Lancaster, David ORCID logoORCID: 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 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.

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.

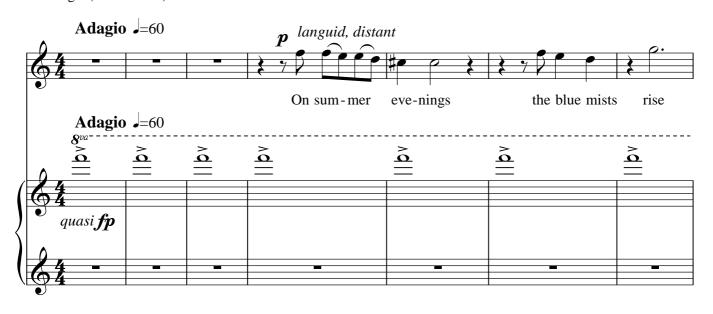
And we are the last. Day is declining. The last, solitary coach is about to leave. Let us too get in quietly And go, For it won't wait.

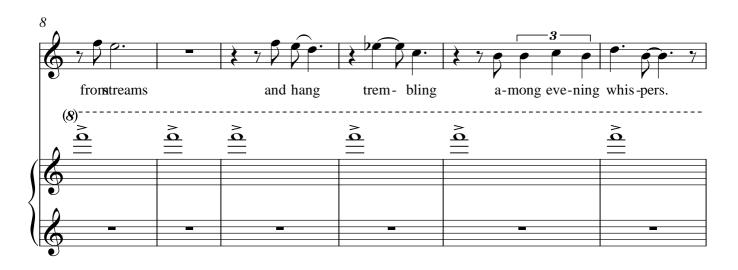
The Dark Gate

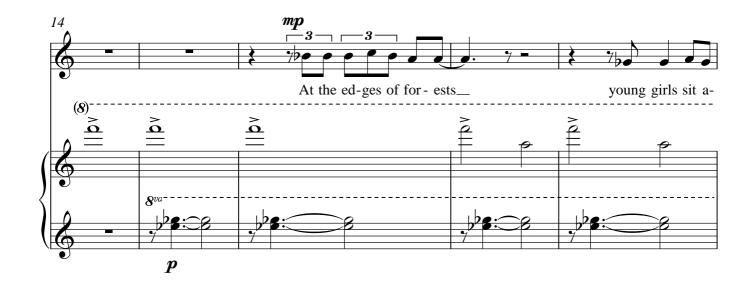
On Summer Evenings

David Vogel (1891-1944?)

