

Psyché-Cité/Transversales

Series for ensemble and electronics

Clara Maïda

2005-07

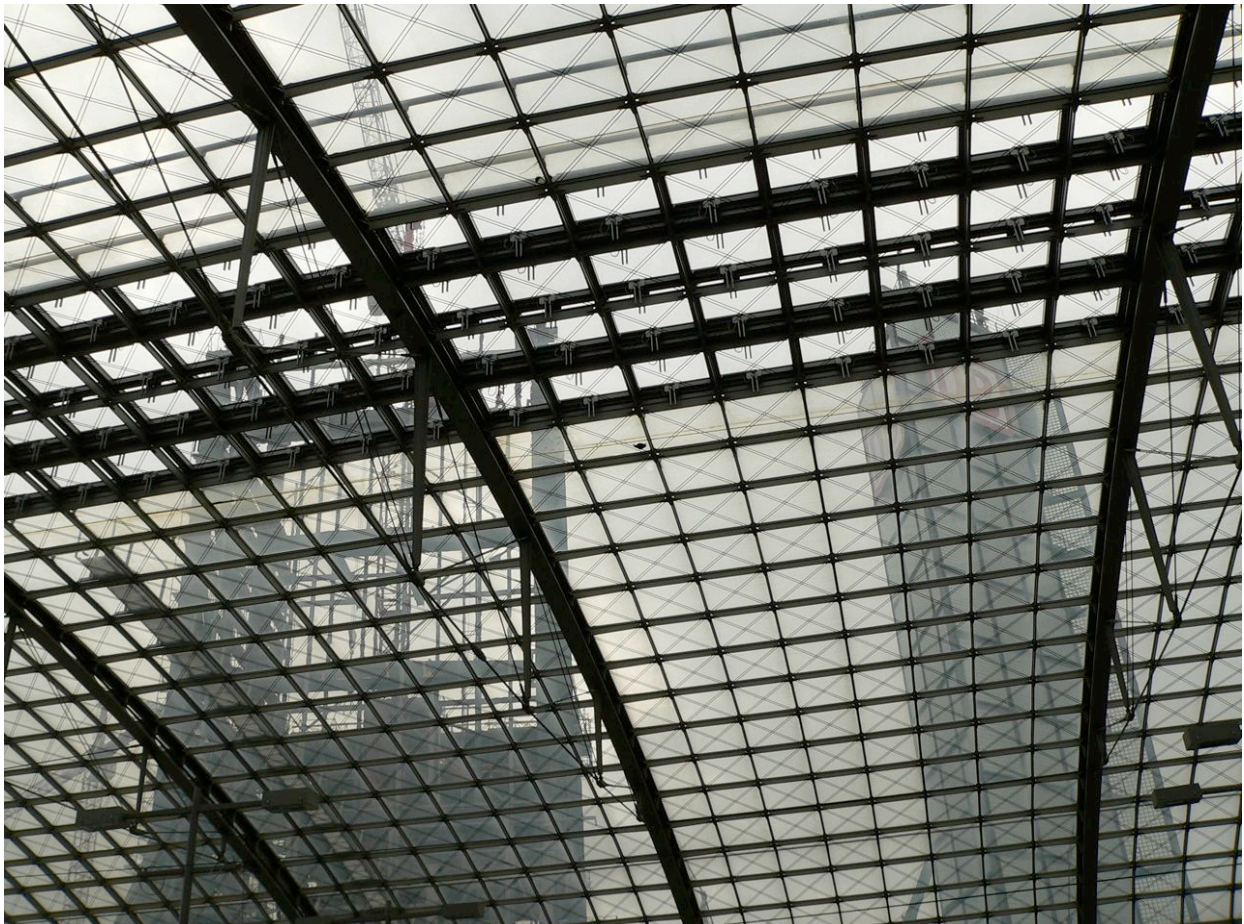


Photo: Berlin Hauptbahnhof - © Clara Maïda, 2005

Psyché-Cité/Transversales

Series for instruments and electronics

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1- Fluctuatio (in)animi (p.3)

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

(13'42)

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

AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE commission
Residency at the ADK and at the STUDIO FÜR ELEKTROAKUSTISCHE MUSIK of the ADK

KAMMERENSEMBLE NEUE MUSIK
Technical processing: STUDIO FÜR ELEKTROAKUSTISCHE MUSIK of the ADK

PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA - Honorary Mention (Austria, 2007)

2- Ipso facto (p.4)

for electronics

(9'34)

Premiere on September 21st, 2007. *Fünf + 1* Festival, Berlin
(KLEINER WASSERSPEICHER of Prenzlauer Berg)

Technical processing: ELECTRONIC STUDIO of the TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT of Berlin

Residency at the ELECTRONIC STUDIO of the TU, Berlin

MUSICA NOVA - Finalist selection (Czech Republic, 2008)

3- Via rupta (p.5)

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

(8'55)

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

FRENCH MINISTRY OF CULTURE and GMEM commission
Residency at the GMEM of Marseille

ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRAL CONTEMPORAIN - Direction: Fabiàn PANISELLO
Technical processing: GMEM

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

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

Heterogeneous materials (instrumental and urban sounds – in particular those of the subway in this series) merge in a plastic fabric in constant evolution, which goes beyond categories and within which emerge a dialectic between the endless renewable potentialities of the paths of all 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 title *Fluctuatio (in)animi* to evoke the difficulty of avoiding emotional alienation, a crystallisation on the same kind of relationships or behaviours. It would be this floating moment which can shift to a repetition creative of micro-differences within the structure and matter, or to a deadly repetition incapable of generating new structuring, to the magnetic attraction exerted by the poles of fixation present in the mechanics of the affects. It could also be the systematic inclination towards this mechanics, despite the opening to another possible field, Freud's Thanatos, which then would not indicate the death of all 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 one 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 complexes of objects in themselves, whose identity is constituted and dissolved all at once, but the network 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 all automatism, would be characterized by the capacity of continually inventing new ramifications.

Clara Maïda, November 2006

2nd part: **Ipso facto**

for electronics

(9'34)

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 first 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 premiere 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 little 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 other two pieces of the series, my aim 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 it cannot be told 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 of "via rupta" was a broken or cleared, opened way.

The whole piece is pervaded with this ambiguity between the breaking of 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 (a kind of virtual, abstract body, since it appears only in dreams and fantasies in which it 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 those 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 kind of intrusive object whose paths bore holes in matter (via rupta), and its network structure reminds of psychic processes. The merging of the two sound worlds (the 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 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 2006