress.

But you
Will go on softly sleeping on your bed.

4

With gentle fingers
The rain is softly
Playing sad melodies
On the black instrument of night.

Now we are sitting in darkness,
Each in their own house
Listening to the rain
Telling our sorrow.

For we have no more words.
Our feet have been leadened
By day.
There is no dance
Left in them.

5

There is one last solitary coach about to leave.
Let us get in and go,
For it won't wait.

I have seen young girls going softly
With sad faces
That look ashamed and sorry
Like purple sunsets.

And chubby pink children
Who went simply
Because they were called.

And I've seen men
Who stepped proud and straight through the
streets of the world,
Far and wide,
They too got in calmly
And left.

And we are the last.
Day is declining.
The last, solitary coach is about to leave.
Let us too get in quietly
And go,
For it won't wait.

The Dark Gate

On Summer Evenings

David Vogel (1891-1944?)

David Lancaster

Adagio ♩=60 *p* languid, distant

On sum-mer eve-nings the blue mists rise

Adagio ♩=60

quasi fp

8

from streams and hang trem- bling a- mong eve- ning whis- pers.

14

mp

At the ed- ges of for- ests_ young girls sit a-

p

19 *mf* *mp*

lone, their hair hang- ing down. weep- ing

23 *p*

tears o - ver no - thing.

27

3/4

2. How Can I See You Love?

31 **Poco più mosso** ♩=72 *mp*

How _____ can_ I

Poco più mosso ♩=72

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

35 *mp* *mf*

see you _____ my love _____

p *mp* *mf* *f*

39 *mp*

Stan - ding a -

p

43

lone a - mid storms of grief

p *mp* *f*

47

with - out feel - ing my heart

mf *f* *p* *mp* *mf*

50

shake. — A deep night

p

8vb

54

blacker than the black-ness of your eyes has fal - len

(8)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 54, 55, and 56. The vocal line is in 4/4 time. Measure 54 has two triplet eighth notes. Measure 55 has a quarter note followed by a quarter rest. Measure 56 has a quarter note followed by a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a quarter-note bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of (8) is indicated at the bottom.

57

pp

si-lent-ly_ on the world. And is touch - ing your

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 57, 58, 59, and 60. The vocal line starts in 4/4 time and changes to 3/4 time in measure 59. Measure 57 has a triplet eighth note. Measure 58 has a quarter note. Measure 59 has a triplet eighth note. Measure 60 has a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a quarter-note bass line in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *pp* and *p*.

60

mf

hair. Come, my hand will

8^{vb}

Detailed description: This system contains measures 60, 61, 62, and 63. The vocal line starts in 4/4 time and changes to 2/4 time in measure 62. Measure 60 has a quarter note. Measure 61 has a quarter rest. Measure 62 has a quarter note. Measure 63 has a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a quarter-note bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present. A marking of 8^{vb} is at the bottom.

64

clasp your dream-ing hand, And I shall

mp

8^{vb}

Detailed description: This system contains measures 64 through 67. The vocal line starts in 2/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "clasp your dream-ing hand," followed by a measure rest, and then "And I shall" in a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, while the left hand provides a bass line with a dotted half note in the first measure and a half note in the second. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the piano part. A dashed line at the bottom indicates an 8^{vb} (8^{va}) transposition.

68

lead you bet - ween the nights.

mp

8

Detailed description: This system contains measures 68 through 70. The vocal line continues in 2/4 time with the lyrics "lead you bet - ween the nights." The piano accompaniment continues with triplets and slurs in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present. A dashed line at the bottom indicates an 8^{va} transposition.

71

Through the pale_ mists_ of child - hood_

mp

p

8

Detailed description: This system contains measures 71 through 73. The vocal line begins with a measure rest, then the lyrics "Through the pale_ mists_ of child - hood_". The piano accompaniment features triplets and slurs in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *mp* and *p*. A dashed line at the bottom indicates an 8^{va} transposition.

75

(hums) *pp*

Musical score for measures 75-77. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system (measures 75-76) features a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system (measure 77) continues the piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked *mm*. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. A rehearsal mark (8) is indicated at the beginning of the first system.

78

Musical score for measures 78-81. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four systems. The first system (measures 78-79) features a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system (measures 80-81) features a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes and a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. A rehearsal mark (8) is indicated at the beginning of the first system.

3. An Autumn Day will Breathe

84 **Lento** ♩=56 *mp slentando*

An au-tumn day will breath, with a pale_ trem-bling hand_____

Lento ♩=56

88

It will slow - ly strip the black___ dress from your sleep- ing_ vill- age.---

92 *slentando*

The na-ked lin-den will stand___ sad-ly sway ing___ And I shall re - turn_____

97

lone-ly, out_ of the night_ Bow gent-ly to_ her and say:

102 *slentando*

Take my greet-ing to your mis-tress. But you will go_ on_ sleep-ing so

106

rall. poco a poco

soft-ly on your bed_

rall. poco a poco

4. With Gentle Fingers

112 **Piu Mosso** ♩=72

Musical score for measures 112-116. The piece is in 4/4 time with a tempo of Piu Mosso (♩=72). The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand features a bass line with triplets and a pedal point. Dynamics include *f* and *pp*. Pedal markings are present at the end of the section.

117

Musical score for measures 117-120. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and accents, and the left hand features a bass line with triplets and a pedal point. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*. Pedal markings are present at the end of the section.

121

Musical score for measures 121-124. The right hand has a vocal line with lyrics: "With gen-tle fin-gers the rain is soft-ly play-ing". The left hand features a bass line with triplets and a pedal point. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. Pedal markings are present at the end of the section.

124

sad me-lo-dies on the black in-stru-ments of night.

f

Ped.

128

p

Now we are sitt-ing in

p

132

dark-ness, each in their own house. List'-ning to the rain,

p

136

tell - ing our sor - row. —

f *pp*

Ped.

140

p

For we have no more

f

Ped.

144

words — Our feet have been lead-en'd by day. There is no dance — left

p

148

in them. ah mm

mf *p* *pp*

3 5

Red.

153

ah

p *pp*

3 4 4

5. There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

158 **Lento, rubato** $\text{♩} = 52$
p $\overset{3}{\text{—}}$

There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach a-bout to leave. Let us get

Lento, rubato $\text{♩} = 52$
p

163 *mp* *pp* *mp*

in — and go. For it won't wait. And I have seen young

168 *p*

girls go-ing soft - ly — with sad — fa-ces that look a - sham'd and

172

sor-ry like pur-ple sun - sets. And chub-by pink

177

child-ren who went sim-ply be-cause they were call'd. And I've seen men who stepp'd

181

proud and straight through the streets of the world far and wide They

185 *mf* *mp*

too got in calm-ly and left. And we are the last. Day is de

Poco meno mosso al fine

190 *p*

cli-ning. There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach, a-bout to

Poco meno mosso al fine

195 *slentando* *rall. poco a poco* *pp*

leave. Let us get in too and go, soft-ly, For it won't

rall. poco a poco

199

wait.

pp

ppp