Three Rimbaud Settings

soprano and percussion

Larry Polansky

1977/83
PERFORMANCE NOTES

The soprano should sing in a justly intoned scale of six octave equivalent pitch classes (cents deviations are from tempered)—

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>+4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>F#</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>+2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>-31</td>
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The soprano may use a monochord, the natural harmonics on a low cello C string, or a simple electronic device to train herself in these pitches. Since the mallet instruments are, of course, tempered, there will be microtonal differences between the voice and percussion parts, and, if anything, these should be exaggerated.

In WAR, the soprano should play those vibraphone parts when the percussionist is playing tom-toms. Only as a last resort should a second percussionist be used.

In DEPARTURE, vib. (motor off) or marimba might be used. In TO A REASON, marimba is preferred. In WAR, roto-toms are the preferred drums, tuned approximately a fifth apart.

The songs may be sung in any order. The soprano should employ no or as little vibrato as possible.

The whole set is dedicated to my brother, Steven Polansky.

Larry Polansky
Toronto, 1977/
Oakland, 1983
ENGLISH TEXTS

TO A REASON

A rap of your finger on the drum frees all the sounds and starts a new harmony. A step of yours: the levy of new men and their marching on. Your head turns away: O the new love! Your head turns back: O the new love! "Change our lots, confound the plagues, beginning with time," to you their children sing. "Praise no matter where the substance of our fortune and our desires," they beg you. Arrival of all time, who will go everywhere.

DEPARTURE

Seen enough. The vision was met with in every air. Had enough. Sounds of cities, in the evening, and in the sun and always. Known enough. Life's halts. — O sounds and visions! Departure in new affection and new noise.

WAR

When a child, certain skies sharpened my vision: All their characters were reflected in my face. The phenomena were roused. —At present, the eternal inflection of moments and the infinity of mathematics drives me through this world where I meet with every civil honor, respected by strange children and prodigious affections. —I dream of a war of right and of might, of unlooked for logic.

It is as simple as a musical phrase.

(Translations are by Louise Varese, New Directions Paperback, 1946)
Departure

Not too fast

* Seen enough, the vi-sion was met with in every air:

f > mf ——— f > mf

Hay enough, sounds of ci- ties, in the even- ning, and in the sun and al-

ways.

2 ——— 2 ——— f sub> mf ——— 2

( in union) 

Note: the vib. or marimba plays each phrase

after it is sung. The amount of pause

should be free.

Fa- cto- ry. in new affectation and now- wise"
"a rap of your finger on the drum frees all the sands and that's a new harmony."

(Voice)

(Vib. or Perc.)

(Deliberate)
"A step of years, the levy of new men, and their marching on."

(Voice)

(Vib.)

(Intently, quickly)
"Your heel tugs away, O' the new love, Your heel tugs back O' the new love."

(Voice)

(Vib.)

(Loosely)
"Change our lots. Confound the plagues. Beginning with time. To you, their children sing."

(Voice)

(Vib.)

(Loosely)
"Praise who ever the sibyls' partial desire. They bless you."

(Voic.)

(Vib.)

N.B. Dynamics apply to singer only.
Percussionist should remain at pianissimo.
(Voice) "ar - ri - val of all time, who will go ev - er where"

Vib. 6:5
War

(Quickly, gradually slowing to d:30-40)

when a child, certain signs sharpen my vision.
All their characters were re-
d:30-40: calmly, softly

reflect-ed in my face"
"The phe-no-me-na were caught"

Vol.4. at present the e-ternal in-flec-tion of moments and the in-fini-ty of in-the-ra-things, as though

Vib. (a little softer than the voice)

N.B. All tom-tom falls rudimental.
this world when I am old again to know, respected by strange children and precocious affections"

"I dream of a war of night and of might of unlooked for logic"

"It is as simple as a musical phrase"