

## **Fluctuatio (in)animi**

for flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass and a 4-channel electroacoustic device

**Clara Maïda**

(13'42)

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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 crystallization on recurrent patterns of relationships or of behaviours (that can almost seem inanimate). It would be this floating moment which can shift, either to a repetition creative of micro-differences within the structure and matter, or to a deadly repetition incapable of generating new structuring, i.e. to the magnetic attraction exerted by the poles of fixation present in the mechanics of 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.

This piece is the first part of the series *Psyché-Cité/Transversales* which aims at developing a sound system that works like a mutant organism (an ensemble of terms and relations), at the intersection of psychic and urban matters. It includes heterogeneous materials (instrumental and urban sounds presenting a mechanical character) in a plastic fabric which is in constant evolution and goes beyond categories.

Like in *Via rupta* (the third part of the series), 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 suggest.

The comparison between the psychic and body experience and the urban world expresses in a confrontation between two opposite sound "behaviours": the speed and proliferation encountered in mental connections as well as in the structure of a city, or the inclination to confine in repetitive processes, on the psychological level or in the development of our life environment.

The whole piece is based on the dialectic between the proposition of giving a mobile architecture to all these sounds that live in an anarchic way under the city, in order to underline their poetic strength, their almost living appearance sometimes (rattles, breaths, etc.), and a kind of inarticulate and closing speech, that of the beat, of the inexorably stuck repetition of mechanised sounds. It reminds us that since we tend to forget that these urban prostheses are delusions to veil our lacks, they keep us in the illusion of power (a kind of unchanging permanence which cancels the idea of a possible end), but they also impose us an alienation that we want to conceal.

Oscillating between this process 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 the question of the difficulty of a true freedom that would be characterized by the capacity of continually inventing new ramifications, avoiding all automatism.

Clara Maïda, November 2006