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## **Spiritual corporeality: towards embodied gnosis through a dancing language**

Tunca, S.A.

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## CHAPTER 6

### Dance, Music and Dance Language in SEI

#### SEI

(SEI#1 → DUE → SEI & DUE → TRE → SEI#3 → SEI)

SEI is a dance and music performance that we developed between 2018-2023 in collaboration with composer Giuliano Bracci<sup>423</sup>. SEI is the practice component of this dissertation and evolved in parallel with the written text<sup>424</sup>. The creative process developed in relation to the question of how the dancing body can be attuned to act as an interface between the metaphysical and the physical through which I can investigate and communicate a sense of intimate proximity with a creative source.<sup>425</sup> I respond to this question in the written text. In the performance we respond to it from non-verbal and performative perspectives through dance and music.

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<sup>423</sup> Giuliano Bracci is a PhD candidate at ACPA docARTES. "Giuliano Bracci", giulianobracci.com, accessed 7.5.23, <https://giulianobracci.com/>.

<sup>424</sup> SEI#1 was performed at Broedplaats de Lely in Amsterdam (30.9.2018) and at the celebration of the ten-year anniversary of ACPA in Leiden (18.10.2018). "Individual Project", phdarts.eu, accessed 6.4.2023, <https://phdarts.eu/Individual-Projects/2018-09-30-Sei>, "PhDarts conference/Celebrating 10 years PhDarts," Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, Kabk.nl, accessed 6.4.2023, <https://www.kabk.nl/agenda/phdarts-conference-celebrating-10-years-phdarts>. The integration of SEI & DUE (SEI#2) was performed at the ARC (art\_research\_convergence) session of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) during the Peel Slowly and See Festival in Leiden (25.8.2021). "ARC session SEI & DUE Dance and Music Performance by Giuliano Bracci and Suzan Tunca," universiteitleiden.nl, accessed 19.3.2023, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2021/09/sei-due-dance-and-music-performance-by-giuliano-bracci-and-suzan-tunca>; "ARC\_view", researchcatalogue.net, accessed 19.3.2023 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1118707/1118708> (please scroll to the right to SEI & DUE). The integration of TRE into SEI & DUE (SEI#3) was performed at the University Theater of the University of Amsterdam (16. + 17. April 2022).

<sup>425</sup> To recapitulate my research questions: Is it possible to gain new perspectives on the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical through a dancing language that weaves together corporeal and verbal discourse? How can the dancing body be attuned to act as an interface between the metaphysical and the physical through which I can investigate and communicate a sense of intimate proximity with a creative source?

Bracci's PhD research is focused on transcribing musical works from the past in the context of contemporary music. He conceptualizes the practice of transcribing as "a form of listening, (...) as creating a new relation to an existing musical work; a relation that establishes itself in a composer-transcriber's musical imagination: the other work is transformed; it is reimagined, reinvented, rewritten."<sup>426</sup>

In SEI we bring together Bracci's research on transcribing the music of the past and my research on how to embody the ancient idea of gnosis through a [\*dance language\\*\*](#).

The *dance language* evolves in relation to distinct and evocative acoustic landscapes created by Bracci. Throughout the performance I enact different aspects of a quest for intimate proximity with an unspeakable creative source. [\*Languaging\\*\*](#) this quest nonverbally through dance is intended to activate the potential to experience [\*embodied gnosis\\*\*](#) and to communicate this state to the spectators. The polyphonic musical dimensions created by Bracci allow me to dis- and re-orient myself in ways that support me to enter that state.

The [\*attunements\\*\*](#) in chapter five describe a selection of psychophysical foundations for this state of knowing-being in dance. In this chapter, I describe how I communicate the search for this state through dance and in dialogue with the acoustic landscapes created by Bracci. With "acoustic landscapes" I refer to the potential of the music to shape the space in which I am dancing. The music creates acoustic fields of tension that challenge my sense of internal and external orientation. It triggers an articulation of pathways of movement through which I performatively explore communicative connections between inner and outer movement impulses.

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<sup>426</sup> docARTES, "Transcribing: between listening, memory and invention," Research project Giuliano Bracci, accessed 5.3.2023, <https://www.docartes.be/en/research-projects/transcription-and-the-role-of-memory>.

In the following, I will describe the overarching lines of the evolution of the performance. SEI#1, DUE, SEI&DUE, TRE and SEI#3 correspond to the linear progression in time of the phases of the creative process.