David Lancaster

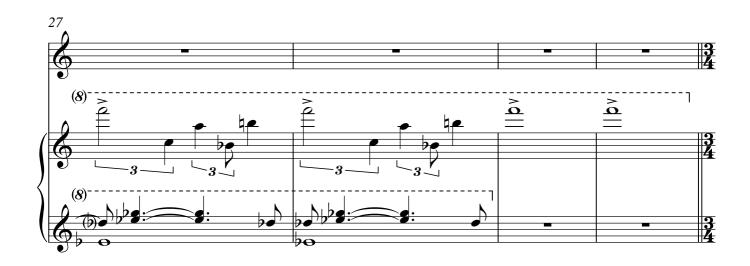






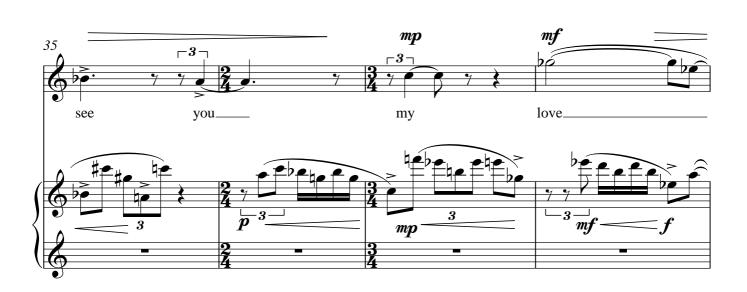


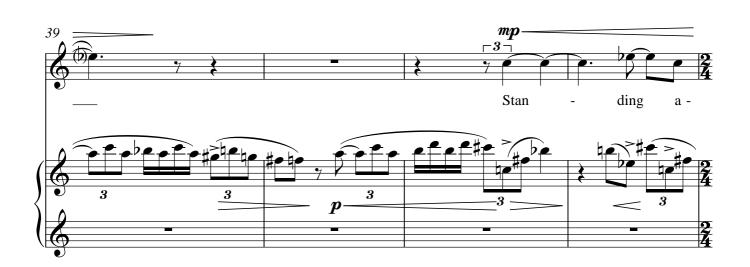


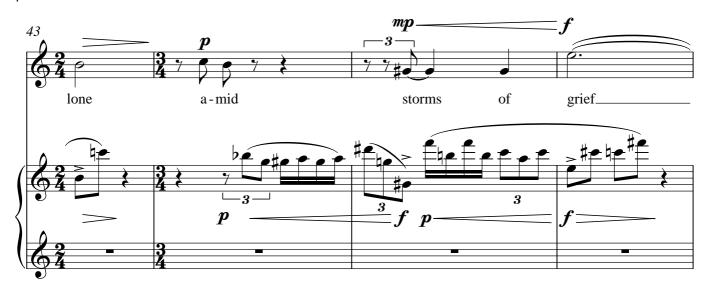


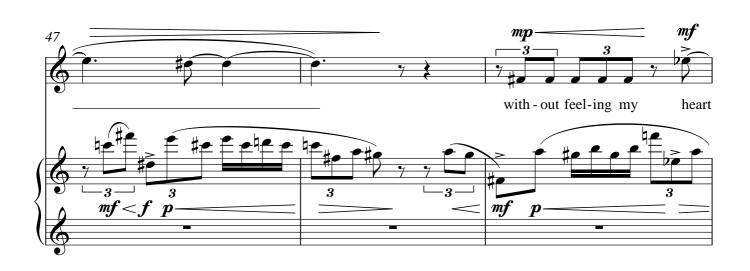
2. How Can I See You Love?

