

dying words

(2011-2012) for solo female vocalist with flute

Commissioned by Initiativ Neue Musik Berlin for Ute Wassermann

text: Friedrich Hölderlin, "Mein Eigentum", 1799

duration: approximately 9 minutes

Trills, tremoli and gracenotes always as fast as possible, unless otherwise indicated. Flute trills are normally shown in terms of fingering since the resulting sound is usually altered more in timbre (and often stability) than in pitch. (L1) indicates that the left-hand first finger executes the trill, (R123) that the first three fingers of the right hand are used together, and so on.

Alterations in flute timbre produced by unorthodox fingerings should not be minimised, even when emphasising them might lead to instability in pitch-content.

Quartertunes: (♭) ♭ ♭ ♭ ♭ ♭ ♭ ♭ ♭ (♭)

Where a line indicating embouchure position is shown, a downward "glissando" indicates turning the flute inwards (lowering the pitch) and an upward glissando returns to the normal position.

↓ = tongue-stop, with a lower pitch in brackets showing the resultant when fingering the upper pitch. (The same relationship between fingered and resultant pitches is shown when playing and/or singing when the mouthpiece is completely closed by the lips.)

↓ = [x:] or [ç:] articulation through the flute, ɹ = tongue-click, ♭ = whistle, ↓ = "vocal fry" (single staccato sounds using this technique are single "clicks" of the throat)

↓ Diamond-shaped noteheads indicate a more breathy, whisper-like sound either from the voice or the flute, and an unvoiced sound from the voice. When the voice is whispered, the staff is frequently discontinued when no pitch is being specified. Further specifications are given in the score.

The text is frequently augmented by phonetic notation, when the intended sound differs from the regular pronunciation of the text, for example where a strong glottal stop is needed to activate the flute, or when consonants are given extended durations. In these cases the phonetic notation takes precedence over the written text. Note that both [r] and [R] phonemes are specified. In the sung text [R] should be used, and in general "classical" singing pronunciation.

The performer of *dying words* will be principally a vocalist, with an alto range and some ability on the flute. (A closed-hole instrument is sufficient.) Amplification (and, in dry spaces, reverberation) will be necessary in order to give intimacy and presence to the fine gradations of timbre and expression in the music, which is mostly performed at a low dynamic level.

Dying words was originally written to be "accompanied" by a light-performance by Michael Vorfeld, in which a light-bulb construction in front of the performer would be switched off in stages (during the silences after each "verse" of the music) leaving her in darkness at the end. A similar progression from light to darkness could also be carried out during a more conventional concert performance.

Not all of the Hölderlin text appears in the music. A central concept is that it has a generally increasing tendency to "submerge" into the sound of the flute. The whole piece encapsulates a moment like those experienced while awakening and attempting to "hold on" to a dream as it disintegrates into waking reality - reflecting Hölderlin's prayer in the poem to the "heavenly powers" that the Fates do not end his vision of simple contentment too soon, and of course Hölderlin's subsequent experience of losing contact with reality, and eventually abandoning poetry and the world with his flute as sole remaining means of expression. When preparing a performance all of this (and the entire text, not just the audible fragments) should be borne in mind.

dying words forms part of a larger work entitled *dying words (resistance & vision part 2)* for voice, flute, piano and electronics.

Thanks to Ute Wassermann, and to Andrew Botros (*The Virtual Flute*, <http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/music/flute/virtual/main.html>), Robert Dick (*The Other Flute*, New York: Multiple Breath Music Company 1989) and John Fonville (*Microtonal Fingerings for Flute*, San Diego: JonFon Music 1987)

"Mein Eigentum"

In seiner Fülle ruhet der Herbsttag nun,
Geläutert ist die Traub und der Hain ist rot
Vom Obst, wenn schon der holden Blüten
Manche der Erde zum Danke fielen.

Und rings im Felde, wo ich den Pfad hinaus
Den stillen wandle, ist den Zufriedenen
Ihr Gut gereift und viel der frohen
Mühe gewähret der Reichtum ihnen.

