

## **INTERVIEW: Clara MAÏDA and Sophie DARDEAU**

Sophie DARDEAU: concert flutist

Professor and associated researcher at Paris IV-Sorbonne University (FR)

Flutist of L'ITINÉRAIRE ensemble, Paris (FR)

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**Sophie Dardeau: *One of your compositional preoccupations relates to the apprehension of temporal flux, with a non-linear and pluridirectional time as a central axis. Could you tell us more about this?***

Clara Maïda: Yes, but first of all, it is necessary to delineate its origin in my approach for it is not systematically a musical time as such though there are numerous possibilities of apprehending time. From the beginning of my research, this approach was actually related to the way time is experienced during psychoanalysis as well as to the way it is theorized by psychoanalysts. During my psychoanalytical experience, I was immediately aware that when we speak, there is of course a chronological time which is that of speech, with successive sentences, a linear order of the discourse, but at the same time, speech can follow multiple possible directions. For instance, we speak, we follow a certain line, then it stops for something in this line has referred us to another element - a memory, a dream -, we therefore follow another line on which another element induces a point of divergence, a bifurcation of speech towards something else. Flux thus crosses the lines and induces bifurcations, but there are also many breaks - it can be a very fragmented time. Something suggests a link, connects to something else - a word, a fragment of word, a situation, an element of situation -, a resonance occurs between two situations, two fragments of situations, two persons, two fragments of persons. The discourse branches out on ever more lines each time an element echoes another. That is what is named the free association technique. At first, we can have the impression that it leads nowhere, but that is incidentally not the question since the technique consists in giving free rein to what comes in speech without trying to create a logical order or to respect a chronology. Therefore we let it come, and step by step, some junctions take place. Some elements of the fragments of sentences, which seemed trivial or isolated, collide with others. Echoes, ricochets between the small elements of speech - the signifiers - regularly form intersections and a sense emerges which rebounds again on other enunciations. We then understand that this disorder of speech was made of an underlying,

unconscious logic. These links, these coagulations between scraps of memories, fragments of dream, elements of daily life, did not occur by chance, of course. At certain times during an analysis, all these lines lead to some meeting points which make a meaning emerge, and this meaning will revive the flux of speech. From bifurcations to others, from links-up to others, we can go towards psychic zones that were unbeknown. Dreams also open doors. And I am also interested in their structure which influences the kind of musical structure and form that I try to elaborate.

***S. D.: Does the first apprehension of a fragmented time then determine the global form of the work in progress?***

C. M.: It can be a fragmented time. On the chronological level of the musical discourse, we can indeed choose to write some sequences which will be abruptly interrupted, but we then have to make sure that a signal in this sequence will have been clearly perceived by the listeners so that they can recognize something of it in a further sequence of the piece. What is important to keep in mind when one is composing this kind of form is a will to make listeners understand that the fragmentation is only apparent and that there is actually a continuity which operates on a non immediately accessible level. I thus work on a double level: on the one hand, I develop processes which will induce the mutation of musical sequences. It must be clearly perceptible for the listener that a texture is being developed or that sound objects are being modified. I often articulate my pieces around two or three evolving sequences, based on the idea of a sound flux, of a development and of the elasticity of matter. In these sequences, something follows somehow a quasi-irreducible course, as if carried away by a force. But on the other hand, I both work on the articulation of these different sequences and a correspondence of other elements or situations that have first been fleetingly enounced in the piece. I like to let the listener's memory come up in a way that rather short sound signals perceived at a time as heterogeneous to the situation become significant in another sequence in the light of what happened in between. Thus they find their place and eventually develop. Silences are also important because they give a time of remembrance to the listener who can recreate a logic beyond the breaks and connect the fragments heard, but sometimes only as an aftermath. Sometimes again, two evolving sequences can at the end of their mutation converge towards the same kind of minimal and very clearly audible musical gesture. This time again, an order emerges, which was not necessarily so evident at other times of the piece. There is thus a kind of dialectics between an apparent disorder and an emerging order, between an irreversible flux and the ruptures of situations. That is what is