**Timeline creative process SEI:**

**SEI#1:** 2018-2019→ **DUE:** 2019 -2020→ **SEI&DUE:** 2021→**TRE:** 2022→**SEI#3-SEI:** 2022-2023

Be welcome to visit a more detailed documentation of the creative process including annotated visual excerpts where I implement the method of [retrospective dance writing\\*](https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/2167629):  
<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/2167629>



SEI#1, topshot, DAS AHK Amsterdam, July 2019.

## SEI#1

In SEI#1, I dance with the “Ciaccona,”<sup>427</sup> a solo violin composition by Johan Sebastian Bach, re-mixed live by Giuliano Bracci. SEI#1 inhabits a performative space suspended between improvisation and choreography/composition, between predetermination and intuitive creative emergence.

The “Ciaccona” is the fifth movement of Partita No. 2 in D-minor. This Partita is part of a larger compositional structure of three Sonatas *da chiesa* and three Partitas of dance movements for unaccompanied violin composed in 1720.<sup>428</sup> The six Sonatas and Partitas are titled by J.S. Bach “Sei Solo.”

In his re-interpretation of the “Ciaccona”, Bracci creates a polyphonic space where the “Ciaccona” is multiplied: two 21<sup>st</sup> century recordings of the “Ciaccona” are remixed live by Bracci using nine parallel musical layers. This live mixing instrument was designed to support my exploration into different corporealities in dance, to speak through a [polyphonic body\\*](#) that speaks with different textures of psychophysical tonalities. Two of the nine layers are interpretations of the “Ciaccona” by Janine Jansen (2003) and Gideon Kremer (2001). In six additional layers, the sounds of both interpretations are manipulated by electronic filters. One additional layer introduces a composition for vocals by Bracci (“Non sta, si svolge e gira”, 2012), which is inspired by a collage of texts written by Giordano Bruno between 1584 and 1585 about “the infinity of the universe and the human condition in a space that has not a predetermined center.”<sup>429</sup>

Bracci manipulates the behavior of the “Ciaccona” in a multilayered space where individual and independent voices interact. The general form of the piece is given by the “Ciaccona”. Within this structure, the number of layers involved and their spatial origin (variable through a surround sound system), the changes of density, clarity, quality and the type of voice shape the acoustic and spatial experience of the performance.

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<sup>427</sup> J.S. Bach, *Partita No.2 in D minor for solo violin, BWV 1004*.

<sup>428</sup> Shute, *Sei Solo: Symbolum? The Theology of J.S. Bach's Solo Violin Works*, 2016, xxiii.

<sup>429</sup> Giuliano Bracci, “Non sta, si svolge e gira” (2012), <http://giulianobracci.com/non-sta-si-svolge-e-gira/>. The works by Giordano Bruno that Bracci has used for his collage are *De l'Infinito, universo e mondi*, *De gli eroici furori* and *De la causa, principio et uno*.

The presence and unpredictable unfolding of these layered voices support me in discovering new textures of corporeality and different kinds of orientations for incorporated and spatially projected movement articulation in dialogue with the sounds.

During each iteration of SEI#1, Bracci's acoustic universe supports me in discovering a variety of states of being. These states accumulate as experiential knowledge by psychophysically cognizing layers of reality which I communicate nonverbally through the dance.<sup>430</sup> Bracci responds to the performative states that I enter along the way by making choices in the live-mixing of the nine tracks based on my behavior and his musical intuition.

These choices influence again my experience of the "Ciaccona" and its expression through dance. When the quality of the relation between the dance and the sounds settles in a state of repetition or predictability, Bracci purposely disrupts the *status quo*. He reorients the musical dimension in a way that I cannot relate anymore to the stable structure of the "Ciaccona", except by imagining its continuity in my inner ear. Losing the ability to predict what is happening in the music, I also lose a concrete and stable reference of musical elements to dialogue with through the dance. I then allow the deeper layers of my body to take over the choice making in terms of movement origination, articulation, dynamics, spatial positioning and orientation. Being forced to explore other relational references than the stable score of the "Ciaccona", I dive deeper into unknown areas of movement origination inside and outside of my body. The possible referents for communicative relations become more and more speculative. Who or what is the subject of the *dance language* or the objective of its communication becomes unsettled in a mobile triangle between the dancer, the dance and the observers of the dance. Both, the conscious awareness of a dancer that witnesses movements from unconscious strata of her body and the spectator are the observers of a dance that emerges from an unknown place.

