

*to Beth Griffith*

# Dark Colors

for solo soprano and optional live electronics  
extended version

Composed for *Fifteen Minutes of Fame: written for Beth Griffith*

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## Performance Notes

The score consists of a list of sound sequences and a staff with rhythms and dynamic indications. The performer chooses any sound sequence they desire, then layers it on the pattern of rhythms at whatever point they find suitable (as long as there's enough material for the entire sound sequence) and matches the sounds to the durations indicated. For example, a list that begins with “growl – blowing – held note, A or C-sharp” would match to a pattern of three half notes as: a short growling sound (at the attack point of the first half note), then a full half note of blowing, and then a sung half note, either an A or a C-sharp, choice left to the performer. To determine which sounds should be held for full duration and which shouldn't be, refer to the explanation of sounds. Tempo is chosen by the performer and may be subject to gradual or rapid changes during the performance. For performers' convenience, performances and recordings may change the title to indicate bars and sequence used, e.g. *Dark Colors Extended Version seq. X, mm. Y–Z*. Bar numbers and barlines do not indicate any accents, they merely serve as aids to reading and performing the score.

Assume uniform dynamics throughout the entire duration of the piece, except for noise and blowing sounds, which may vary from *pp* to *f*. Vocal sounds should always have smooth attacks unless the score specifies otherwise (using accent marks). They're invariably variations of the sound /a/, as in *far*, or *luck* (*là* in French, etc.) with the exception of held notes, which may also use a soft version of /i/, as in *see*, or *pin* (*livre* in French, etc.). Any performance should be calm and smooth, a neutral transmission of sounds from a source.

**Large diamond shaped notes** indicate places where the performer stops following the sound sequence for a moment, and simply reads a small sentence aloud, in their normal speaking voice, not too loud. They don't have a duration, so just read the text in a neutral tone of voice while keeping time and waiting for the next sound. The texts may be translated into any language. **Notes with tremolo indications** show places where the corresponding sound should be changed in a tremolo-related way, e.g. by introducing tiny pauses between bits of the sound itself. **Notes with cross-head noteheads**, written on separate staves, indicate foot stomping. It doesn't have to be too loud and/or clearly audible. **Notes with crossed noteheads** indicate obligatory clicks. Insert them between the sounds of the chosen sequence. **Notes without stems** are free in duration and pitch (except that the relationships between them, as indicated in the score, should be observed), and if necessary, one may prolong any of them, canceling some of the sounds that follow in the next bars. In the score, anything in **brackets** is optional. In sequences, anything in **square brackets** is optional.

Articulation is left to the performer unless an articulation mark is present. If a string of short notes is too fast, the way to perform it is to only voice the beginnings of sounds, thus expanding the vocabulary of the piece (as intake of air may do in other places, so that sound may be articulated as well). The alternative, if one is required, is to start the passage early and perform it slower than notated, but the next long note must be performed on time. **Grace notes** are fast, but free, e.g. two eighth notes may be interpreted as a dotted eighth note and a normal one. **Held noises** may segue smoothly, e.g. a hissing sound may gradually become a blowing sound, and so on.

Any aspects of performance not notated or explained here may be freely determined by the performer. See below for optional live electronics.

# Explanation of Sounds

## Vocal sounds:

- **held note**
- **short note**: an eighth or, at best, a quarter note.
- **staccato note**: louder than held and short notes, and preferably very high.
- **glissando**: starts immediately; do not hold the starting note. Consecutive glissandi in the same direction are performed as one continuous glissando from wherever it started.

## Noise bursts:

- **click (dent.)**: a dental click, made by sucking on the front teeth, as in *tsk!*
- **click (alv.)**: an alveolar (palato-alveolar) click, made by pulling the tongue down from the roof of the mouth, but not dropping it down all the way. Similar to one of the sounds in the common imitation of a horse trotting.
- **click (lat.)**: a lateral click, made by sucking on the molars, as in the sound made to urge a horse to move (frequently written as *tchick!*)
- **gasp**: a gasping sound that includes a pitch component, preferably one that is very audible. Like a high pitch produced by inhaling rather than exhaling. In fast passages, no pitch component is required.