experienced during psychoanalytical sessions, but with music, we can get a strongly increased richness for although words present a thickness and are likely to resonate with other words, the possibility of superimposing multiple sound layers in musical discourse reduces on the one hand the limits nevertheless imposed by the semantic dimension of words and, on the other hand, the fact that one person can only enounce one single layer at a time. While the different strata of language are either inaudible or pronounced on a horizontal line with a temporal arrow, and therefore transfer the vertical dimension onto a horizontal axis, the sound layers accumulate, allowing us to hear many simultaneous levels, and are worked on horizontal and vertical dimensions. Moreover, the diagonals of sound waves arise from the intersection of both axes. There is therefore a multiplication of ricochets, of trajectories and it then induces a potentially infinite complexity. To go back to the point, there is actually a possible fragmentation but, at definite times of the pieces, there are times of re-composition of the whole musical logic, and the piece is conceived so as to reveal its internal logic at the end, when all the situations have developed successively and find their meaning in the relationships which have interwoven.

**S. D.: *Does it take the form of a fabric?***

C. M.: It is a fabric, it is a diagram of forces, it is a cartography which gets embodied. We can look for several ways of trying to describe the functioning of my pieces. But to get back to the previous question, the form is not pre-established. The course of forces in action, the logic of mutation of the microelements which make up the piece and the way they combine or connect together, generate the form of the piece. In language, the multiple combinations of phonemes endlessly create words and sentences. And the spectrum of language is made up of virtual permutations of phonemes that could have given another word, virtual choices of words that could have given another sentence. This idea of a spectrum of language or of music goes beyond the notion of sound spectrum (the addition and merging of the partials of a sound) although it is however of a similar nature. Below the surface of discourse, whether verbal or musical, the virtualities of speech live and resonate. Of course, we can also relate it to the spectrum of colour, and to its hidden components which enrich the perceptible surface. The spectrum of sound, of colour, of verbal or musical speech, it is its unconscious horizon. With music, this horizon is even more suggestive because of the possible polyphonic characteristic. I find highly interesting to work both on this horizontal, fluid or fragmented time which comes to multiple possible crossroads, and on the vertical dimension of time, i.e. on the possible superimposition of lines that have different times. This simultaneity of different times which induces, among others, the sensation of a diagonal. If

the same kind of sound contour is enounced with several speeds on various layers, the first vertical dimension gradually leans down for the meeting points between the various layers shifted by the different speeds of enunciation. I like this idea of a simultaneous presence of different times for it seems to describe the psychic structure. Different areas actually coexist in our psychic structure, from the more archaic to the more developed. Nothing disappears from the very first experiences, from birth and infancy, but everything accumulates in our unconscious memory. Even in adulthood, our psychic life is permeated with all these imprints which are not erased and which condition our affects, our life, in a very significant and unknown way. We have somehow several ages at the same time. On the level of a musical structure and of its own energy, it is interesting to breathe life in all this, each sound layer unfolding in a way one of the psychic strata. But it is a graphic way of speaking. Reality is much more complex.

***S. D.: This reflection was a starting point in your works... Could we develop this aspect about other pieces?***

C. M.: This aspect is present in all my pieces, let us say in a more elaborate way, from "Holes and bones" to the most recent pieces, although I have added since then other scientific models such as neuropsychology or genetics. These are also models which throw an interesting light on structures. I started from the structural approach of psychoanalysis, and especially Lacanian psychoanalysis, to enrich then my reflection with other structural approaches. But the common point between these fields is that they propose structural models.

***S. D.: In what way is your approach different?***

C. M.: As a matter of fact, it is both different and not different. There is always this conception, present in all my pieces, according to which any artistic work is an expression of the unconscious. All my pieces naturally reflect my unconscious psychic structure. But beyond this observation, I found interesting to go beyond the simple fact that the content of the work mirrors my personal psychic architecture, and to try to account for the very structure of the unconscious for any human being - his relations to the body, not only the anatomical or biological one, but also the drive body, as it is considered by psychoanalysts, its relations to the libido, to desire. I thus chose to stand at the intersection of scientific approaches which try to explain the functioning of life, of the body, of an organism - genetics proposes some models -, the functioning of the brain - this is what neuropsychology brings us - and the functioning of the Psyche - psychoanalysis comes here into play. This complexity of our human experience when we perceive, feel, think, act, with our body,

