

Daan Janssens (*étude scénographique*) (2008)

for mezzo soprano and six instruments

the origin of (*étude scénographique*) – a composition for mezzo soprano and six instruments – was an ode by Ricardo Reis (one of the heteronyms of the renowned Portuguese writer Fernando Pessoa). Most of the text is effectively audible in the composition. However, the first and the last words are only *virtually* present.

*Pequena vida consciente, sempre*

*Da repetida imagem perseguida*

*Do fim inevitável, a cada hora*

*Sentindo-se mudada,*

*E, como Orfeu volvendo à vinda esposa*

*O olhar algoz, para o passado erguendo*

*A memória pra em mágoas o apagar*

*No báratro da mente.*

*Little knowing life, always*

*Pursued by the repeated image*

*Of its inevitable ending, itself continually*

*Feeling a different life*

*And, like Orpheus who turned*

*His killing glance to his wife, raising*

*Memory to what was, to erase it in sorrows*

*In the abyss of the spirit.*

In my composition, I work primarily with different short motifs and musical gestures, sometimes linked to one instrument. Rather than being intended to illustrate the text word for word, the music evokes the underlying thought. The text, which is more lyrically, yet fragmentarily presented, is *pursued* by continually recurring short musical images (a nervous tremolo in the viola, a bowed crotale...).