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Transcribing: between listening, memory, and invention

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Citation
Bracci, G. (2024, November 20). *Transcribing: between listening, memory, and invention*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4139206

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Chapter 4
Una notte
The Musical Work and Its Double

Another language comes to disturb the first one.
It doesn't inhabit it, but haunts it.

Jacques Derrida, "At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am"

In chapter 3, I discussed how, when writing *Hortense*, my relation to Gesualdo's music was significantly shaped by the poetic text featured in the madrigal "Languisce al fin." In *Una notte*, my transcription for voice and orchestra of Schubert's Lied "Der Doppelgänger" (1828), I further explored the possibilities of engaging with a vocal work through its poetic text.

Audio example 1 presents *Una notte* in its entirety.

Audio 1. Bracci. *Una notte*, performed by RKST21 (Orkest de Ereprijs, Nationaal Jeugdorkest); Sterre Konijn, voice; Jurjen Hempel, conductor:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/E07227-05-Giuliano-Bracci-Una-Notte_STERRE.mp3
Complete score in pdf:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bracci_Una-notte.pdf

In order to reflect on my relationship with the original musical work in *Una notte*, I will consider the practice of transcribing in light of certain ideas regarding the possible relations to a musical score from the perspective of musical performance. First, I will focus on the ideas of the composer and conductor Hans Zender (1936-2019), whose insights were instrumental for me in considering the performative nature of transcribing, a practice of which transcriptions serve as tangible traces. In the introduction to this thesis, I described transcriptions as evidence of listenings, following Peter Szendy's ideas (Szendy 2008), while delineating listening as auditory imagination – a listening that is able to imagine – and envisioning it as a genuinely performative and creative endeavor. I believe that the transcriber's listening that Szendy refers to encompasses a multitude of practices, all of which represent tangible forms of imagination. Hence, the transcriber's body (analogous to that of the composer, as described by Paul Craenen) "is a body that alternates between the positions of a planner, improviser, listener, performer, technician, or official manager of the composer's thinking" (Craenen 2014, 244).

Zender designates his *Schuberts "Winterreise"* (1996) as a "composed interpretation."[1] It is a transcription for tenor and orchestra of Franz Schubert's entire *Winterreise* (1827) cycle. In a lengthy and insightful commentary on *Schuberts "Winterreise,"* which merits a thorough examination, he writes:

> Since the invention of musical notation, music has been divided into the text set down by the composer and the reality actualized in sound by the performer. I have spent half my life attempting to deliver performances that are as true as possible to the original text – especially of Schubert's works, which I love deeply – only to have to admit to myself that no interpretation can ever be really true to the original. Apart from the fact that I changed a great many things in *Winterreise* – instruments, concert halls, the importance of marginal notes, etc. – one must understand that each note in a manuscript is primarily a challenge to action and not an explicit description of sound. (Zender 1999a, 18)

After expressing his love for Schubert's music and contemplating the attempt – and the impossibility – of being "really true to the original," Zender asserts that notation is primarily a challenge to action. The nature of musical notation is ambiguous, as it could simultaneously indicate the action *and* the outcome of the action – i.e., the sound – and this ambiguity constitutes its very richness.[2] In line with Zender's perspective, the score does not function as a set of instructions for (re)producing music; rather, it is a challenge, and it primarily prompts taking initiative: It encourages embarking on an exploration, making musical choices, and engaging in musical thought. Performers are thus engaging with their

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[1] Zender also designates as a "composed interpretation" his *33 Veränderungen über 33 Veränderungen* (33 Variations on 33 Variations) (2011), a transcription for ensemble of Ludwig van Beethoven's "Diabelli Variations" (1819-1823). The concept of variation is latently present in my research on transcribing, as it encompasses both repetition and difference. However, I have chosen not to explicitly introduce it into my thesis, because doing so would deviate from the primary focus of my research. Variation, both as a musical technique and as a musical form, holds its own significance within the repertoire and it does not necessarily correlate with transcribing as a way of engaging with another musical work.

[2] In musical notation, a distinction is often made between sound result notation and action notation. Sound result notation primarily refers to the relatively fixed properties of a note, such as pitch and duration. Action notation, on the other hand, pertains to techniques that alter the sound through additional actions or techniques, such as applying a damper. Although this distinction is not absolute, it is nevertheless significant. For instance, extended techniques are often notated through graphic visualizations or representations of actions on the instrument, without a direct relationship between the written symbol and the resulting sound. In contrast, traditional pitch notation is independent of the instrument for which it is written, allowing, for example, a clarinet player to read and perform a violin part. Since these two types of notation coexist and are not completely separated, performers are constantly (re)constructing the actions to be taken starting from the indicated sound results, and vice versa, deducing the sounds to be produced from the actions indicated in the score. Moreover, notation is not fixed but evolves over time. As extended techniques – previously requiring action notation for comprehension – become familiar among performers, they can then be indicated through sound notation (for example, by simply using a specific notehead).

intelligence and sensitivity, both of which are essential for the "creative transformation" of a "lively and exciting performance" that can "bring new aspects of the work to attention" (Zender 1999a, 18).