In SEI#1, two polarity pairs and the spectrum of experience between them that draws them together are the foundational axes for the logic of expression of my dancing body: known (choreographed) and unknown (spontaneously emerging) movement and gravity and levity.

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<sup>430</sup> The *attunements* as described in chapter five are a limited selection of verbal descriptions of this psychophysically accumulated experiential knowledge. They have been identified through a retrospective analysis of the creative process.

In the dynamic spectrum between known and unknown movement I play with the two different types of movement origination and the intermediary zone of experience that enables a creative dialogue between them. The main difference between both approaches to generate movement is that performing choreographed movement reactivates movement patterns that have already been inscribed in the body. These patterns can be accessed consciously, they are already known to the dancer. The spontaneously emerging movements, on the other hand, come from an unknown – or unconscious - place of origin. I associate the ability to intuit this place of movement origination with the presence of the metaphysical within the physical. Performing movements in relation to the spectrum between the (physically sensible) known and the (intuitively intelligible) unknown becomes a way of experientially exploring possible relations between the two of them. A clear-cut distinction dissolves in the intermediary zone between both approaches. This enables another state of being, knowing and speaking through dance to come “online”. By letting go of pre-defined movements (which I tend to reference during moments of not-knowing how to continue the dance), I experience a more challenging situation that forces me to rely exclusively on what my body comes up with in each moment of the performance. At the same time, the possibility to encounter the unspeakable unknown becomes more concretely tangible by searching for movement origination from a sense of an expanded corporeality that extends its limbs through the physical towards the metaphysical inside and outside of my body.

Engaging movement with the dynamic tension field between gravity and levity adds another experiential layer to my exploration. I work here with a felt connection between the force of will and the experience of gravity and levity: different qualities of will traverse my dancing body and influence the texture of the dance. I associate my individual personal will with the force of gravity, with how I engage my weight in relation to the ground underneath my feet. I associate something like an impersonal, cosmic, evolutionary or maybe even artistic will with levity, with the infinite space above my head. In the dance of SEI#1, I explore the tension field between individual personal will and an infinitely larger and more potent will as a vehicle for expression. At the same time, I explore how to communicate this vertically aligned orientation horizontally, to the observers that are present in the performative space.

My approach to dance differs from a free dance and music improvisation because of the artistic-epistemic goal that motivates the dance: to be informed by my dancing body about potential relationships between the metaphysical and the physical through processes of *linguaging* the experience of their interpenetration.

I am engaged in the performance as a performer who creates a dance and as a researcher who wants to explore the meaning and nature of an intuited spiritual-corporeal intelligence that fuels my creative output. The sounds that give rise to the polyphonic musical dimensions resonate in the psychophysical space of my dancing body and I transform these resonances into danced expressions. This communication can evoke in me the ability to perceive a spiritual-corporeal layer of reality where the physical appears to blend with the metaphysical. It is not evident to me whether I perceive it because I unconsciously generate it by searching for it, or whether it is there anyway, and I am enabled to perceive it through processing movement as non-verbal communication.

It is impossible for me to estimate or predict how this communication is perceived by the spectator. As mentioned in chapter one, possible meanings of this text and of the text of the dancing body emerges between the dancer (me), the dance, the musical composition, this written text, the spectators of the dance and the readers of this text. The intensity of the experience of the dance is amplified by the presence of the spectators. The spectators also experience the resonance of the sounds, but this experience is not exteriorized through spatially articulated movement. When the frequency and intensity of my exteriorized inner movements resonate with and meet the frequency and intensity of the inner movements of the spectator, our beings can meet in the spaces in and between us, the dance and the sounds. A shared experience of the potential of *embodied gnosis* may come into being.

SEI#1 begins with mapping my body in motion as exactly as possible with the melody, dynamics and affective intensity of the sound of the violin. Gradually adding musical and performative layers (along the two foundational axes for the logic of expression of my dancing body as described above) provokes a deviation from the direct relation between the movements of the body and the sounds of the violin. This deviation creates an opening, an in between space for other layers of communicative corporeality to come into being.