Vom Himmel blicket zu den Geschäftigen
Durch ihre Bäume milde **das Licht herab**,
Die Freude teilend, denn es wuchs durch
Hände der Menschen allein die Frucht nicht.

Und leuchtest du, o Goldnes, auch mir, und wehst
Auch du mir wieder, Lüftchen, als segnetest
Du eine Freude mir, wie einst, und
Irrst, wie um Glückliche, mir am Busen?

Einst war ichs, doch wie Rosen, vergänglich war
Das fromme Leben, ach! und es mahnen noch,
Die blühend mir geblieben sind, die
Holden Gestirne zu oft mich dessen.

Beglückt, wer, ruhig liebend ein frommes Weib,
Am eignen Hand in rühmlicher Heimat lebt,
Es leuchtet über festem Boden
Schöner dem sicheren Mann sein Himmel.

Denn, wie die Pflanze, wurzelt auf eignem Grund
Sie nicht, verglüht die Seele des Sterblichen,
Der mit dem Tageslichte nur, **ein**
Armer, auf heiliger Erde wandelt.

Zu mächtig, ach! ihr himmlischen Höhen, zieht
Ihr mich empor, **bei Stürmen**, am heitern Tag
Fühl ich verzehrend euch im Busen
Wechseln, ihr wandelnden Götterkräfte.

Doch heute laß mich stille den trauten Pfad
Zum Haine gehn, dem golden die Wipfel schmückt
Sein sterbend Laub, und kränzt auch mir die
Stirne, ihr holden Erinnerungen!

Und daß mir auch, zu retten mein sterblich Herz,
Wie andern eine bleibende Stätte sei,
Und heimatlos die Seele mir nicht
Über das Leben hinweg sich sehne,

Sei du, Gesang, mein freundlich Asyl! sei du,
Beglückender! mit sorgender Liebe mir
Gepflegt, der Garten, **wo ich, wandelnd**
Unter den Blüten, den immerjungen,

In sichrer Einfalt wohne, wenn draußen mir
Mit ihren Wellen allen die mächtigste Zeit,
Die Wandelbare, fern rauscht und die
Stillere Sonne mein Wirken fördert.

Ihr segnet gütig über den Sterblichen,
Ihr Himmelskräfte! jedem sein Eigentum,
O segnet meines auch, und daß zu
Frühe die Parze den Traum nicht ende.

(Text in **bold** is sung with little or no modulation by the flute; text in *italics* is obscured to a greater or lesser degree by simultaneous flute activity; the rest of the text is subsumed into the flute part and is not heard as such, although every syllable in the poem is "set to music" in some way.)

dying words

Richard Barrett
2011-12

 = 69

at first like raindrops, then as if progressively smeared out in time until bar 7

pp *sempre*


11
8



In sei - ner Fü - lle ru - het der Herbst - tag nun,

2

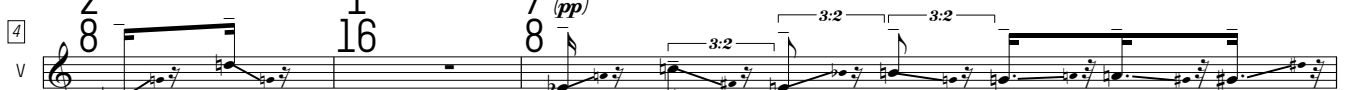
1 11
16 8 (*pp*) brief glissandi in the indicated direction, tailing off within the notated duration like a talking drum



ge - läu - tert ist die Traub und der Hain ist rot

4


2 1 7
8 16 8 (*pp*)



vom Obst, wenn schon der hol - den Blu - ten

7

10 continuous pitch-movement only touching on the notated pitches... (no gliss!) 6
8 take flute



man - che der Er - de zum Dan - ke fie - len.

In these moments the "pure" flute sound should never unequivocally emerge

(R2)

(L1) emphasise instability of flute sound

13:12

7:6

16

8

9

F

V

pp

p

pp

mp

(non dim.)

Und rings im F... [f:]

wo ich den Pf... [pf:]

15:12

4:3

16

8

12

F

V

pp

p

pp

mp

molto vibr. quasi tr.

den sti - llen w... [v:]

ist den Zu - fr... [fr:]

(L3)

from smeared sounds back to raindrops...