In his *Schuberts "Winterreise,"* Zender has left Schubert's vocal part nearly intact, but he has redesigned it by introducing new dynamics and repetitions. His main interventions primarily focus on the orchestral component, extending to the creation of new interludes that frequently introduce individual Lieder within the cycle. As the musicologist James Wishart emphasizes, "Zender's work is in no way orchestrated in Schubertian style, and the world of late-twentieth-century modernism is everywhere on view: in the instrumentation, the timbral sophistication, the composer's attitude to rhythm, the use of polytonality, the adventurous manipulation of pulse and tempo, and many other dimensions" (Wishart 2000, 229). A good example of Zender's way of approaching Schubert's music is the beginning of the nineteenth song "Täuschung," where the few bars of Schubert's piano introduction – see figure 1 and audio example 2 – are transformed into an articulated and extended orchestral passage where the plucked sounds of the guitar, the harp, and the strings isolate and emphasize the rhythmical character of the piece, putting it in the foreground and gradually establishing the context for the entry of the voice. Zender's version of the beginning of "Täuschung" is presented in figure 2 and in audio example 3.

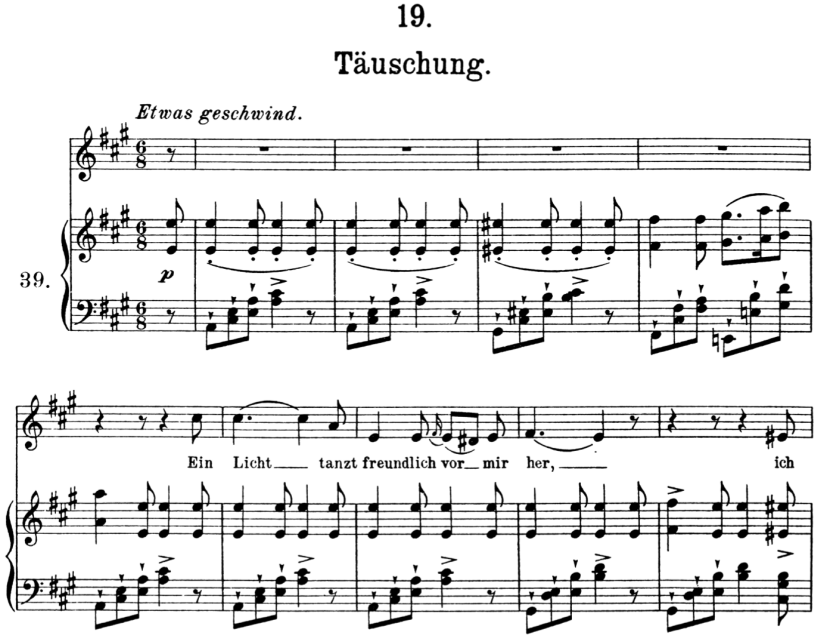


Figure 1. Schubert, "Täuschung" (*Winterreise*), bars 1-9

Audio 2. Schubert, "Täuschung" (*Winterreise*), bars 1-9, performed by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, voice, and Alfred Brendel, piano:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Schubert_Tauschung-bars-1-9-AUDIO.mp3

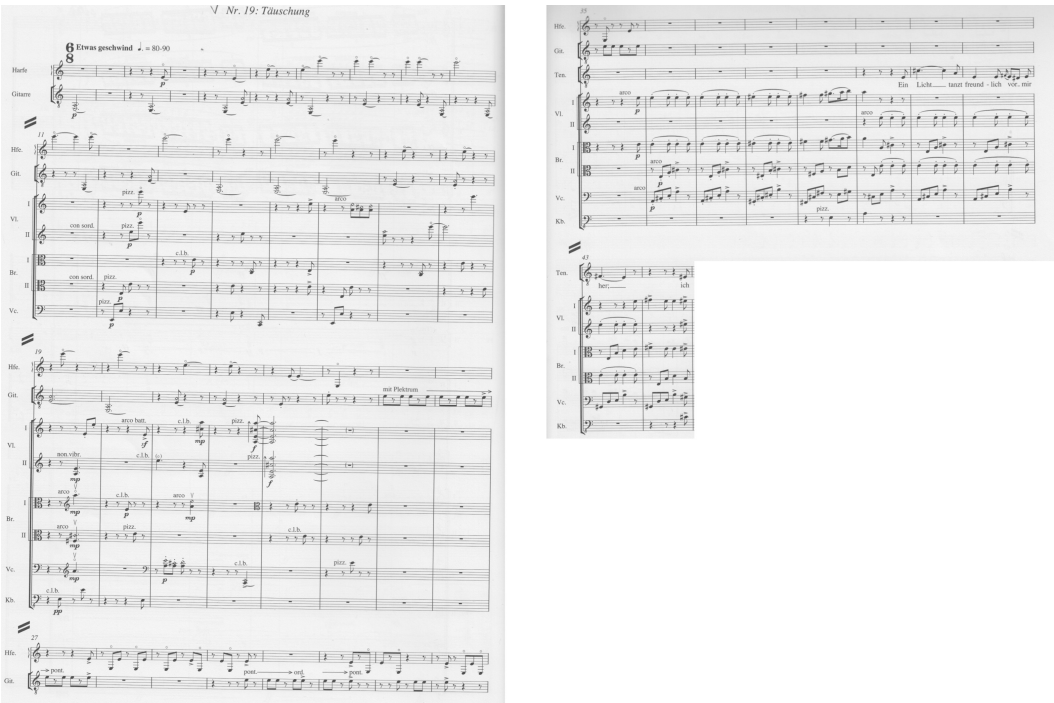


Figure 2. Zender, "Täuschung" (*Schuberts "Winterreise"*), pages 150-151

Audio 3. Zender, "Täuschung" (*Schuberts "Winterreise"*), pages 150-151, performed by Julian Prégardien and the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie conducted by Robert Reimer:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Zender_Tauschung-INIZIO.mp3