As SEI#1 unfolds in time (ca. 15 min. in total), I deliberately detach from known patterns and delegate the choice making to the deeper, yet unknown layers of my body.<sup>431</sup> Intuitively emerging movements (from the spiritual/somatic unconscious or the subtle body) then dialogue with the polyphonic dimensions that Bracci creates from Bach's composition.<sup>432</sup>

I then enter a performative state where the movements emerge from a psychophysical texture of inner liquidity, suspended between gravity and levity. The dance then starts to speak through me, my dancing body almost articulates itself. In this performative state I search for the cutting edge between uninhibited surrender and just enough control to be able to articulate the movement and to navigate the body through the space.<sup>433</sup>

## DUE

I started generating the movements for DUE in silence, from the state of being I find myself after performing SEI#1. My psychophysical center of gravity has shifted towards a higher place inside of my body. A state of being suspended between gravity and levity can now be sustained during longer amounts of time. In DUE, I continue to work from the dynamic field of tension between choreographed and intuitively emerging movement and between gravity and levity. As an extension of SEI#1 into another musical and performative dimension, I continue to search in DUE for progressively deeper sources of movement origination. The deeper I enter the unknown depths of my body, the subtler these sources become.

They appear to be of such a subtle nature that it becomes increasingly difficult to discern whether these movements originate from a corporeal sensation, or whether they come from some kind of zone of being that precedes or causes corporeal sensation.

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<sup>431</sup> For an annotated visual impression of a segment of dance from deeper strata of movement origination see "SEI deeper", researchcatalogue.net, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/652390>.

<sup>432</sup> For an annotated visual impression of performative states and related corporealities in SEI please visit "Thresholds", researchcatalogue.net, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/694147>

<sup>433</sup> For an annotated visual impression of a segment of dance from deeper strata of movement origination see "SEI deeper", researchcatalogue.net, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/652390>.

A place of being that lives at the same time underneath as well as far beyond the borders of the skin of my physical body.

I synthesized the first movement experiments of DUE into an improvised sequence in silence. I recorded this sequence and sent the video to Bracci who used it as a departure point for a new composition. Bracci watched the video and created a first landscape of sound that builds on pre-recorded instrumental and vocal materials from two of his earlier compositions: *Utopia sottile* for hyper organ and large ensemble (2019) and *Se non in ombra e specchio* (2019) for eight voices on texts by Giordano Bruno. These are fragments from *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* where Bruno relinquishes the idea of a hierarchically structured universe; *De gli eroici furori* (with dialogues on the love of the human being for the divine nature) and *De la causa, principio et uno* (1584-85). The libretto of *Se non in ombra e specchio* consists of a collage from these texts by Bruno, without a linear narrative.<sup>434</sup> For the composition of DUE, Bracci worked with superimposing, cutting and filtering the pre-recorded materials and adding autonomous, digitally generated electronic musical layers.

I continued to work by myself in the studio with this first landscape and suggested some changes in the composition. Bracci responded to the feedback, adapted the composition and sent a new audio file. We repeated this back-and-forth procedure four to five times until DUE settled into a fixed composition.

While engaging with the soundscapes of DUE, I delegate choice making in movement to my body in the first place. I allow it as much as possible to respond to the sounds without consciously intervening. On the level of conscious choice making and *linguaging* of movement, I manipulate what comes from the body in line with additional motives that accumulated during the creation phase of the composition in iterative dialogue with the dance sequences.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Giuliano Bracci, "Se non in ombra e specchio for 8 voices", [giulianobracci.com](http://giulianobracci.com/se-non-in-ombra-e-specchio/), accessed 6.4.2023, <http://giulianobracci.com/se-non-in-ombra-e-specchio/>.

<sup>435</sup> Some of these motives are: Stretching the time of being suspended between the forces of gravity and levity to emphasize the "in between" state; engaging in a speculative dialogue with the hypothetical subtle body as a creative source; *etheric listening\**: i.e. imaginatively moving with a subtle, spiritual-corporeal energetic substance of the sounds and responding to it from the hypothetical somatic unconscious; Searching for another kind of body, a new body; Creating spatial configurations of the body that imaginatively respond to the spatial experience of the sounds; contrasting sounds that are extended in time with dynamic sub-articulations of movement; transposing reverberations of sound events into the *psychophysical resonating space\** of the dancing body; Creating and un-creating forms; engaging and disengaging from the body; searching

DUE stands for a new beginning, for a transitional journey into uncharted territory. The path traversed in DUE enacts a psychophysical preparation for a radical opening towards the unknown in TRE. In DUE, I attempt to enter the domain of the hypothetical subtle body, suggesting a place or state of being beyond time and space. I navigate islands of sound events and longer silences from an inner compass, from a place where I trust that my body knows where to go and what to do.