## Noises:

- **blowing**: a blowing noise made by exhaling air while the lips are rounded, as if blowing into a wind instrument.
- **shhh**: any variation of the sound indicated by *sh* in English (*ch* in French, etc.). A given performance may have any number of variations involved.
- **hiss**: a thin hissing sound made by exhaling air through clenched front teeth. Somewhat similar to the first sound in *secret* (first sound in *si* in French, etc.).

## Animal sounds:

- **growl**: a single growling sound, as one of a medium-sized animal. If the acoustics of the venue permit, do not use your vocal cords and produce a similar noise using only your oral cavity. The best possible variation is an imitation of the sounds made by the alien in *Predator*.
- **cat**: a single meowing or purring sound, may last for as long as an eighth or, at best, a quarter note.
- **bird**: imitation of birdsong by whistling OR a collection of rapid clicking sounds of all kinds interspersed with short pauses (as in a language that consists of clicks only).

Noises, glissandi, held notes, and bird sounds are the only sounds that may be held for the indicated duration; all others appear at the attack point and are short. Growling is no longer than a quarter note. In all cases where the pitch is not determined in the sound sequence, the performer chooses any pitch they desire.

## Live Electronics

Electronic manipulation is indicated in the score by solid and dotted lines below the staff. The performer and the sound engineer choose the ones to perform and the ones to ignore, if any. Solid lines indicate distortion and/or overdrive which render(s) the performer's voice more or less unrecognizable as voice. Dotted lines indicate delay: several regular repetitions of the original sound. In both cases the effects are only applied to the first suitable sound (which is any sound for distortion, but short sounds only for delay), so the results must be pre-recorded and played during an actual performance. Thus, for example, a dotted line under three half notes, the first of which is a sung short note, indicates that a delay effect must be applied to that first note, and that the resulting repetitions should continue until the entire three half notes segment is over:

A – B – C – D

A–A–A–A–

Distortion (overdrive) is applied the same way. In cases where both distortion and delay are indicated, the delayed sound is distorted and this distorted version is repeated. In cases where two distortion lines are indicated, choose one (if any). Dynamic indications apply to distorted and delayed sounds just as they do to normal sounds.

If the sound engineer is up to the challenge, two microphones may be used and effects improvised during the performance, by turning one of the microphone outputs off and replacing it with a processed sound. Obviously, the output from the second microphone should be balanced perfectly so that the listeners perceive both the performer's voice and the processed sounds as a single entity with uniform volume (only with distortion/overdrive being, naturally, somewhat louder). Also possible is an improvisation by the sound engineer: record every processed sound indicated in the excerpt the performer has chosen, but only play some of these recordings, preferably not informing the soprano soloist as to which recordings will be played.

# Sequence 1

- |    |                               |    |                           |    |                           |
|----|-------------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1  | click (dent.)                 | 17 | (silence)                 | 33 | bird                      |
| 2  | click (lat.)                  | 18 | click (dent.) [pp]        | 34 | click (any click)         |
| 3  | click (dent.)                 | 19 | shhh                      | 35 | click (dent.)             |
| 4  | click (dent.)                 | 20 | glissando ↓               | 36 | bird                      |
| 5  | hiss                          | 21 | staccato                  | 37 | bird OR staccato          |
| 6  | held note, E or B-flat        | 22 | click (alv.)              | 38 | click (dent.)             |
| 7  | (silence)                     | 23 | staccato                  | 39 | click (dent.)             |
| 8  | (silence)                     | 24 | held note                 | 40 | bird                      |
| 9  | blowing                       | 25 | held note, lower than #24 | 41 | held note                 |
| 10 | gasp                          | 26 | held note                 | 42 | hiss                      |
| 11 | shhh                          | 27 | short note                | 43 | bird                      |
| 12 | click (dent.)                 | 28 | blowing                   | 44 | (silence)                 |
| 13 | click (dent.) OR click (lat.) | 29 | bird OR (silence)         | 45 | (silence) OR click (alv.) |
| 14 | click (dent.)                 | 30 | gasp                      | 46 | blowing                   |
| 15 | blowing                       | 31 | click (alv.)              | 47 | blowing                   |
| 16 | short note [G-sharp]          | 32 | staccato                  | 48 | bird                      |