In one of his essays on music, Zender claims that "the past is not finished; its forces can regroup and affect our present in a barely predictable way" (Zender 2004, 185). As aptly noted by the musicologist Håvard Enge, in Zender's view, looking at the past as something unfinished and open for a creative transformation in the present also means that "heritage must always be revised critically; tradition must be reinterpreted, reinvented and supplemented for each new historical situation" and that "it is only through this continuous critical actualisation that the tradition can survive" (Enge 2010). Beyond his radical engagement with the musical works of the Western tradition, Zender's idea of the reinvention of tradition also sees the composer, the performer, and the audience as equals due to their shared practice of active and productive listening. Indeed, akin to the past, the musical text also maintains the characteristic of being unfinished, thereby positioning the performer (and the audience) as a co-creator of the work.
Zender's ideas of the past (and of scores) as something unfinished and open, and of shared authorship between composers and performers, resonates with Roland Barthes's ideas expressed in his essay "The Death of the Author." Barthes claims that "a text consists not of a line of words, releasing a single

'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) […] but of a multi-dimensional space in which are married and contested several writings" (Barthes 1977a, 52-53). A text, he continues, "consists of multiple writings," and – like a score is for Zender – it is open for creative transformation. Furthermore, the "site where this multiplicity is collected" and "the destination of a text" (Barthes 1977a, 54) is not the author, but precisely the reader – or, in our context, the listener (i.e., the transcriber, the performers, and the audience).
In the commentary on his transcription, Zender further elaborates:

> My interpretation of *Winterreise* does not seek a new expressive meaning but rather makes use of the liberties that all composers intuitively allow themselves: the slowing or quickening of tempi, the transposition into different keys, and the revealing of more characteristic and colourful nuances. To this, we must add the potential of 'reading' music; moving around within the text, repeating certain lines of music, interrupting continuity, comparing different readings of the same passage…In my version, all these possibilities remain subject to compositional discipline and thus create autonomous formalistic passages layered over the original Schubert manuscript. The transformation of the piano sound within the multicoloured possibilities of the orchestra is only one of the many consequences of this method: this is definitely not a matter of a one-dimensional 'colouring,' but rather of permutations of tone colour arranged in a manner fully independent of the formal rules relating to Schubert's music. The appearance, in a few parts, of 'contrafacta' (that is, the addition to Schubert's music of invented sounds as introductory, epilogue or bridge passages, or as simultaneous parallel music) are but one extreme of this methodology. (Zender 1999a, 18-19)

In the middle of the Lied "Täuschung" lies another example of Zender's freedom in (re)reading Schubert's music: The beginning of the line "Ach! wer wie ich so elend ist," is repeated three times by Zender before continuing. Figure 3 and audio example 4 present Schubert's Lied, while figure 4 and audio example 5 present Zender's reading of the same passage.

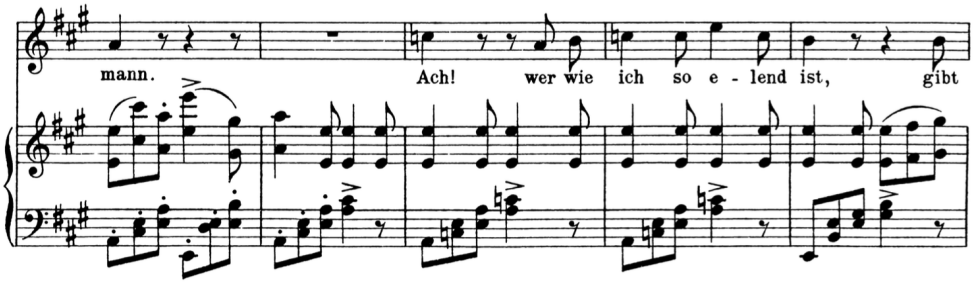


Figure 3. Schubert, "Täuschung" (*Winterreise*), bars 20-24

Audio 4. Schubert, "Täuschung"(*Winterreise*), bars 20-24, performed by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, voice, and Alfred Brendel, piano:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Schubert_Tauschung-AUDIO-Ach.mp3

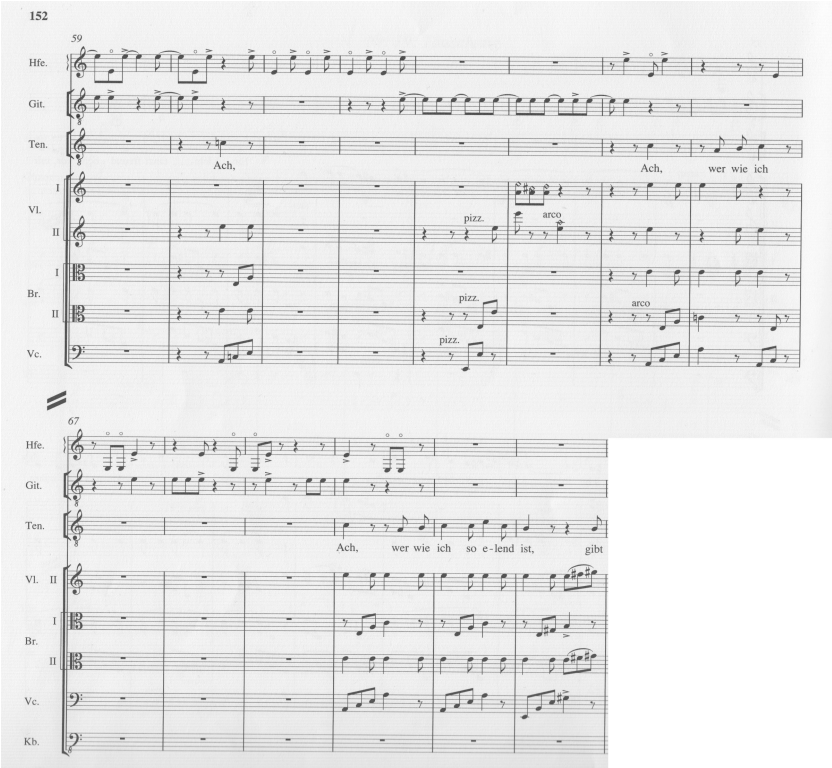


Figure 4. Zender, "Täuschung" (*Schuberts "Winterreise"*), bars 59-72

Audio 5. Zender, "Täuschung" (*Schuberts "Winterreise"*), bars 59-72, performed by Julian Prégardien and the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie conducted by Robert Reimer:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Zender_Tauschung-ACH.mp3