The human voices that appear occasionally give a touch of humanity to the vast, in comparison with SEI#1, rather impersonal and abstract acoustic landscape of DUE. My body responds to this acoustic touch. In DUE, I allow my dancing body to interpret the sound while at the same time playing with the idea of producing the sounds. As if the sounds of the composition are created by the movements of my body. This is indeed indirectly true, as the composition came into being in response to propositions given by the dancing body in silence, from the state of being after having traversed SEI#1. During the performance, the temporal duration of the back-and-forth movements between my dance and Bracci's composition are collapsed in time. The distance of space and time between the creation of the movements and the creation of the sounds is abolished, they are in a direct, immediate relation with each other. In this state of creative proximity between the movements and the sounds I can explore the experience of a sense of proximity with the unspeakable unknown. The acoustic landscape of DUE helps me to sustain this state in time and space because it evokes in me a sense of infinite space. I work with it as both an abstract and concrete relational reference and as a dialogue partner for the movements.

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communicative connections between different layers of the experience of self moving; tracing infinity loops and elliptical curves in the joints in relation to the sliding pitch of the voices in the soundscape; orchestrating affective articulation of rotating angles in different velocities through the joints of the full body in motion; velocities and momentum of movement as forms of speech; Silences as forms of speech; leaving undefined spaces for the emergence of spontaneous creativity; Stabilizing the inner performative state towards an [\*inner heaven\\*\*](#). For visual reference see documentation in research catalogue.

## SEI & DUE

For the occasion of performing our work during an ARC (art\_research\_convergence)<sup>436</sup> session of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) at the Peel Slowly and See Festival in Leiden on 25.8.2021<sup>437</sup>, we integrated DUE with SEI#1. During three studio sessions, we experimented with how the two parts of the performance could be combined in a way that they strengthen each other. We wanted to develop an artistic proposal that was aligned with our research priorities, while at the same time making sense as a performance without necessarily making the research component explicit. Pondering the question of how to integrate DUE with SEI#1, Bracci reflected on the different connotations of inserting musical segments as quotations or as references. When we would begin with Bracci's composition DUE and then insert the live re-mixed composition of J.S. Bach, SEI#1 could be read as a quotation of Bach inside of Bracci's composition. While, when beginning with Bach and SEI#1, the insertion of Bracci's composition DUE could be read as a comment on Bach by Bracci. Based on the experiential dramaturgy of performing SEI#1 as a vehicle to activate a *polyphonic body* before diving deeper into the unknown domain of the *subtle body\**, we decided to insert DUE into SEI#1 by cutting the "Ciaccona" in two parts. From a compositional point of view, in that version of our performance (SEI & DUE), Bracci then quoted himself as an excursion during his live re-mixing of Bach.

After having performed SEI & DUE with an audience, we experienced the insertion of DUE as a valid enlargement of SEI#1. It opened new dimensions for another kind of performative state and communicative corporeality to come forward. In our experience the piece could now stand by itself as a dance and music performance, with or without an explicitation of the research component.

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<sup>436</sup> "ARC session SEI & DUE Dance and Music Performance by Giuliano Bracci and Suzan Tunca," universiteitleiden.nl, accessed 19.3.2023, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2021/09/sei-due-dance-and-music-performance-by-giuliano-bracci-and-suzan-tunca>.

<sup>437</sup> "ARC\_view, SEI & DUE, Dance and Music Performance by Giuliano Bracci and Suzan Tunca", researchcatalogue.net," accessed 19.3.2023, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1118707/1118708> (please scroll to the right to SEI & DUE).



Screenshot of Bracci's live-mixing instrument for SEI & DUE

## TRE

Imagining future scenarios during the beginning phase of our collaboration we envisioned the creation of a triptych. After having performed SEI & DUE we were still convinced that there was more space for adding new elements. For a third part TRE we wanted to create a new environment, a different zone of collaboration.