## Sequence 2

- |    |                              |    |                          |    |              |
|----|------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|--------------|
| 1  | glissando ↓                  | 17 | hiss                     | 33 | glissando ↓  |
| 2  | click (lat.)                 | 18 | short note               | 34 | cat [f]      |
| 3  | held note                    | 19 | cat                      | 35 | click (alv.) |
| 4  | blowing                      | 20 | bird                     | 36 | short note   |
| 5  | glissando ↑ from a high note | 21 | (silence)                | 37 | blowing      |
| 6  | short note [with tremolo]    | 22 | bird                     | 38 | blowing      |
| 7  | hiss                         | 23 | click (alv.)             | 39 | (silence)    |
| 8  | cat                          | 24 | silence                  | 40 | hiss         |
| 9  | click (dent.)                | 25 | held note                | 41 | (silence)    |
| 10 | click (dent.)                | 26 | held note, D             | 42 | bird         |
| 11 | held note                    | 27 | held note, C or A        | 43 | bird         |
| 12 | click (lat.)                 | 28 | shhh                     | 44 | blowing      |
| 13 | blowing                      | 29 | gasp                     | 45 | glissando ↓  |
| 14 | glissando ↑                  | 30 | gasp, identical to #29   | 46 | glissando ↓  |
| 15 | staccato                     | 31 | bird                     | 47 | hiss [p]     |
| 16 | (silence)                    | 32 | (silence) OR glissando ↓ | 48 | hiss         |

## Sequence 3

1	blowing	17	short note	33	(silence)
2	blowing	18	click (alv.)	34	(silence)
3	gasp	19	click (alv.)	35	glissando ↑
4	held note, C-sharp	20	held note, any pitch, but like an echo of #17	36	shhh
5	staccato, same C-sharp as in #4	21	glissando ↓ from an A	37	staccato
6	hiss	22	growl	38	gasp
7	(silence)	23	blowing	39	blowing
8	blowing	24	hiss	40	blowing
9	click (dent.)	25	click	41	held note
10	short note	26	click	42	growl [ <i>p</i> ]
11	held note, G or A-sharp	27	gasp	43	held note
12	bird	28	shhh	44	hiss
13	bird	29	blowing	45	click (dent.)
14	click (alv.)	30	bird	46	hiss
15	held note	31	held note, E	47	hiss
16	held note	32	hiss	48	short note [ <i>pp</i> ]

## Sequence 4

- |    |                        |    |                        |    |   |
|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|---|
| 1  | hiss                   | 17 | staccato               | 33 | held note, F                                  |
| 2  | blowing                | 18 | bird OR click (dent.)  | 34 | scream [shorter, a bit less intense than #21] |
| 3  | gasp                   | 19 | blowing                | 35 | staccato                                      |
| 4  | blowing                | 20 | hiss                   | 36 | (silence)                                     |
| 5  | staccato               | 21 | scream                 | 37 | hiss  |
| 6  | bird                   | 22 | hiss                   | 38 | blowing                                       |
| 7  | (silence)              | 23 | short note             | 39 | click (alv.)                                  |
| 8  | gasp                   | 24 | hiss                   | 40 | click (lat.)                                  |
| 9  | click (alv.)           | 25 | hiss                   | 41 | held note                                     |
| 10 | hiss                   | 26 | (silence)              | 42 | click (lat.)                                  |
| 11 | staccato               | 27 | (silence)              | 43 | hiss  |
| 12 | (silence)              | 28 | click (dent.)          | 44 | bird  |
| 13 | click (dent.)          | 29 | staccato OR short note | 45 | (click lat.)                                  |
| 14 | click (alv.)           | 30 | glissando [ <i>p</i> ] | 46 | growl [ <i>f</i> ]                            |
| 15 | glissando [ <i>p</i> ] | 31 | blowing                | 47 | short note                                    |
| 16 | hiss                   | 32 | (silence)              | 48 | held note                                     |