In his commentary, Zender discusses his interpretation of Schubert's *Winterreise* as though it were a distinct performance of Schubert's work. Following his perspective, it becomes possible to perceive transcriptions as recomposed performances. Instead of generating sounds by playing an instrument, transcribers (re)create and (re)imagine music by reading a score. Zender provides an insight that makes explicit what reading a score could mean for a composer (and also for a transcriber): "moving around within the text" in a non-linear way, allowing repetitions of certain lines of music, comparing different possible ways of reading the same passage, and imagining other music that is not in the original score (Zender 1999a, 18-19). Zender's description represents a common attitude among composers when facing their own musical scores, examining the

unexpressed or unrealized potential within them. I find it noteworthy that this perspective is also clearly articulated when composers relate to the music of others, particularly within the context of transcribing.
Zender's reference to reading implies imagining: Reading is already a rereading, where the transcriber imagines what they are reading, utilizing the potentialities and freedoms of the imagination. The way Zender describes the potentials of reading music contradicts the prescriptive conception of the score as "an authoritative grid, mainly designed to facilitate unidirectional instructions from composer to performer" (Cobussen 2017, 111). However, it is also important to consider how the original score dictates its influence in each specific instance. In the transcriptions discussed in this thesis so far, and next to other elements that are more case-specific, pitch patterns – i.e., melodic or harmonic identities – generally retain a certain authority, occasionally remaining recognizable or becoming evident upon re-examination. This emphasis might aid in the comprehension of instances of deviation or transformation of the original.

Zender's stance, which redefines what a score is and how it can work, is also embraced and explored by performers advocating for a reshaping of the bond between notation and performance, aiming to liberate themselves from a static and prescriptive tradition. Some of these radical approaches are present in the work of Heloisa Amaral and Lucia D'Errico, two musicians and artistic researchers who were involved in MusicExperiment21, a research program led by Paulo de Assis at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, that explored notions of experimentation, aiming to introduce innovative performance practices for Western notated art music.

In her doctoral research, Amaral problematized the activity of mediating classical music and the conditions in which this music is presented, from a curatorial perspective. Her approach, which challenges the boundaries of freedom for classically trained musicians, is pertinent to my research, as it addresses the issue of establishing a living and critical relationship with existing musical works. It explores, from a performer's perspective, various ways of engaging with classical music in contemporary contexts. In Amaral's performances, classical works coexist with other sounds – the action of the instrument, the creaking of floors, the breathing of the performer, or the steps of the audience – (sometimes) amplified by electronic means. The explicit inclusion of environmental sounds in the performance of a classical work affects the audience's attention, and it modifies the practice of the performer and their relationship with the musical work, inviting "a form of openness and a listening attitude that would cover a sonic landscape broader than that of the musical work" (Amaral 2022, 77). Specifically, when discussing the concepts put forth by musicologist Nicholas Cook (2001), Amaral suggests dealing with scores as scripts. In her work, she considers scores not as rigid and prescriptive artifacts to be replicated, but as open sources of inspiration. They serve as starting points for the execution of

more expansive musical endeavors in which "musical interpretation, improvisation, and curatorial thinking are tightly interwoven" (Amaral 2022, 131).

In her work, D'Errico aims to redefine "the locus of performance as a place of experimentation, where instead of replicating the past through a set of inherited modalities and tools, 'what we know' about a particular musical work is reshaped and constituted anew" (D'Errico 2018, 14). For D'Errico, the musical work – that for Amaral was the point of departure to explore a broader musical environment – acts as the pretext for an exploration that centralizes the performer's relationship with the music, extending beyond the boundaries of the work itself. Her approach is based on the concept of divergence from the traditional paradigms of musical interpretation: D'Errico's divergent performances are in fact constituted by sounds and gestures that are mostly unrecognizable as belonging to the score they reference. D'Errico refers to the musical work that she is performing as the "primary work," thus making explicit its nature as the fundamental point of departure – and not the goal or arrival – and also setting herself outside of a traditional paradigm of reproduction and reiteration of past musical works.