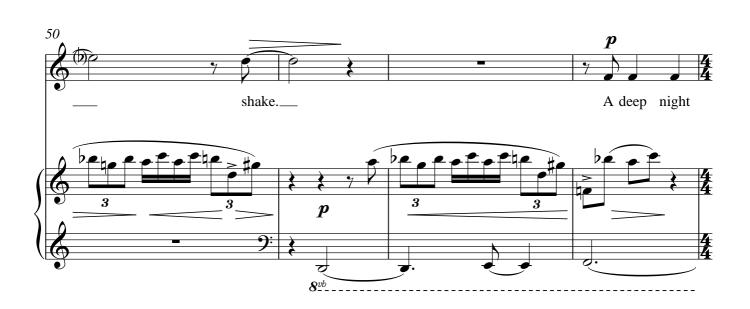


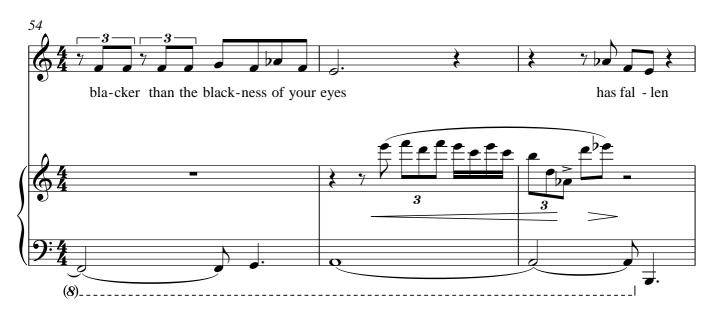




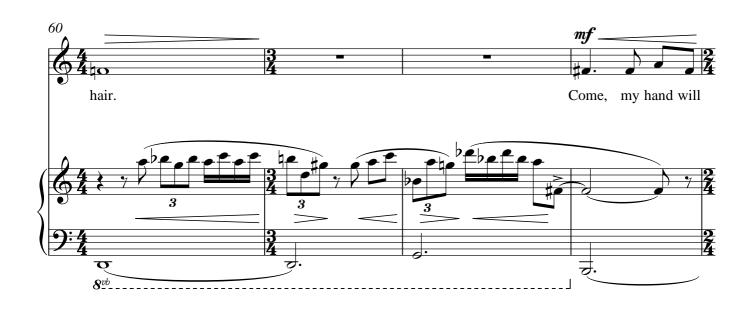


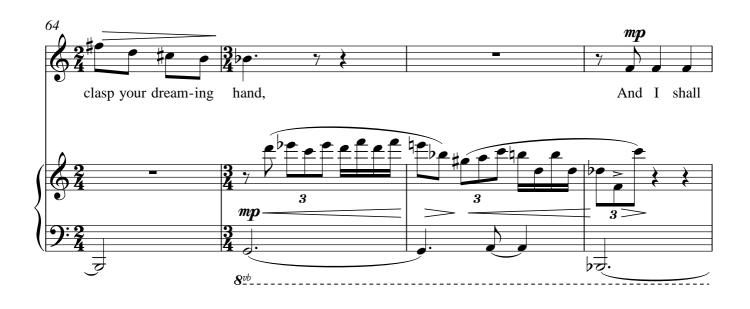


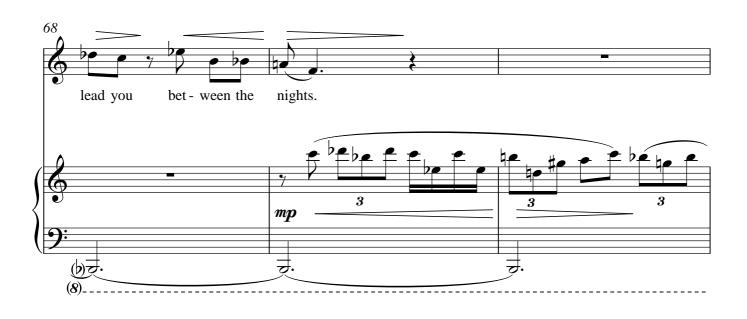


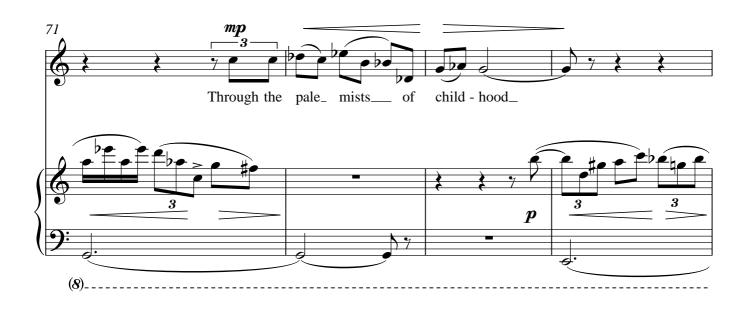


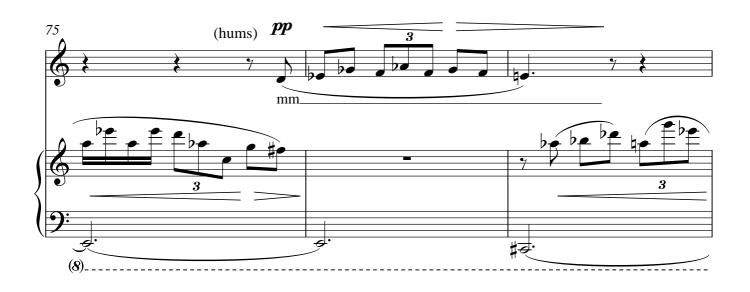


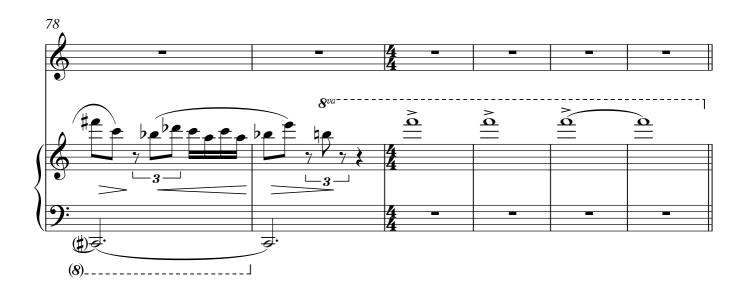






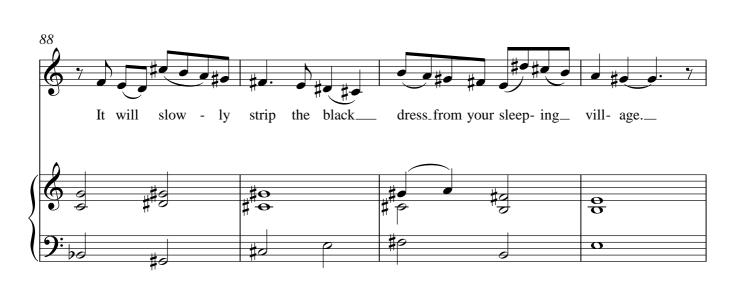


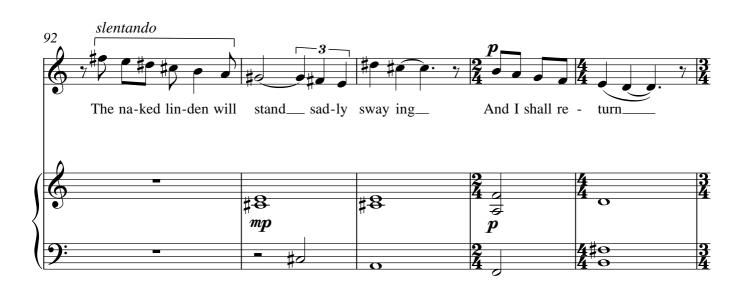