3:2

3:2

3:2

15

V

pp

ihr Gut ge - reift und viel der fro - hen

(L1) left- and right-hand trills independent and slightly irregular

(R1+2)

10

6

8

16

F

V

mf

(singing)

pp sempre

irregular undulations in pitch up to a quartertone either side of G#

(singing + whistling)

mü... [my:]

11
8

18 until bar 23; maximise all timbral differences in both voice and flute, so that each sound has as different a character as possible

F (tongue stop) (glissando of harmonics) (L3) 4:3

V (throat-tremolo) 4:3 4:5

Vom Hi - mmel bli - cket

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

(tongue-trill) *tr*

16

19

F (L23) (R123) 5:6 (close L23, R123) 6:5

V (whistle the A#) [x] mf

durch das Licht her - ab [hɛr:]

mp *p* *f* *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* (whisper) *mf* (fry) *mp* *f*

5
8

21

F 3:2 16 4 8 (R123) (R123)

V 6:4

die Freu - - de

pp *mf* *mp* *pp* *mf sub.* *mp* *f* *p*

10
8

24

F (close D2 trill) 6:7 (close both trill keys) (close D2 trill) 6:8

V 3:2

Hän - de der Men - schen

mp *pp* *mf*

26 *mf* $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{4:3}{16}$ $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{6:5}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$ *mp* $\frac{7:5}{16}$ $\frac{5:4}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$

V Und leucht - est du, o Gold - nes,

30 $\frac{2}{8}$ *p* $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ *pp* $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{11}{16}$ $\frac{5:4}{16}$ $\frac{6:5}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ *ppp*

V auch mir, und webst auch du mir wie - der,

(increasingly breathy and less voiced)

34 $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{4:3}{16}$

F

V Lüft - chen,

... almost whispered... eventually losing pitch altogether

mp *pp* *ppp sempre*

[t]

38 $\frac{11}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{6:5}{16}$ $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$ $\frac{7:5}{16}$

F

V [d] [d] [d] sim...

(ppp) [t]

41 $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{3:2}{32}$ $\frac{5}{32}$ $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{11}{16}$ $\frac{6:5}{16}$ $\frac{7:5}{16}$ $\frac{4:3}{16}$

F

V [d] [g] [g] [g] [g] [g]

(ppp) [g]

46 $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{13}{32}$ $\frac{6:4}{32}$ $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$

F

V [b]

(ppp) [b]

until bar 63: where voice and flute are both active, the consonants should sound clearly, but vowel-changes should be made only in the mouth-cavity with the lips positioned as for normal flute-playing, exploring through the vowel and dynamic changes the different (multiphonic) possibilities given by the unstable fingerings - the voice should modulate or 'colour' the flute sounds rather than the other way around.

49

F

V

Einst war ichs, doch wie Ro - sen, ver - gäng - lich war

[?]

54

F

V

das fro - mme Le - ben, ach! und es mah - nen noch

[?]

59

F

V

die blü - hend mir ge - blie - ben sind, die

63

F

V

hol - den Ge - stir - ne zu oft mich de - ssen.

65

F $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{5:4$

V *mp sempre* until bar 62: use a vocal timbre as similar as possible to the flute
(mp) tongued attacks very light $\frac{4:3}$ $\frac{4:5$

Be - glückt, wer,

70

F $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{11}{8}$ $\frac{6:5$ $\frac{4:3$ $\frac{1}{16}$

V *(mp)* $\frac{5:4$ $\frac{3:2$

73

F $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{4:5$ $\frac{6:4$

V *(mp)* $\frac{3:2$ $\frac{5:4$

74

F $\frac{10}{8}$ $\frac{5:6$ $\frac{5:4$ $\frac{11}{16}$

V *(mp)* $\frac{3:2$ $\frac{6:5$

76 $\frac{11}{8}$ hold this fingering, with embouchure completely closed

distinguish different pitch-resonances of these closed-embouchure articulations by altering the shape of the mouth cavity

(single vocal-fry clicks)

mf [*t k ʎ*] *mf* *p* [*ʎ k t*] *p* [*t*]

