

Psyché-Cité/Transversales

Series for instruments and electronics

Clara Maïda

1- Fluctuatio (in)animi (p.2)

for flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass and electronics

(13'42)

Première on November 25th, 2006. AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, Berlin

AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE Commission
Residency at the AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE in Berlin
and at the STUDIO FÜR ELEKTROAKUSTISCHE MUSIK of the ADK
Technical processing : STUDIO FÜR ELEKTROAKUSTISCHE MUSIK of the ADK
KAMMERENSEMBLE NEUE MUSIK

2- Ipso facto (p.3)

for electronics solo

(9'34)

Première on September 21st, 2007

Fünf + 1 Evenings, KLEINER WASSERSPEICHER of Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin
Invited to the ELECTRONIC STUDIO of the TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT in Berlin
Technical processing : ELECTRONIC STUDIO of the TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT

3- Via rupta (p.4)

for flute, clarinet, trombone, violin, viola, cello, double bass and electronics

(8'55)

Première on May 21st, 2005. GMEM Festival *Les Musiques*, Marseille

State and GMEM Commission
Residency at the GMEM of Marseille
Technical processing : GMEM
ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRAL CONTEMPORAIN

This series is part of a project based on suburban spaces (subways, tunnels, shelters...).

These two pieces aim at developing a sound system that works like a hybrid organism (ensemble of terms and relations), at the crossroads between the psychic and urban matters.

Heterogeneous materials (instrumental and urban sounds - in particular those of the subway in this series) merge in a plastic fabric that is in constant evolution and goes beyond categories and within which emerge dialectics between the endless renewable potentialities of the paths of any structure and the beat, the inexorably fixed repetition which can trap any mechanism (alive or not).

Where is the breaking point located, between the possibilities of exploration offered by a mechanism and the captivity generated by the repeated use of the same paths ?

1st part : **Fluctuatio (in)animi**

for flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass and electronics

[13'42]

The title refers to the notion of *fluctuatio animi* that Spinoza developed by linking it to the notion of affect.

The simultaneity of opposite affects induces a rearrangement, but also a conflict within the psychic dynamics.

The *fluctuatio animi* would be the zone where the shifting of an individual's psychic forces takes place, this suspended floating moment when an emotional cycle ends and could shift to one side or the other of the contradiction, i.e. towards the repetition or the beginning of a new cycle.

It is not the hesitation between several paths, since the movement is not actualized yet. It is an overlapping of all these paths, which remains virtual and in constant motion, and organizes itself within a space where all the possible connections between the elements form a problematic field (in the mathematical sense of the word).

I imagined the expression *fluctuatio (in)animi* to evoke the difficulty of avoiding emotional alienation, crystallisation on the same kind of relations or behaviours.

Fluctuatio (in)animi would be this floating moment which can shift to a repetition creative of micro-differences within the structure and the matter, or to a deadly repetition incapable of generating new structuring, to the magnetic attraction exerted by the poles of fixation present in the affects' mechanics. It could also be the systematic inclination towards the latter, despite the opening to another possible field, Freud's Thanatos, which then would not indicate the death of any movement, but the death of a potentiality of renewal and the endless persistence of the same gesture.

A dynamic principle pervades the series of events, flows from a layer to another, continuously modifies their articulation and their outlines, thus inducing a superimposition of perspectives, intertwining points of view.

What matters is not the objects or the objects' complexes themselves, whose identity is constituted and dissolved all at once, but the tree structure that all of their trajectories suggests.

Oscillating between this process, which is likely to mobilize new circuits, and a blocking movement which revolves around itself and cannot escape from the return to the same centre (and here, the metaphor of the machine takes its full meaning), the piece raises also the question of the difficulty of a true freedom which, avoiding any automatism, would be characterized by the capacity of continually inventing new ramifications.

