Twittering Machines

The ideas the Swiss artist Paul Klee expressed concerning the structure of art have fascinated me for a long time. Klee, himself a part-time musician, compiled many of the technical features of his work in a number of volumes of inspiring pedagogic value.

Like several other composers, I have always felt attracted to what Klee could have called "Twittering Machines": the unpredictable mechanisms whose systematic—yet imperfect—behavior is not unlike the "processes" we often find in musical structures. I love to observe clockworks with missing or erratic parts; or a spider who laboriously tries to climb a wall, or one of those precarious robots built by Rodney Brooks, whose "function" is not to fulfill a task but, simply, to "exist". They are all twittering machines whose image, interestingly enough, often ignites my musical imagination. My musical "twittering machines", an uninterrupted chain of short variations, try to be be tangible, yet always imperfect, musical "mechanisms".