77 sim.

pp [*t k*] [*ʎ*] *mf* *pp* [*t*] *mp* [*ʎ*] *pp* [*ʎ*] *mf* [*k*] *p*

4:3 8:9 4:5 9:10

78 $\frac{9}{8}$

p *mp* [*k t*] *pp* [*ʎ ʎ*] *mf* *ppp* as if from a great distance

7:8 6:5 3:2

Ein

79 $\frac{10}{8}$ (as before) $\frac{7}{8}$

ppp [*t ʎ*] *pp* [*t k*] *mf* [*ʎ ʎ*] *p* *mp*

9:7 5:6 4:3

Ar - - mer,

transitions from voice to flute as smooth as possible, emphasising modulation of flute sounds by sustained consonants

81

F

V

Zu mäch - tig... [tiç: x:]

himm - li schen Hö - hen z... [R:] [ts:]

84

F

V

[R: ç: r:]

bei Stür - men, am...

89

F

V

fühl ich ver - zeh - - - rend euch... [oix: s:]

91

F

V

ihr wan - deln - den Gö - - - tter - kr... [kr:]

94

like a faulty mechanical device (tongue stop)

11/8 4:5 7:6 4/8 3:2

F *mp* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *p*

V

Doch heu - te laß mich sti - lle den trau - ten Pfad zum Hai - ne gehn,

96

1/16 11/8 5:6 3:2

F *ppp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *p*

V

dem gol - den die Wip - fel schmückt sein ster - bend Laub,

98

1/16 7/8 6:7 1/16

F *p* *pp* *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *ppp*

V

und kränzt auch mir die Stir - ne,

[?unt]

101

8/8 9:8 11/16

F *pp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *mp* *pp* *p* *ppp*

V

ihr hol - den Er - inn - er - ung - en!

[?ia]

sing next to the mouthpiece, accentuating those articulations and phonemes which activate the flute sound.
 from this "normal" position gradually close the mouthpiece...

103

11/8 1/16

F

V

Und daß mir auch zu re - tten mein sterb - lich Herz,
 [ʔu: nt da s: mi R: au x: ts: u R: ε tē n main f: tē R: bli ç: hē R: ts]

4:3 6:7 4:3 8:9

ppp

(almost closed)

105

11/8 1/16

F

V

closed mouthpiece (fingered B, resultant C)

inhale (without breaking sound) as necessary

[s:↔f:]

(constant irregular transitions between the two sounds)

5:4 3:2

ppp

107

9/8

F

V

und hei - mat - los

[ʔu: nt hai: ma: t lo: s:↔f:]

(as before)

8:7 6:7

ppp

closed rapid slightly irregular repetition of this fingering-sequence (lowest fingering is lowered by approximately a quartertone)

108

10/8 6/8

F

V

ü - ber das Le - ben

[ʔü: bə R: da s: le: bə n]

6:5 10:11

ppp

embouchure-glissando with increasing breathiness

whispered

mouthpiece open → almost closed

110

F $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$

V *pp* $\frac{4:5}{16}$ $\frac{4:3}{16}$ *p* $\frac{6:5}{16}$ *mp*

Sei du, Ge - sang,

(use a more reed-like vocal quality which contrasts with the flute while balancing with it in dynamic)

115

F $\frac{3}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{3}{16}$

V *ppp* *mp* $\frac{6:7}{16}$ $\frac{10:7}{16}$

Be - glück - en - der!

119

F $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{7:9}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{3}{16}$ $\frac{6:5}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$

V *mf* *p sub.*

(vibrato, echoing flute trill)

(L23, R123) *t* (sim.) *t* *t*

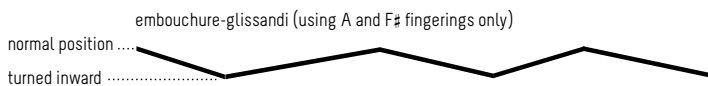
122

F $\frac{5}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{5}{8}$

V *pp* *mf* $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{3:2}{16}$ $\frac{8:7}{16}$

wo ich, wan - delnd

(vib.)



