VOI(REX) (2002)
for voice, 6 instruments and electronics. Duration : 23 mn
On texts by Lin Delpierre.
Commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and IRCAM.
Premiered on Jan. 20th, 2003, at IRCAM, Paris (France),
by Donatienne Michel-Dansac (voice) and the Ensemble L'Itinéraire, conducted
by Pierre-André Valade.
Instrumentation : flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano et percussion
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I   L'invisible debout
II   Jusque
III   De part (…) En part
IV   Devant tout autour
V   L'inachevé à son faîte

Written in 2002, *Voi(rex)* was composed to poems by Lin Delpierre taken from his collection
Le testament des fruits. The texts being freely arranged and even sometimes mixed. The
sense, however, is still often perceptible and serves the piece's overall expression, which is
also conditioned in some aspects by the verbal structure. At the same time, the poems are used
as phonetic material and suggest numerous figurations that occur right through the
composition.
Even the calligraphy of the letters, prolonged as wave shapes that become archetypal
melodies, generates rhythmic-melodic models and spatial trajectories.
Finally, some scenic movements are borrowed from how the poems are written out and
punctuated.
The piece is in five movements preceded by a short introduction, each movement depending
on one or more exclusive characteristics.
In the first, a sustained violin note - fixed - serves as reference point for the progressive
transformation - mobile – of the noise–discolored voice ('a bit of voice stumbling on itself'),
of the singing voice and of a sort of spatial 'vanishing point'.
Profiles of all the poem's letters, applied to the melodic curves of both voice and instruments,
give the second movement its identity. These profiles are embodied in a strophic form that has
the same structure as the song of the reed warbler or of Stravinsky's *Danse sacrale*.
The third movement is constituted from harmonic 'tints' traversed by blazes and framed by
the voice in a form suggested by the text : '*From part – after dazzlement – to part*'. What
results is a progression towards white noise, whose 'whiteness' displays itself as blinding
light.
What dominates the fourth movement is a structure : a nested form, but where the ever
smaller elements packed into one another are different. A driving force ensures the transition
between the sections, whose shapes come from different kinds of wave form.
The last movement takes us by song to the word, through a general recapitulation of the
different constitutive elements of the preceding movements. Again the poem's letters generate
the melodic profiles of the singer's scat.

The main idea of the piece is to confront different sorts of model – to, as one might say, model
models. To begin with, the singer recorded the poems standing close to gongs and a tam tam,

which her voice caused to resonate. That gave, through analysis, the harmonic elements used right through the work. At the same time she recorded an improvised sequence based on various kinds of vocal technique. The recorded sounds were chosen, isolated and reworked only by editing, with no treatment. They were then presented as new models to the singer, who thus had to imitate herself, but after the recording and editing of what she had sung before. There developed in this way a corpus of vocal elements that could then serve as a model for the instruments and electronics. Some technological models (such as, for example, frequency shifting, the doppler effect, freezing within a variable frame certain parts of the sound or models derived from the letters of a poem, or even the rhythmic model provided by the poet's speed of diction in reading his own texts) were also used in a constant give and take involving voice, instruments and electronic apparatus.

This last principally comprises a computer running Max/MSP, which controls not only the real-time treatments, such as crossed synthesis, harmonizer delays, filtering, frequency shifting, reverberation, spatialization, and so on, but also the triggering of sound files in response to the singer.
The software used in creating the piece was OpenMusic for the whole harmonic, melodic and rhythmic conception, Audiosculpt for representing and analysing certain vocal phenomena and cleaning up sounds, Max/MSP for simulating real-time treatment and PSOLA for morphing the end of the piece.

I warmly thank Frédéric Voisin, Donatienne Michel-Dansac and Gilles Leothaud.

This piece is dedicated to François Paris.

Philippe Leroux