A powerful example of D'Errico's strategies is her *n(Amarilli-1)*, a series of reenactments of Giulio Caccini's *Amarilli mia bella* (1602). D'Errico uses the forceful rhetorical organization of the original song as her starting point. She understands Caccini's song to be "a scene of desire and violence" (D'Errico 2018, 96), and then divides it into six sections, or vectors: distance, desire, suspicion, laceration, penetration, and rapture. D'Errico uses the rhetorical structure of the original piece as the main material to draw a visual diagram that then functions as a guide for her performances. The first three vectors of D'Errico's diagram are illustrated in figure 5. Audio example 6 presents an excerpt of a performance – or reenactment – of Caccini's *Amarilli mia bella* in the context of *Aberrant Decodings*, a performance by D'Errico and Marlene Monteiro Freitas.[3]

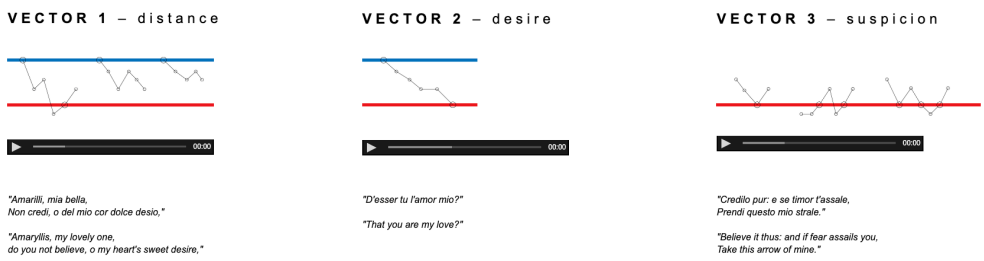


Figure 5. The first three diagrams of D'Errico's *n(Amarilli-1)*

[3] Other versions of D'Errico's *n(Amarilli-1)* are available on the Research Catalogue's page showing her project *Powers of Divergence* (2019): https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/278529/386193

Audio 6. D'Errico, *Aberrant Decodings*, performed by D'Errico and Marlene Monteiro Freitas (starting at 51'50"):
https://youtu.be/P3hLQBVT9To?si=hwShVsY95-oHU98r&t=3110

The performances and reflections by both Amaral and D'Errico are relevant for my practice as they show possible, radical, and liberating approaches to a score, putting a musician's relation to the musical work at the center. Scores become a "challenge to action" (Zender 1999, 18), and a point of departure that enable the musicians to place the musical work in a wider context and to actualize unheard virtualities of it. While writing *Una notte*, I worked on Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger" in a similar way: Schubert's Lied on Heinrich Heine's poem became the point of departure for my transcribing process.

Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger"

Part of Schubert's last song collection *Schwanengesang*, "Der Doppelgänger" is one of six pieces setting Heine's poetry. The composition of this Lied dates back to 1828, the year of Schubert's death, and it was published posthumously in 1829.

To start transcribing Schubert's Lied, I spent time reading it, playing and singing it at the piano, listening to it with my inner ear, thinking about it, and imagining different possible approaches to it. This time spent with the musical work made me quite familiar – intimate even – with the words and the music. Schubert's score and a recording are presented in figure 6 and audio example 7. The text and an English translation of Heine's poem are below. (Once again, the score and the recordings that I have chosen are the ones that were available to me at the time, without any implication that they were more original or more correct than others that I could have possibly chosen.)

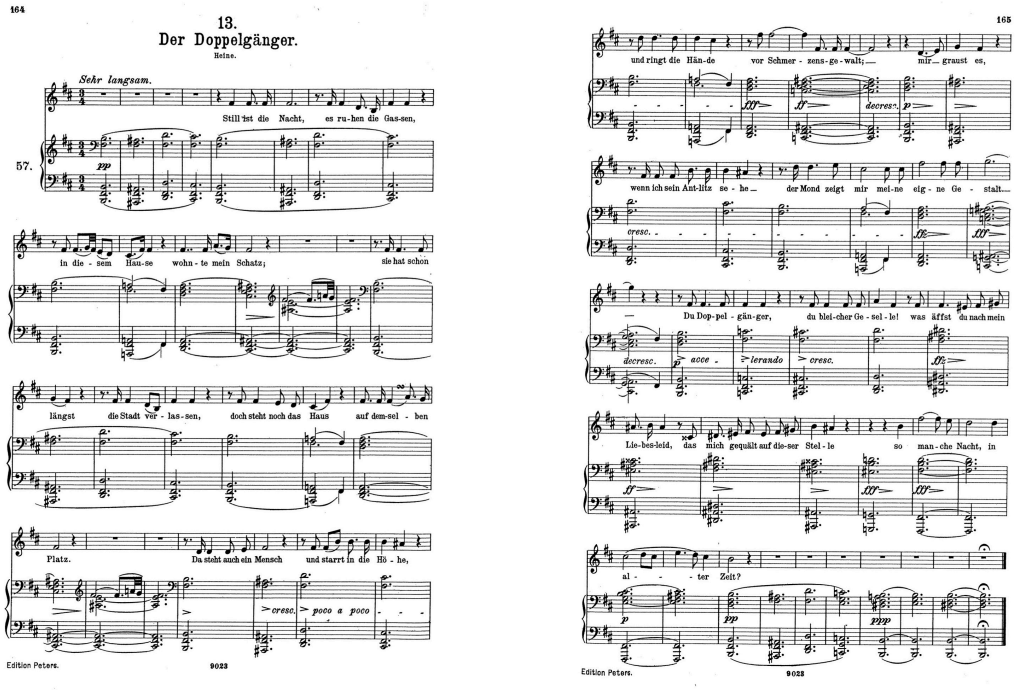


Figure 6. Schubert.,"Der Doppelgänger" (*Schwanengesang*)

Audio 7. Schubert, "Der Doppelgänger" (*Schwanengesang*), performed by Christoph Prégardien, tenor, and Andreas Staier, fortepiano: https://youtu.be/_hoCMcHzlrM?si=XpEw_kdpHgXGZWDy

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,
In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;
Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,
Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.

Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Höhe,
Und ringt die Hände, vor Schmerzensgewalt;
Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe -
Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.

Du Doppelgänger! du bleicher Geselle!
Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,
Das mich gequält auf dieser Stelle,
So manche Nacht, in alter Zeit?