To expand Bracci's live-mixing instrument with additional layers, we added the first eighteen bars of the introduction of the *St. John Passion* by J.S. Bach. I chose this musical reference because of the inner movement that it stirs in me. This movement is exemplary for what I experience as an irresistible pull towards an unspeakable unknown which I am exploring and responding to with this research. This inner movement is also exemplary for a sense of

proximity with a creative source that both transcends my corporeal being while at the same time activating a resonance with it in its deepest layers.<sup>438</sup>

From a compositional perspective the choice for another Bach reference was also economical. Bracci was cautious about working with too many ingredients. To work with Bach and his own compositions as the two main anchor points for the composition was already rich and challenging enough.

Yet we still wanted to find a way to include Islamic resonances next to the Christian stream of faith represented by Bach. Next to honoring my ancestral lineage, which includes both Muslims and Christians, this also made sense in relation to chapter four on the subtle body, which includes a reference to the Sufi Sema Ceremony. As one additional layer to include the presence of Islam in the performative space, we added an a cappella voice by Sufi singer Ahmet Çalısır, reciting a prayer for a Sema Ceremony.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> The choice for a fragment from Bach's St. John Passion also echoes an affinity of this research with the Johannine mystery according to "The Acts of John", a gnostic text from the second half of the second century AD belonging to the family of Christian apocrypha. Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of John*, 1995, 120. These documents were sacred scripture for early Christian communities but were excluded from the canon because they were classified as heretical in the polemics surrounding the early formation of the Christian Church. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures. Books that did not make it into the New Testament*, 2003, 2-3. "The Acts of John" include a narrative supposedly told by the apostle John. It describes Jesus gathering his disciples in a singing and dancing ritual hymn before being delivered. This ritual has also been described as an "alternative sacrament at the place where the Synoptics narrate the institution of the Last Supper." Lalleman, *The Acts of John. A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism*, 1998, 65. Studies on the segments in the text that describe the dance refer to it in terms of an initiatic dance where Christ directs a ritual act that is explicitly addressed in terms of a mystery and is intended to convey knowledge to the disciples. The segments that narrate the dance ritual are 94-97 and 101. Junod and Kaestli, "Acta Iohannis," 1983, 621. Theosophist, scholar and writer G.R.S. Mead (1863-1933) referred to this text fragment as "The Hymn of Jesus" and saw it as possibly the oldest textually preserved Christian mystery ritual. Goodrick-Clarke, *G.R.S. Mead and the Gnostic Quest*, 2005, 155.

<sup>439</sup> Ahmet Çalısır, vocalist, CD: *Dergahta Sema-Sema Töreni, Aşr-ı Şerif*, Yenikapı Müzik 2005.

### SEI#3

For the creation of TRE and the integration of the sections elaborated so far, we collaborated during a two-week residency at the University Theater of the University of Amsterdam between 4-17 April 2022.<sup>440</sup> We started TRE by performing sketches that allowed SEI & DUE to expand in time and space, adding the two elements of the introduction to the *Passion of St. John* by Bach and the Islamic prayer. Instead of aiming to create a fixed composition as with DUE, we used the theatrical space to improvise together with these musical materials. We searched for how the different elements could dialogue with each other in organic and fluent ways, while at the same time carrying the performative space towards a climactic experience.

Technically speaking, the compositional procedure for TRE was divided into two parts: Part one consisted of setting up the acoustic environment to play with during the live improvisations. Bracci decided how many tracks would be used, which layer would be situated on which track and which effects would be used to manipulate which tracks. He set up the live-mixing instrument in a way that the audio files could be treated in advance as well as live. He prepared some audio files at fixed positions in the linear timeline and others to be moved and adjusted in terms of volume and position live, in dialogue with the dance. Some of the tracks were treated with extra effects which he could control live.

With TRE we moved towards a performative dimension where the characteristics of the previous two chapters could be potentiated. The surround sound system with four speakers allowed us to have a polyphonic space into which we and the audience could be immersed in a clear and effective way. Bracci could control how the sounds move in the space, in terms of provenience, direction and closeness. He used this possibility for the improvised experiments of TRE.

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<sup>440</sup> With much gratitude to Henk Danner (UVA Theatrescience) and to ODN (Omscholing Dansers Nederland) for making this possible.

The now wider and more complex heterogeneity of the materials required a larger musical time and structure to unfold. Gradually, the integration of the three chapters settled at a duration of ca. 30 minutes. We worked on developing the conditions for an inner journey that could make sense in line with our research interests but also as a performative event that could be meaningful in its own terms, without necessarily making the research interests that moved us in the first place explicit.

