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<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1691-4320> (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

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

14 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

mp *p* *f*

47

with-out feel-ing my heart

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, a quarter note with a flat, and a quarter note. Measure 56 has a quarter note with a flat, an eighth note, and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dashed line with the number 8 indicates an octave transposition for the bass line.

57

pp

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

p

mp

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 58, then back to 4/4 in measure 60. Measure 57 has a triplet eighth note. Measure 58 has a quarter note with a sharp and a quarter note. Measure 59 has a quarter note with a sharp, an eighth note, and a quarter note. Measure 60 has a quarter note with a flat, an eighth note, and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *pp* and *p* in the piano part, and *mp* in the vocal part.

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 with a sharp, an eighth note, and a quarter note. Measure 63 has a quarter note with a flat, an eighth note, and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dashed line with the number 8^{vb} indicates an octave transposition for the bass line.

64

mp

clasp your dream-ing hand,

And I shall

Musical score for measures 64-67. The vocal line (treble clef) has a 2/4 time signature that changes to 3/4 at measure 65. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a 2/4 time signature that changes to 3/4 at measure 65. The piano part includes triplets in both hands and an 8^{vb} marking in the bass line. Dynamics include *mp* and accents.

68

lead you bet - ween the nights.

Musical score for measures 68-70. The vocal line (treble clef) continues with the lyrics. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a 3/4 time signature and includes triplets in both hands. Dynamics include *mp* and accents.

71

mp

Through the pale_ mists_ of child - hood_

Musical score for measures 71-73. The vocal line (treble clef) has a 3/4 time signature and includes a triplet in measure 71. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a 3/4 time signature and includes triplets in both hands. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*.

(8)

75

(hums) *pp*

Musical score for measures 75-77. The score is in 4/4 time. Measure 75: Treble clef, whole rest, quarter rest, eighth rest, quarter note G4, eighth notes F4, E4, D4, quarter note C4. A slur covers the notes from G4 to C4, with a '3' above it. A 'mm' marking is below the slur. Bass clef: quarter note G3, quarter note G3. Measure 76: Treble clef, quarter note B3, eighth notes A3, G3, quarter note F3, eighth notes E3, D3, quarter note C3. A slur covers the notes from B3 to C3, with a '3' above it. Bass clef: quarter note G3, quarter note G3. Measure 77: Treble clef, quarter note B3, eighth notes A3, G3, quarter note F3, eighth notes E3, D3, quarter note C3. A slur covers the notes from B3 to C3, with a '3' above it. Bass clef: quarter note G#3, quarter note G#3. A dashed line with '(8)' is below the bass clef line.

78

Musical score for measures 78-81. The score is in 4/4 time. Measure 78: Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef: quarter note G#3, quarter note G#3. Measure 79: Treble clef, quarter note A#3, eighth notes G#3, F#3, quarter note E#3, eighth notes D#3, C#3, quarter note B3. A slur covers the notes from A#3 to B3, with a '3' below it. Bass clef: quarter note G#3, quarter note G#3. Measure 80: Treble clef, quarter note B3, eighth notes A3, G3, quarter note F3, eighth notes E3, D3, quarter note C3. A slur covers the notes from B3 to C3, with a '3' below it. Bass clef: quarter note G#3, quarter note G#3. Measure 81: Treble clef, quarter note B3, eighth notes A3, G3, quarter note F3, eighth notes E3, D3, quarter note C3. A slur covers the notes from B3 to C3, with a '3' below it. Bass clef: quarter note G#3, quarter note G#3. A dashed line with '(8)' is below the bass clef line. A '4/4' time signature change is indicated at the start of measure 81. An '8va' marking is above the treble clef line in measure 81, with a dashed line extending to the right. Below the treble clef line in measure 81, there are three double bar lines with a 'b' below each, indicating an octave reduction.

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:

This system contains five measures of music. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment is in grand staff. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4, then back to 3/4, and finally to 4/4. The lyrics are: lone-ly, out_ of the night_ Bow gent-ly to_ her and say: There is a fermata over the final note of the vocal line.

102 *slentando*

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

This system contains four measures of music. The tempo marking is *slentando*. The vocal line is in treble clef. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff. The lyrics are: 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

This system contains five measures of music. The tempo marking is **rall. poco a poco**. The vocal line is in treble clef and includes a triplet in the first measure. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff. The lyrics are: soft-ly on your bed_____

4. With Gentle Fingers

112 **Piu Mosso** ♩=72

Musical score for measures 112-116. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of Piu Mosso (♩=72). The right hand part features a melody with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides accompaniment with triplets and a pedal point. Dynamics include *f* and *pp*. Pedal markings are present at the bottom of the page.

117

Musical score for measures 117-120. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand features a triplet accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*. A pedal marking is present at the bottom of the page.

121

Musical score for measures 121-124. The right hand part includes the lyrics: "With gen-tle fin-gers the rain is soft-ly play-ing". The left hand part features a triplet accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. A pedal marking is present at the bottom of the page.

124

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

f

Ped.

128

Now we are sitt-ing in

p

132

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

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

Ped.

148

in them. ah mm

p *pp*

mf *p*

3

Ped.

153

ah

p *pp*

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

pp *mp*

168 *p*

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

p

172

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

mf *p* *mf*

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

f *pp*

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