(Heine 1877)

An English translation by Hal Draper (Heine 1982):

The night is still, the streets are dumb,
This is the house where dwelt my dear;
Long since she's left the city's hum
But the house stands in the same place here.

Another man stands where the moon beams lace,
He wrings his hands, eyes turned to the sky.
A shudder runs through me – I see his face:
The man who stands in the moonlight is I.

Pale ghost, twin phantom, hell-begot!
Why do you ape the pain and woe
That racked my heart on this same spot
So many nights, so long ago?

(Heine 1982)

The poem unfolds entirely in one night, when the poet sees his double at the window of the house where his beloved once lived. The theme of self and other – how disturbing it is to face oneself as if one were someone else – forms the central theme of the poem. The poet sees himself as he was some years before, yet thinks he sees someone else, and this event – of which he questions the meaning – terrifies him. The repetition of an experience, the repetition of our self – that is, of what we believe to be unrepeatable – changes its very meaning. The presence of a double is also what is produced by the practice of transcription: The original splits, both repeated and modified. As I discussed in chapter 1, the copy precedes its original: It is the practice of transcribing that defines a musical work as an original. The presence of a transcription – of a double – prompts a different consideration and reveals new facets of the original work, after which it is no longer possible to listen to it in the same way.

Why Schubert?

I chose Schubert's Lied "Der Doppelgänger" (and indeed the other works for my research on transcribing) primarily because of my affection for it, and above all, because of the desire to spend more time with it. Specifically, I aimed to allow myself to be musically changed and contaminated by this encounter. Unlike the late-Renaissance polyphonic music of Frescobaldi and Gesualdo that inspired *Une petite fleur bleue* (chapter 1) and *Hortense* (chapter 3), "Der Doppelgänger," my starting point for *Una notte*, is a solo song for voice and piano from the nineteenth century. I explicitly sought this difference from my previous experiences to see what would happen if I placed myself in a different situation, observing – much like in a chemical experiment – how my creativity would react

when exposed to a different reagent. Indeed, in transcribing, the original work is not just a pretext; it triggers unforeseen and distinct reactions. The choice of instrumentation for my transcription was also quite different from previous experiences: I chose to utilize a commission I had received at the time to write a piece for voice and orchestra, using it as a means to advance this experiment of transcribing Schubert's Lied.

As I delved into the available options, studying the potentialities at hand, I sensed that the presence of a single voice, both in the original and in my transcription, would restrict my scope for maneuvering more than in my previous experiences. I also found the fusion of text and music in Schubert's work challenging to disassemble. The Lied asserted itself strongly, unlike the pieces I had previously transcribed, which had provided a polyphonic space to intervene in and to rearticulate. I struggled to find the right distance; it seemed that my transcription, by preserving the seamless integration of voice and lyrics, would stay too close to the original. It risked adhering too faithfully, blending in without standing out, thereby denying me the real opportunity for change or contamination – i.e., the possibility (and the freedom) of betrayal. I continued to read and imagine Schubert's Lied, awaiting a convincing approach and consequently, a direction to pursue. I waited, and, as "one does not make the other come, one lets it come by preparing for its coming" (Derrida 2007b, 45), I invited the other to come, preparing an opening for its arrival.

Una notte

As previously mentioned, my process for transcribing "Der Doppelgänger" initially involved reading and rereading the Lied along with the poetic text by Heine. Initially, I could not find an approach to Schubert's Lied that satisfied me; I struggled to find the right distance from (and closeness to) the text. Therefore, I decided to look for a different text that revolved around the theme of duality – the encounter with another self, hence the fragmentation of one's own identity. I discovered several relevant poems by the American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), and assembled the final text for *Una notte* from a selection of fragments of various poems (catalog numbers 850, 410, 1721, and 1619) by Dickinson:

I sing to use the Waiting
My Bonnet but to tie
And shut the Door
No more to do have I