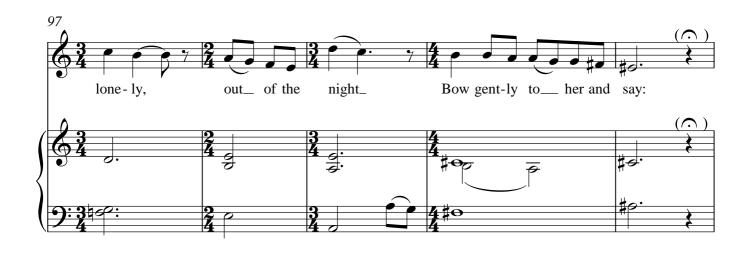


3. An Autumn Day will Breathe





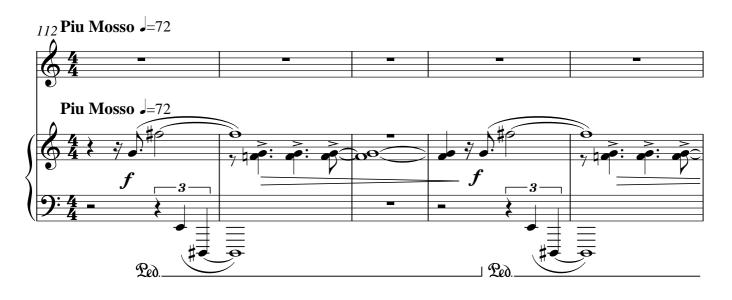


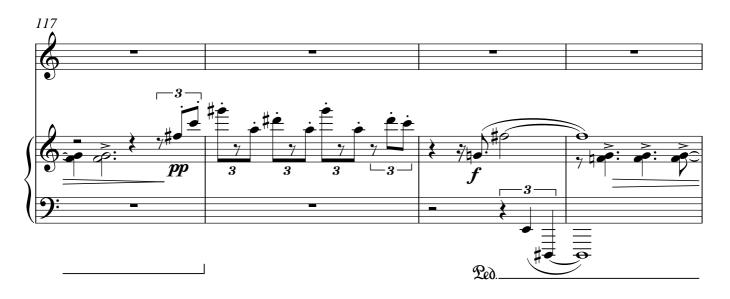


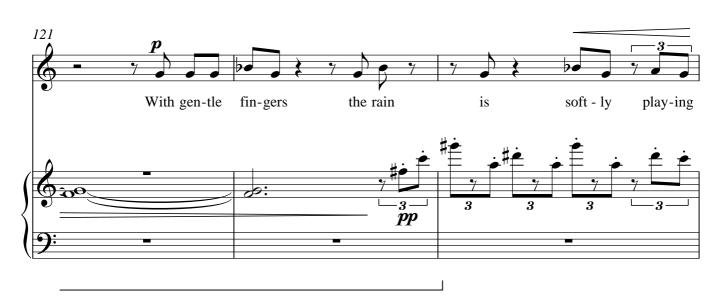


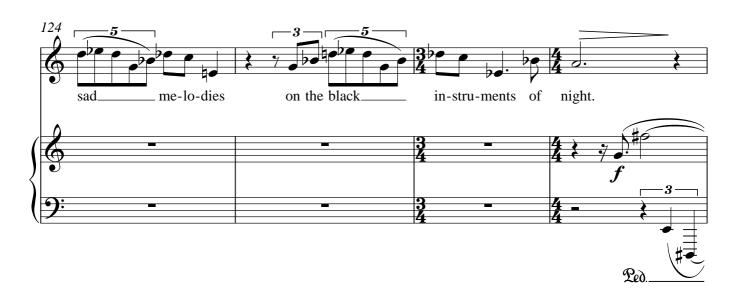


4. With Gentle Fingers





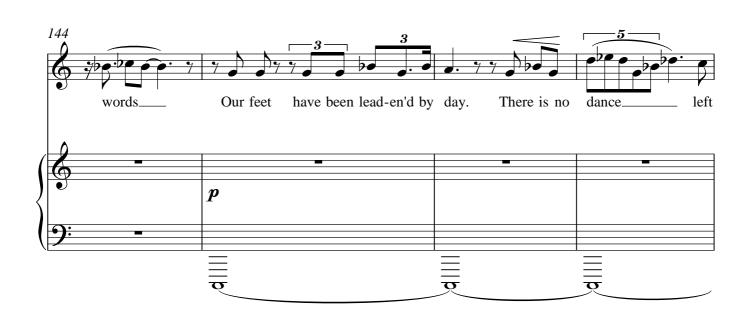












Led.



5. There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