our brain. And all the discordances that we can subjectively experience between the body and the mind, between the cerebral and the psychic functioning. On the one hand, these aspects are presented in a partial way by sciences and we do not always experience these different dimensions in perfect concordance. The approaches proposed differ. But on the other hand, there is a point common to all these scientific approaches. They all operate at a structural level. On the psychic level, there is definitely a structuralist approach to the unconscious. Minimal elements - the signifiers - assemble on chains, constitute networks, are likely to connect to other chains of signifiers, to crystallize, to form knots, in short, all this structure is the Unconscious. On the cerebral level, we know the web-like structure, the neurons connected by synapses, the multiple ramifications, the brain areas, the different layers of the cortex, etc. And on the corporeal level, or in the field of life in general, we know the structure of the DNA, the connections of nucleotides, the codons which generate proteins, etc. Therefore, in the three cases, minimal elements connect to form more complex elements whose assembling produces again other more complex elements and so on. If we put aside the specific field into which this kind of structure fits, we observe that the mechanisms are the same. From one connection to the next, from one agglomerate to the next, we start from the most elementary to get to ever more complex assemblages, a body, a brain, a psyche. Mystery...! This is fascinating, and music works in the same way. Extremely minimal units link and generate structures on ever increasing levels of complexity. From one structural scientific model to the other, there are therefore crossroads, a possible step beyond boundaries - it is the very essence of life, of matter in general. Starting with psychoanalysis in the first pieces, I took thus a whole course which led me to make use of everything that was of the order of structure (it can be quantum physics as well nanosciences and nanotechnologies, which are fascinating fields). I had studied Psychology, and genetics and neuropsychology are included in the syllabus. I was then already familiar with these scientific approaches.

If we work on a structural level, all matter is always a microscopic articulation. Any object, a bed - for instance - our planet - the Earth, the whole set of planets, the cosmos, language, are always small arrangements which lead to complex conglomerates. It is more and more obvious with the development of nanotechnologies and that is why I named my music a "nanomusic".

***S. D.: From this pure structure, how do you integrate the notion of pluritemporality in your music?***

C. M.: If we talk about matter in general, we can start from the hypothesis that there is a beginning, a chronology, the Theory of the Big Bang, for instance, or the birth of a cell, of an

individual, to remain on the human level. We have the questions of Why and How asked by physicists. From electrons, neutrons, etc., elements which were not first necessarily linked, why are matter and more compact forms made up? I am interested in two aspects. Pure matter, the presence of particles, potentially free to move in any direction, with different speeds, with no arrangement already formed, and the moment when forces are at stake, forces of attraction, of collision or others, which lead these particles to form arrangements and more or less moving shapes. In my work, I am interested in the dialectics between this fragmented matter, made up of minimal elements, somehow of sound quanta, which are not integrated yet to a given order, a coherent and homogeneous whole, and the moment when, eventually, they encounter, coagulate to form a sound object or situation, as if trapped by poles of crystallization. The question that I also ask in my music is - and it goes further than a psychoanalytical research: why do elements which have an autonomous life - a cell, the elements of a cell - meet, link and form at a certain time an object, an organ, a body, a construction? I often unfold therefore in my pieces sound situations which retrace an edification from a cohesion of elements, or which inversely undo the links that were making up this situation to go back to a disorganized state, a dissolution. There is a play with this law of matter which permanently comes back in my pieces. But it can also be envisaged from the psychic angle, once more, i.e. a play around what has formed the structuration of the psyche during childhood, a play which consists in doing and undoing the course of structuration of an identity, to pass from the formed to the informal, then from the informal to the formed, crossing through the possible distortions. I prefer when different interpretations of a same piece are possible and I do not want to be trapped in a given field.

***S. D.: This time appears as being a time of elaboration... In your compositions, does this process determine the time of the piece to be or is it, inversely, a time determined by the material under construction (the matter)?***

C. M.: Yes, time is there to reveal the process. Without time, we cannot know that objects are built and disaggregated. The piece is somehow the envelope created by these processes, these trajectories of sound matter. The audible contours of these sound pathways draw a kind of moving form that the listener can receive in the time process.