## Sequence 5

- |    |                               |    |                                  |    |   |
|----|-------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|---|
| 1  | held note                     | 17 | (spoken word) “there isn’t one.” | 33 | (silence) OR click (dent.) [ <i>pp</i> ]      |
| 2  | staccato [ <i>p</i> ]         | 18 | blowing [ <i>ff</i> ]            | 34 | a series of accelerating clicks (dent.)       |
| 3  | held note                     | 19 | blowing                          | 35 | gasp  |
| 4  | (silence)                     | 20 | held note                        | 36 | (silence)                                     |
| 5  | click (lat.) [ <i>ff</i> ]    | 21 | click (dent.)                    | 37 | shhh [ <i>fff</i> ]                           |
| 6  | held note                     | 22 | click (dent.)                    | 38 | held note, high                               |
| 7  | held note                     | 23 | hiss                             | 39 | held note, lower than #39                     |
| 8  | gasp                          | 24 | blowing                          | 40 | held note                                     |
| 9  | growl, short and intense      | 25 | (silence)                        | 41 | held note, as high as possible                |
| 10 | glissando, short [ <i>p</i> ] | 26 | held note, B                     | 42 | held note OR (silence)                        |
| 11 | blowing                       | 27 | gasp [ <i>p</i> ]                | 43 | blowing [ <i>p</i> ]                          |
| 12 | bird                          | 28 | held note, F or F-sharp          | 44 | held note, any pitch from #38–42 [ <i>p</i> ] |
| 13 | hiss                          | 29 | held note, E (fermata)           | 45 | (silence)                                     |
| 14 | hiss                          | 30 | (silence)                        | 46 | hiss  |
| 15 | bird OR short note, C-sharp   | 31 | glissando                        | 47 | bird  |
| 16 | blowing                       | 32 | glissando                        | 48 | glissando (fermata)                           |

## Sequence 6

- |    |               |    |                                   |    |               |
|----|---------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|---------------|
| 1  | blowing       | 17 | held note, as low as possible [p] | 33 | (silence)     |
| 2  | hiss          | 18 | click (any type)                  | 34 | blowing       |
| 3  | bird          | 19 | short note, G                     | 35 | short note    |
| 4  | (silence)     | 20 | gasp                              | 36 | hiss          |
| 5  | blowing       | 21 | (silence)                         | 37 | gasp          |
| 6  | hiss          | 22 | growl                             | 38 | bird          |
| 7  | bird          | 23 | hiss                              | 39 | growl         |
| 8  | (silence)     | 24 | held note, same G as #19          | 40 | hiss          |
| 9  | held note     | 25 | gasp                              | 41 | hiss          |
| 10 | click (alv.)  | 26 | growl                             | 42 | blowing       |
| 11 | (silence)     | 27 | (spoken word) "october."          | 43 | (silence)     |
| 12 | short note, G | 28 | blowing                           | 44 | blowing       |
| 13 | gasp          | 29 | held note                         | 45 | scream        |
| 14 | growl         | 30 | hiss                              | 46 | blowing       |
| 15 | hiss          | 31 | click (alv.)                      | 47 | click (dent.) |
| 16 | (silence)     | 32 | bird                              | 48 | click (alv.)  |

to Beth Griffith  
**Dark Colors**  
(score)

Jashiin  
2011

Soprano Solo

8

16  
"there isn't one."

23

31

*pp*

*pp*

2

39

*f* *pp*

48

"already the colors are turning dark."

57

"four... or five."

66

*f*

73



132

Musical notation for measures 132-140. The staff contains notes with various rests and articulations. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. A double bar line is present. A bracketed section below the staff contains two parallel horizontal lines.

141

Musical notation for measures 141-147. The staff contains notes with various rests and articulations. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. A bracketed section below the staff contains notes marked with 'x' and '3'. A double bar line is present.

148

Musical notation for measures 148-154. The staff contains notes with various rests and articulations. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. A bracketed section below the staff contains notes marked with 'x' and '3'. A double bar line is present.

155

Musical notation for measures 155-162. The staff contains notes with various rests and articulations. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. A diamond symbol is present. The text "the ground is cold." is written below the staff.

163

Musical notation for measures 163-170. The staff contains notes with various rests and articulations. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. A double bar line is present.