We journey to the Day
To Keep the Dark away

The first Day's Night had come —
I told my Soul to sing —

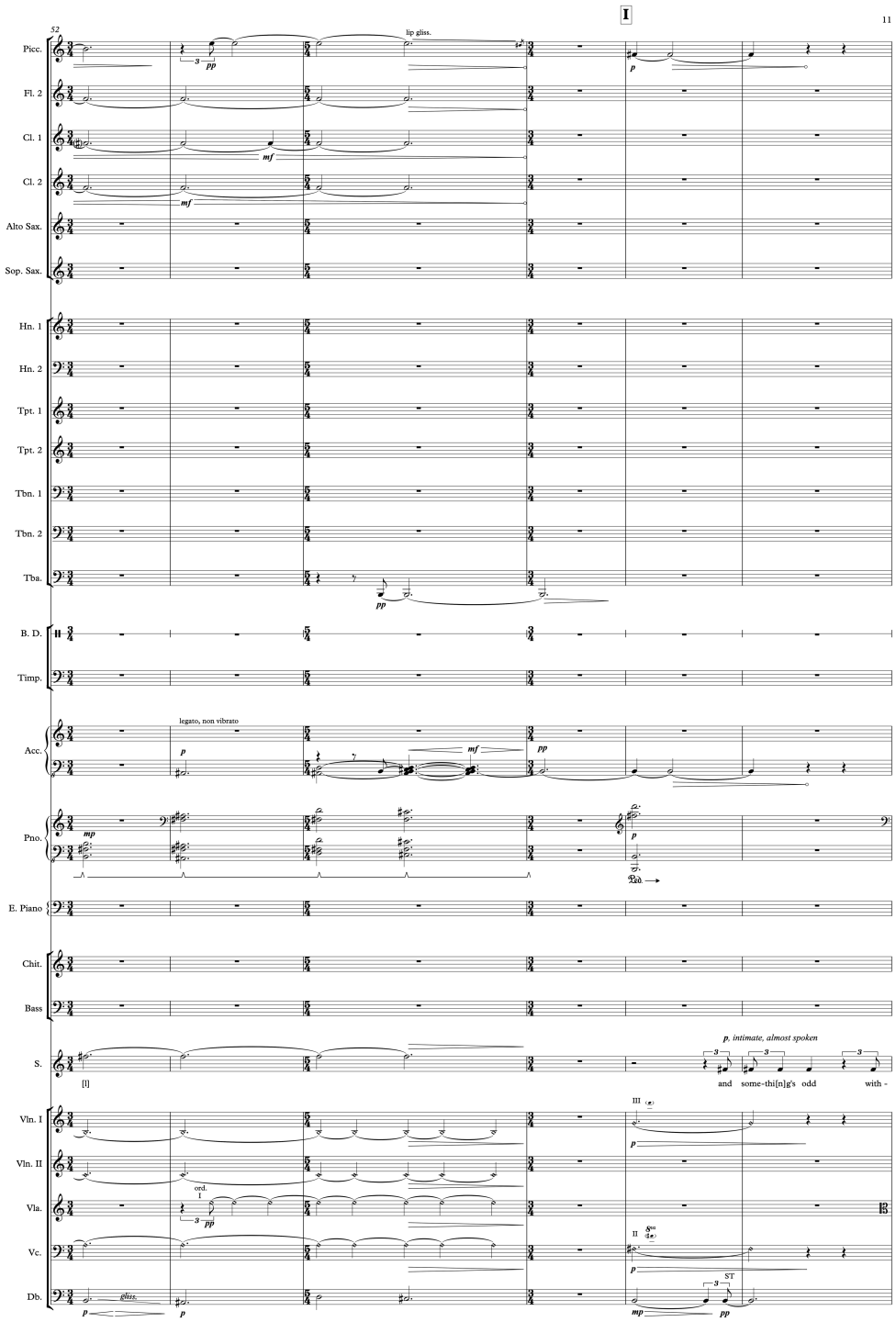
And Something's odd — within —
That person that I was —
And this One — do not feel the same —

She was my host — she was my guest,
I never to this day
If I invited her could tell

Not knowing when the Dawn will come,
I open every Door

(Dickinson, 2009)

I established the order of the verses as I progressed in writing *Una notte*. After an initial impasse, and still uncertain of how to proceed, I began writing while keeping Schubert's Lied in front of me. It remained a ghostly presence throughout the whole writing process, becoming more explicitly evident at the core of the piece.
In the selected verses by Dickinson that I chose and rearranged, initially a voice sings to pass the time – "to use the Waiting" – mirroring my approach with Schubert's Lied. I indeed opted to start writing while still uncertain of the outcome. After an instrumental section that heralds the onset of the night – "The first Day's Night had come" – the voice sings Dickinson's words to Schubert's music. Within the night of *Una notte*, Schubert and Dickinson converge. Figure 7 and audio example 8 present the score and a recording of the section of *Una notte* where Schubert's Lied is recognizable, but with Dickinson's words.



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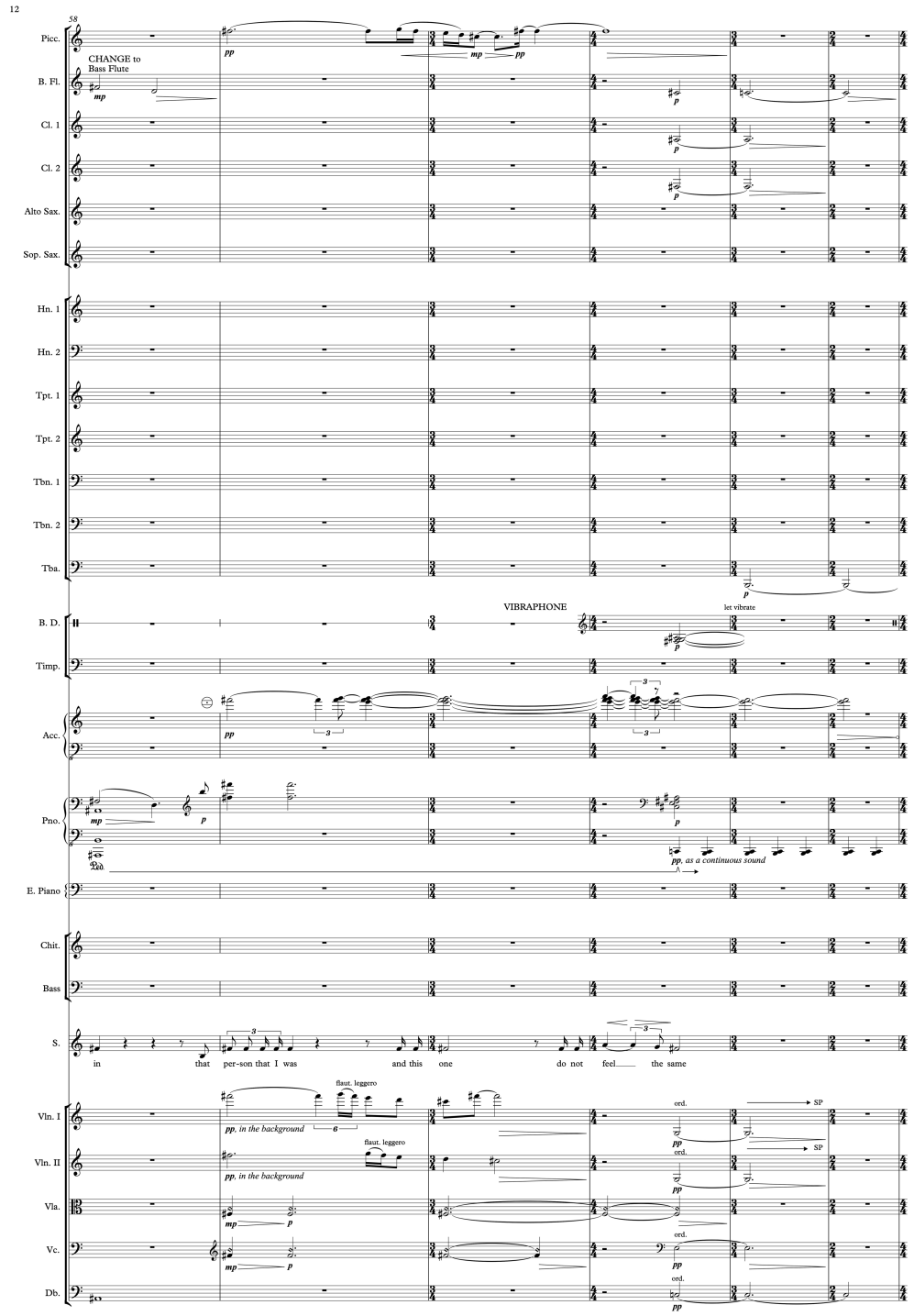