***S. D.: How do you concretely apprehend this compositional process in your pieces?***

C. M.: The first approach is off-time. A bit like painters choosing their colours, I choose my particles. I always choose one or several sound spectra which result from analyses of various

sounds, always inharmonic and complex (noises, instrumental multiphonic sounds).

For my part, a sound spectrum is a piece of the sound cosmos. Is it a little as if I was defining an area, an assembling in the whole of sound wave-particles which constitute the world. I think it more as pure matter than as a sound material. I then determine the parameters according to which this or these spectrum/spectra will be able to develop in the piece, a kind of possible harmonic or spectral field. How can the different partials of this spectrum oscillate so as to generate a pathway from one area to another, for instance? It is an off-time work, for I play more with dots that I move in space to vary the directions and forms of horizontal and vertical lines. But I always work on an instability of this material. I define very strict rules of oscillation which are derived from the very structure of the analyzed spectrum. For instance, I make an inventory of one or two successions of intervals very close in some areas of this spectrum and they build microintervallic scales. The permutation of these intervals will generate a variation of these scales and each variation, applied to each frequency of the spectrum, will modify its configuration. And in this composition time process when I still manipulate in a very rudimentary way this or these first aggregate(s), when I introduce swinging movements and pivots of these dots (the frequencies of the spectrum), another area of my psyche is in advance and traversed by sound movements, imagines situations yet in a very vague way. From the instant I have these basic elements - a selected harmonic aggregate, a certain number of distortions of this aggregate's pitches -, I can think therefore the work on the in-time material, with all kinds of rhythmical processes, stretching or contraction processes of matter. Is the texture loose, is it dense? How will I pass from a tightened texture to a very refined texture? How will I pass from a texture to an object? Which stratification level will there be in such situation? It is somehow a work of sound geology. I imagine moving, sliding grounds. Or else I imagine the movement of particles which will condense into an object then will dissolve it by following opposite trajectories. Once again, it is very complex. I would say that the time of composition is already stratified or polydimensional. One part of the psyche is busy with building situations, another part is projected onto another time of the composition and a further situation, is opened on a very wide field of possibilities. All this "handiwork" on a detailed level makes my imaginary soar, as a little separated from this work, thinking more quickly than the very elaboration. And somehow, this work which puts me in a very specific psychic state is a kind of preparatory work which will allow at one moment to let go of consciousness. There is at the same time a kind of vacuity of the mind and the processes which were initiated follow their path through the potential courses which were laid out. At times, music is almost articulated on its own, apart from the conscious mind. That is the aim, to put oneself in a state where one builds something on a very minimal level, and where, at some time, one is as

carried away with each sound particle, one spreads out and multiplies oneself in the small dots aligned on the music notebook. It is difficult to explain. Another order is established, which is not on the level of consciousness. I yearn for this state for the elaborated structures are often very rich. One has the sensation that one has gone towards uncharted territory, towards the unknown within oneself. I am interested to then read again what happened in the superimposition of all these strata, and to find again elements that I will articulate in other musical situations.

**S. D.: *All these strata appear as a matter in motion.***

C. M.: Yes, it is like a whole matter. The whole set of dots, des lines, curves, entangled curves, forms a whole matter which is never static for the mobility of what makes it on a particulate level modifies the contours.