In TRE, I keep on searching for yet deeper layers of movement origination while exploring how the changing movements relate to the sound and to the space. At the same time, I observe what they might communicate - to me who undergoes and transforms these movements while they come out of my body as well as to the observers. Bracci continues to implement his disorientation strategy which helps me to keep exploring other textures of corporeality that emerge in dialogue with the sounds in a flexible, polyphonic, unsettled and unpredictable space.

TRE became a radical opening towards the unknown. We kept TRE open in the sense of not pre-determining how it would unfold and how it would communicate through the languages of dance and sound in dialogue with each other. TRE kept changing with each performance, and we listened to what it wanted to become and to communicate. During some informal and spontaneous moments of playing with the elements a peculiar atmosphere started to come into being. Both of us had the impression that this atmosphere made intuitive sense as a culmination of the first two parts. We were not able though to technically retrace how this atmosphere had come about, except that it happened from a playful and non-strategic approach. We called this atmosphere “the soup” and kept searching for how to recreate it.

The performance integrating all sections now settled into an extension of SEI&DUE with TRE. It starts with SEI#1 part 1, followed by an insertion of DUE, leading into SEI#1 part 2 and culminating in TRE.



### SEI#3

SEI#1 part 1 - DUE - SEI#1 part 2 - TRE

In the University Theatre I perform SEI#1 part 1 on the proscenium stage. For DUE, SEI#1 part 2 and TRE I move down to the manège, the flat floor space on the same level as the first row of the audience. For SEI#1 part 1, Bracci plays only with the two interpretations of the “Ciaccona” by a female and a male violinist (Janine Jansen and Gidon Kremer). Once I move down to the flat floor, he gets more prominently involved as a live co-creating performer. During the performance we continue to explore different variations of navigating the edge between fixing things and letting them emerge.

During the public presentations on 16. and 17. April a change in our working mode had occurred. While in the “research mode”, we were less concerned with making mistakes or wrong choices. The “performance mode” required another focus and more effectivity in choice making. While the idea (and the pressure) of judging our experiments as performances to be potentially presented to an audience was not present during our research, it started to appear together with the presence of the audience. Many choices could still be made from an aesthetical point of view. Yet we kept prioritizing the sense-making from our understanding of the goals of the performance as embodying an in depth and extensive research trajectory. In line with Bracci’s disorientation strategy to support me in searching for other kinds of bodies and consequently other kinds of movement expression, we unsettled meaning once it started to settle in predictable or one-dimensional ways.

We wanted to keep meaning emerging as open and as undefined as possible to be able to maintain a state of a radical opening towards the unknown – with trust.

At this point, to allow this to happen, we need to be very aware of each other’s choices during the performance: Being in tune with each other and truly listening to each other’s choice making is one of the most important criterions for us to evaluate our performance. We want to aesthetically articulate the full journey of SEI in a way that it can be perceived in different ways. At the same time, we search for a suggestive balance between an inner private

experience and its public communication that can trigger the imagination of the spectators and provoke reflection on the potential of *embodied gnosis*. We search for the *euthus body\** of SEI, the sweet spot where our individual artistic intuitions mediated through the languages of dance and sound meet each other in the will of the performance, bringing forth a sense of the *real\**. We search for a contained creative freedom that is attuned and aligned with a sense of *artistic truth\** and that does not settle into a fixed form or meaning.

## SEI

SEI draws together in one performative event the different stages of the creative process (SEI#1 → DUE → SEI & DUE → TRE → SEI#3 → SEI). The dramaturgy of performative states and related textures of corporeality that I traverse in SEI facilitates one possible pathway to explore how to experience and communicate a state of *embodied gnosis* through activating a *polyphonic body*. In SEI#1 part 1 I begin with a one-to-one relation between the *dancing body* and the music. I start to duplicate this body in dialogue with the two different interpretations of the “Ciaccona”, speaking with two distinct corporeal textures. In DUE I speculatively enter the domain of the *subtle body*, suggesting a region of being beyond space and time, modulating the perception of space and time in the performative space. In SEI#1 part 2 I play with more than two bodies, continuing to search for deeper sources of movement origination. TRE enacts a climactic radical opening towards the unknown with trust, where the *dance language* addresses the unspeakable unknown through perpetually newly emerging corporeal textures.

Whether or not and if so, how it responds, is still to be discovered, together.