125

F $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9:8}{16}$ $\frac{7:9}{16}$

V *ppp sub.* $\frac{5:6}{16}$ $\frac{9:7}{16}$ *mp* *p*

un - ter den Blü - ten,

(voice follows flute glissandi in parallel)

128

F $\frac{3}{16}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{5:6}{}$ $\frac{4:3}{}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{7:8}{}$

V *pp* *pp* (*p*)

(blend vocal timbre with flute)

132

F $\frac{11}{8}$ $\frac{7:6}{}$ $\frac{11:12}{}$ $\frac{1}{16}$

V *p* *f*

134

F $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{13:11}{}$ $\frac{3:2}{}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{5:4}{}$ (R123)


V *f* *mf* *mp* (*p*)

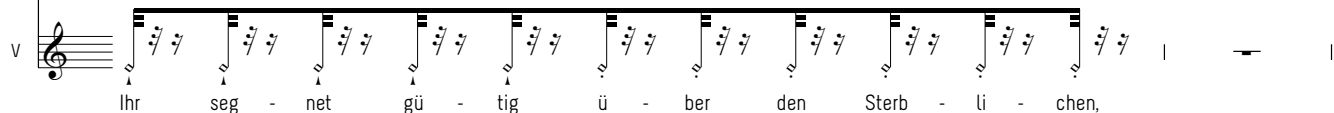
137

F $\frac{10}{8}$ $\frac{4:3}{}$ $\frac{5:6}{}$ $\frac{11}{16}$ (R23) (R3) (R2) (R23) (R2)

V *p* *pp*

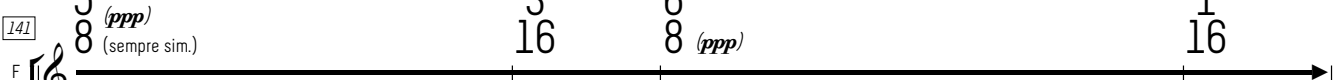
139 $\frac{11}{8}$ *quasi ppp sempre*

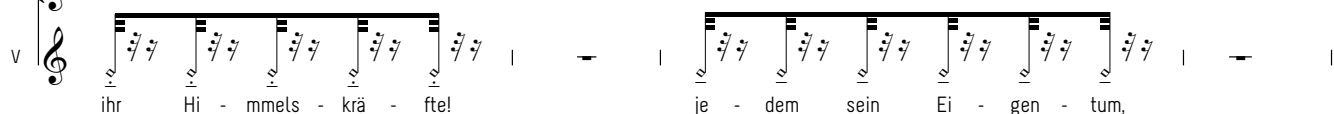
F  extremely rapid and random movement of all keys (except thumb!) with as much key-noise as possible, avoiding any audible patterns

V  Ihr seg - net gü - tig ü - ber den Sterb - li - chen,


whisper - loud and close enough to the mouthpiece to activate the flute's resonance (slightly more loudly than the key-noises) but not so close as to obscure the text. Emphasise plosives and sibilants!

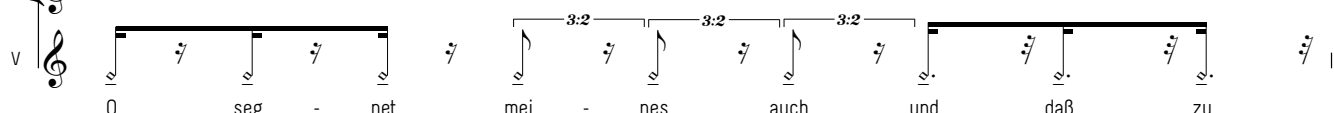
141 $\frac{5}{8}$ (*ppp*) (sempre sim.) $\frac{3}{16}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ (*ppp*) $\frac{1}{16}$

F 


V  ihr Hi - mmels - Krä - fte! je - dem sein Ei - gen - tum,


145 $\frac{9}{8}$ (*ppp*)

F 

V  O seg - net mei - nes auch und daß zu

146 $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ stop! $\frac{5}{8}$ *pppp* (as before)

F 

V  früh - e die Par - zen den Traum nicht en - de.