**S. D.: *How do you concretely articulate the temporal strata?***

C. M.: In general, I wish specific directions. I decide that they will go towards something really definite. So, there are several possibilities. On the one hand, they go towards something really determined, for instance, the idea of a collapse of foundations, or inversely, the idea of something elastic which will lead to rigid columns, vertically erected and interspersed with space (silences). I also like the idea according to which the complexity of a situation with the perception of superimpositions of lines going to all directions gets to a crossroads which makes sense and in which all these lines converge onto one same point or one same appearance, a clearly perceptible object or sound timbre, for instance, or the homorhythm of a finally compact agglomerate. At other times, it is the contrary, I start from homorhythm and I gradually tear up matter which rarefies and leads to silence. There can be a passage from masses to lines, from lines to dots, then from the remaining dots to holes, to silence. It is very plastic, incidentally in both senses of the word, i.e. mobile on the one hand and related to a very abstract visual imaginary on the other hand. But I like that the characteristics and functions of musical events develop. From the texture to the object, it is only a variation in the density of the dots. With the same structural minimal elements, it is possible to do whatever one wishes. This quasi-infinite potentiality is something fantastic to work on: a texture, a matter, the way dots behave together - do they coagulate or not? -, what happens on the level of their articulations - will we perceive such or such state and can this state evolve? There are not only transformations of states, but also transformations of functions. Nothing is steady, i.e. the elements whose function is to give an object at some time can inversely pulverize everything at some other time.



***S. D.: In your approach of structure, how will the fixed elements of the work be determined?***

C. M.: The fixed elements of the work are dots - which frequencies? -, the ensembles of dots - which aggregates? -, the spaces between dots - which durations? But then, from these fixed elements, following a whole set of very strict mutation rules, one can choose the way all this material will be able to move. In which directions will the dots be allowed to move (several potentialities are defined)? What is the limit to a possible stretching or contraction (rules of rhythmical transformations)? Where can these dots and lines possibly move to without modifying the rules? How many superimpositions are possible? There is thus a dialectic between fixed principles and the extremely adjustable modalities of these principles. It is the principle of the DNA molecule which, though made up of four possible letters (A, C, G, T), generates very various shapes according to the combination and the mobile succession of these letters. Then, I am aware of course that, unlike the living, the way an artist combines these elements, is never made by chance. There are obsessions that also come round, and as an artist, one is never neutral to one's material. As far as I am concerned, there are sound gestures which come back despite myself. For instance, small three-sound mobiles which revolve around an axis, a kind of symmetrical structure with a rocking or a swinging movement, repeated falling movements as well. But these gestures - which can also be named sound signifiers (and that I named "sonifiers") - are the mark of an artist and can also be named style, his/her style. Each composer has his/her gestures, his/her whole set of musical signifiers (or "sonifiers"). I thus have my own compulsions which lead me to elaborate such or such structure, and this is incidentally a good way to learn about oneself, about one's psychic structure.

***S. D.: Searching for this steady/unsteady state of matter, will the structure get some meaning according to this definite element, generating the resulting form and not the contrary?***

C. M.: Both aspects are taken in a "feedback" process, i.e. the structure actually gets some meaning thanks to a perceptive anticipation of the composer and to the further perception of the listener. There is a back-and-forth movement between concept and percept, i.e. the structural dimension is elaborated through an intellectual process which anticipates the global form or the kind of matter wished while composing. And at the same time, the elaboration of structural processes draws the formal becoming of the piece. To use genetic terms, the writing work operates on the genotype level (an ensemble of articulations of minimal units) but will give a phenotype (a perceptible global form whose structure is not directly perceptible). To be more

accurate, if I take the example of the human body, genes code for proteins on one level, cells, organs are built on a superior level of elaboration, then the body on the last level, an assembling of organs. A similar construction going from the elementary to the complex will govern the choice of composition rules, but with a constant back-and-forth movement between, for instance, a kind of microscopic apprehension (composition on a minimal level of articulation) and a more macroscopic apprehension, on the level of an auditory human scale, a level of surface (a conceptualization and inner listening of a global movement of the work). The concept drives the directions favoured during the writing process. The writing work feeds a perceptive anticipation which rebounds again on the possible paths on a more global level, and so on. There is also a back-and-forth movement between the possibility of abstraction (the discarnate structure) and the incarnation of this structure. Intellect and sensoriality respond and mutually stimulate each other. It is not enough for me to let myself be led by my inner listening for one is quickly trapped in one's usual patterns. To abstract oneself from sensoriality enables to open new ways for oneself. But at the same time, once this structural "a-sensorial" work is done, a control of inner listening is necessary to check if it seems likely to sound as one wished. It is a little paradoxical, I allow myself to be deaf on one axis and to find again my inner listening on another axis so that the work is not something dry or compartmentalized, so that it keeps an organic characteristic, so that the whole gets the desired coherence and kinetics.