Clara Maïda, November 2006

2nd part : **Ipso facto**

for electronics solo

(9'34)

Ipso facto is the 2nd section of the series of pieces for instruments and electronics *Psyché-Cité/Transversales*.

Ipso facto is a Latin expression meaning « by the very fact », « therefore, automatically ». But what occurs automatically in that piece, paradoxically, is the absence of automatism. Therefore, sound events are articulated with one another, following their own logic, carried away in a kind of whirl also containing a few stases.

In the 1st piece of the series, *Fluctuatio [in]animi*, the musical discourse was based on a dialectic between the possibility of ramifications, the creation of new paths and the irresistible attraction, at times, to a fixed polarization trapping the sound movements within a mechanical reiteration coming back to the same axis over and over again.

In *Ipso facto*, there is no longer any opposition between elasticity and rigidity. One is inside a space filled with vibrations, circular and fluid, and the venue of the première of the piece (the water tank – Kleiner Wasserspeicher – of Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin) played a role in the choice of such a space.

I tried to evoke a confined space, cut off from the exterior, empty and made up of galleries (a bit like a sewerage system).

The sound movements mimic the way sounds can echo on the walls, whirl around, ricochet from one surface to another, diffract by engendering multidirectional trajectories or, on the contrary, extend, lose their contours, blend together within a place where the reverberation is very important.

The distinction between proximity and distance becomes difficult. Some sounds seem to be very crisp, very precise. Others are fuzzier, as if they appeared behind a veil, or distorted, reminding of the sound perception one has when immersed under water.

Musical gestures recur insistently (the sliding, the whirling, the rebounding), and draw ever more rapid abstract curves and twirls.

Like in the two other pieces of the series, my objective was to elaborate a hybrid sound evoking both an urban space and an organic entity, the world of objects and the living world.

Rubbing, scraping, creaking, groaning, chains dragged along and mechanisms started, all these sounds compose a space which undergoes numerous torsions and about which cannot tell whether it is inside or outside the body.

Clara Maïda, September 2007

3rd part : **Via rupta**

for flute, clarinet, trombone, violin, viola, cello, double bass and electronics

(8'55)

The title of the piece is a Latin expression of which the French word « route » (« road ») is derived. For Roman people, the construction of a road implied the breaking (« rupta ») of the obstacles that were arising. The meaning « via rupta » was a broken or cleared, opened way.

The whole piece is pervaded with this ambiguity between the breaking of the matter and the opening of all the possible ways.

As in my previous pieces, I tried to develop musical processes whose articulation would evoke the mobility of unconscious psychic processes, affects and impulses. The sound body would reflect the unconscious image of the body, developed throughout our life experience and sometimes in conflict with the limits of the real body image (sort of virtual, abstract body, since it appears only in dreams and fantasies, and can suffer many distortions).

The sound topology of the piece has several aspects.

On the one hand, it reminds of the functional and structural complexity of psychic topology and presents the same web-like articulation, the same kinematical nature. The numerous paths, the series of links between the musical objects develop a network of interlacing, crossing, ramifications, junctions which outline abstract and fleeting cartographies.

The musical matter thus suffers distortions, atomizations and reappearances similar to the ones that can modify the shape of the body in the dreams.

On the other hand, the sound material of the piece is derived from sounds recorded in the subway. I chose the subway because it can be perceived as a sort of intrusive object whose paths bore holes in the matter (via rupta), and its network structure reminds of psychic processes.

The merging of the two sound worlds (subway and instrumental sounds) generates a sort of mutant sound, half-technological, half-organic.

Moreover, the connection between the psychic and body experience and the urban world is underlined by the rapidity and this proliferation, which are encountered in mental connections as well as in the structure of a town.

Urban body or imaginary body ? Urban space or mental space ? Via rupta is an architecture of fleetness and mobility. It is a space-fabric whose matter is flexible, with varying dimensions. Its form is a state of flux, an endless process, a series of short materializations of the results of extremely fast and trans-generic sound paths.

Clara Maïda, May 2007