To me, the important function of art, of music, is to play on both levels, conceptuality and sensoriality, adding a third one, affects. If there is only one of these dimensions without the others, there is something incomplete. There is the wish to access and to make the listener access something beyond the perceptible, the sensorial. And paradoxically, sensoriality is used to attempt to this aim. On the one hand, I elaborate kinds of processes which undo strata after one another for the "skeleton" to be discerned. On the other hand, I cover the skeleton with a gradual accumulation of strata in order to give thickness, a kind of "flesh" to the work.

***S. D.: Like a painter who chooses his pigments, your very palpable approach to texture is combined with a conceptual approach. Could you talk about this longer?***

C. M.: Although I find it important to have a conceptual approach, I am exceedingly wary of pure conceptual art which remains on the level of discourse, of the elaboration of a concept without going beyond it. As I just said, the couple concept/percept is indivisible. If both are not apprehended together, it does not make sense to me. One dimension of truth is missing. I have the ambition, maybe unattainable, to touch people on different levels through my music, i.e.

simultaneously on the intellectual, sensorial, visceral, quasi-"intestinal" levels. I talked of an attempt to make something beyond the perceptible discernible. There is also a desire to trigger the listener's movements, inner corporeal vibrations (that is why I use the term "intestinal"). Once more, the desire to operate at the intersection of everything which constitutes the functioning and the reactions of a human being. It is a little a way of trying to account for the richness and complexity of individuals. The psyche is so complex. It is a little a meta-artistic work (music would lead one to think about music), and a metapsychological one (it would lead one to think about the psyche). I try to show this complex dimension that we keep in ourselves, i.e. the fact of being matter (the biological, anatomical dimensions) and psyche (affects, libido, which cannot be reduced to this biological dimension, not even the neurologic one). As far as I am concerned, music is a bit the same thing. I experience it as a projection of myself, of my psyche. I also experience it as an attempt to represent the human psyche and I experience it as pure matter in motion. It is certainly a project with an ambition beyond my capabilities, but I tend to this. This task is almost impossible, but I think that one should set impossible aims to attempt to go beyond oneself. In any case, this is what I find thrilling. That is why I create.

***S. D.: In this search for matter in motion, what is the place of the imaginary in the apprehension of sound texture in your compositions?***

C. M.: There is an abstract and kinetic imaginary. So, in a paradoxical way, one can speak of an imageless imaginary, or else of an imaginary made of so mobile images that movements have a pre-eminence on figures. To give a visual example, if I compare with painting, I would say that an elementary work consists in preparing one's colours, the choice of pigments, the kind of material to be used, which is an off-time work, then comes the work of articulation, the work in time and space. If I give pictorial references, it seems to me that my work is sometimes a course from Pollock - the intertwining, the complex entanglement of numerous lines - to Rothko - the pure colour, space, the sensation of void. When I think the textures, I often ask myself this kind of problems: how will I gradually pass from dense masses to refined lines or to dots isolated in space? How will I work on masses, with coagulation and thickness or with interlacing and strata? It is flat or swollen? Is it opaque or transparent? How will the strata be organized? Evolving or static, repetitive or with modulations (meaning here modifications)? With accumulation or with rarefaction? Will I give the impression that the textures go beyond the frame (in reference to Pollock who gives the impression that it is a piece of an infinite matter) or inversely, will the trajectories collide with the boundaries? This dialectic often comes round, that of the limits one

faces to or that one is to push further or to go beyond. Will the movements of matter be unidirectional or polydirectional, homorhythmic or polyrhythmic? Is there one single temporal perspective or a temporal relativity (each stratum unfolding its own time, for instance)? There are somehow obsessions of the kind: one extremely ramified structure evolves towards void, has somehow exhausted all its resources, and only remains a kind of quintessence of matter. There is a moment of temporal suspension when one single very fragile line subsists. Or else two situations can collide, which induces a swinging movement until one of them forces itself on the other. Or else different micro-situations evolve with a kind of parallel montage (of the cinematographic kind). There are several ways of undoing a process, by exhaustion, liquidation, or by saturation and explosion as if the system could no longer contain too large a number of elements. It is therefore a work at the limits of the structure for a densification always has its limits. It might have none, but I think that it would be painfully experienced on a perceptive and compositional level at some time (my mind has also its limits...). But I would rather be interested to write a piece with an interrupted process of mutation of matter from beginning to the end. I have never attempted it. There is always some rupture at a given time. It is also a component which recurs in my pieces.

***S. D.: Is this caused by some realizations related to the instrumental order?***

C. M.: One dimension concerns interpretation. On one level, it is true that I try to push the performers to the limit of what they can realize (the rapidity of the events, for instance, or a extreme dynamic energy to exert), but I am aware at the same time that pauses should be arranged for the body (gestures, breathing). But the "borderline" dimension is very important. There is a play on the limits of the structure (how far can it spread its elaborations?), on the instrumental limits (how can one make an instrument sound in an eventually slightly unusual way?) and on the limits of the global timbre (what sound complex will one establish by accumulating, combining different instruments already themselves rather used beyond their possibilities?), that rebound on the limits of perception. So many instrumental possibilities multiplied the openings - with the question of timbre and all that was discovered on timbre during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But timbre must also be written for if we please ourselves with using the possibilities developed with instruments during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, without trying complex structural combinations, we may remain despite ourselves in a rather well known sound field nowadays (especially Lachenmann, for my generation, has been there since then). And it is about pushing research further.

**S. D.: *Would the process be particularly determined or restricted by this instrumental limit?***

C. M.: Yes, but that is precisely what binds me to the instrument. Once again, it is a paradox. I like working with instruments and with performers because there are limits, but the interest is to exceed them. If there were no limits, it would not be interesting for there would be nothing to exceed... And as I said earlier, I find really interesting this notion of something that is forced on, chips at, goes round the limit, struggles with it too. That is why, even if I often use electronics in my music, I am mostly thrilled by this relation to the instrument because of the physical limits narrower than those of electronics and because of the human dimension, the relation to the body, involved in performance. There is a challenge in borderline playing, playing with this border we try to push as far as possible, with all the efforts that this may entail and all the resistances that it may incidentally induce in the performer. It operates in another dimension than that of pleasure. Something is related to the effort of leaving the psychic and corporeal framework in which one can feel sometimes confined as a human being.

**S. D.: *According to this same idea, we may suppose that Pollock was both limited in his paintings and interrupted in his momentum...?***

C. M.: He might have chosen to paint larger sizes, but anyway, they would not be extensible to infinity. It is interesting to show that the gesture is taken beyond the boundaries of the canvas. Even if these boundaries exist *de facto*, we can feel that the gesture did not want to take it into account. There is therefore a kind of space beyond that which is felt by the viewer. A kind of possible infinite surface. But paradoxically, if the canvas was not a rupture with the surrounding space, we may feel this possible infinity in a lesser way. That is the question: can we apprehend infinity? Or do we apprehend it only as a possibility revealed by the limit? The relation to the instrument and the performer would be somehow of this order. The instrument with its physical limits and techniques, the performers with their corporeal limits. There is a dialectic between these "limited" entities and the multiplication of imaginary potentialities. They collide and it generates something that lies at the border between what is closed and what is open. Also at the limit of our sensorial boundaries which make us perceive the world in a deceptive way, if we believe scientific theories, and notably those of quantum physics. The limit to our visual perception, for instance, reminds me of the pixellization of a computer image. An objet, a table, is a whole set of particles whose trajectories are not precisely interrupted. But our eye recreates a homogeneous and steady form in a kind of coagulation of the particles, and this atomized

formation can be perceived only if the object is observed with tools such as an electronic microscope. It seems interesting to me to try to make one hear that what is perceived is much more atomized than its visible or audible reality. This therefore explains my work on a dialectic between atomization and agglomeration of the musical matter, between the movement of sound particles and their accumulation to form objects. It is somehow as if I was saying: you are certain to perceive this, but it is a sensorial illusion and I will attempt to make this illusion perceptible. And paradoxically, with the very limits of our perception (our human audition), I will attempt to allow you to hear when this limit is exceeded (something of the inaudible order).

Clara Maïda, September 2010