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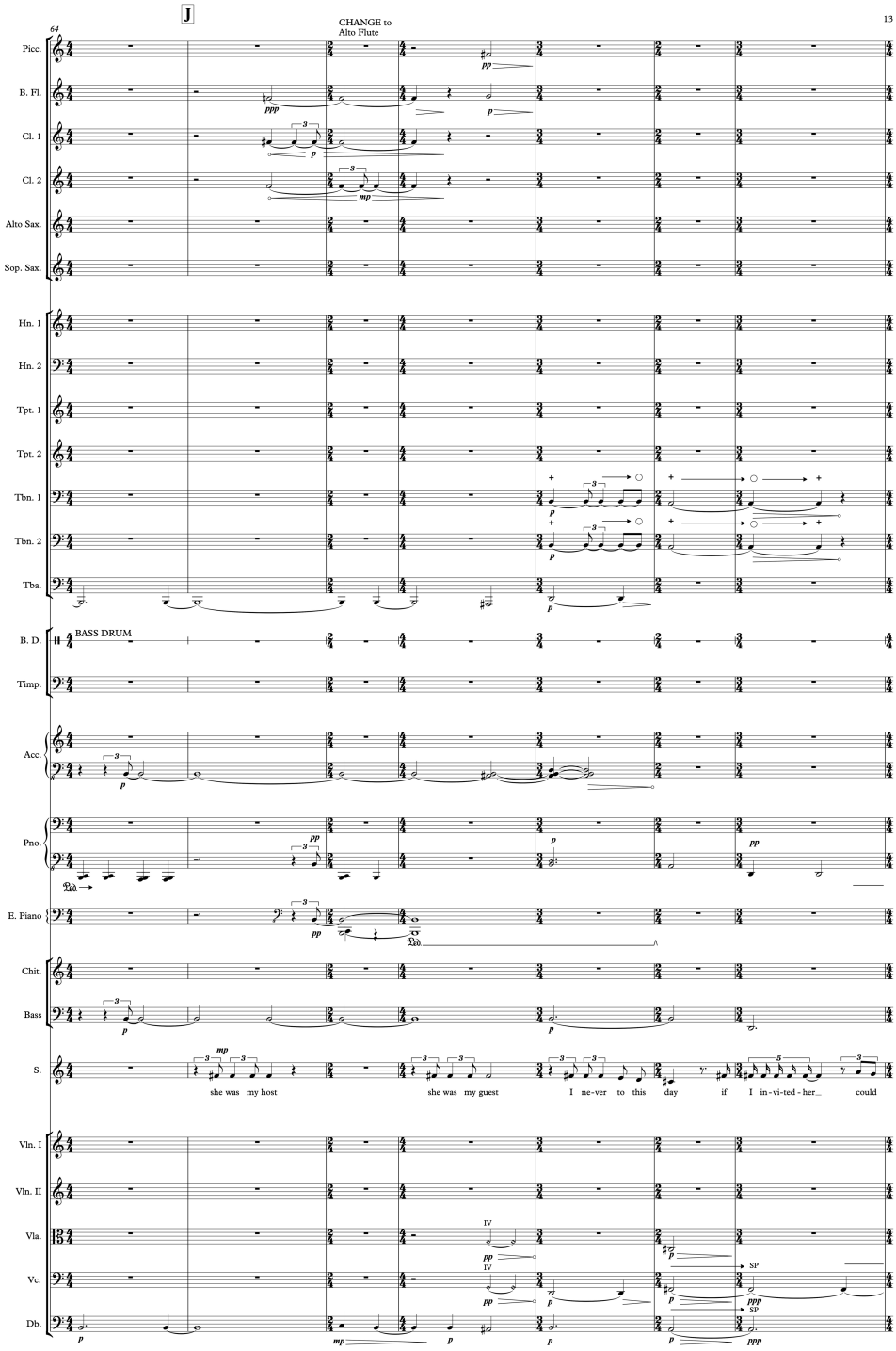

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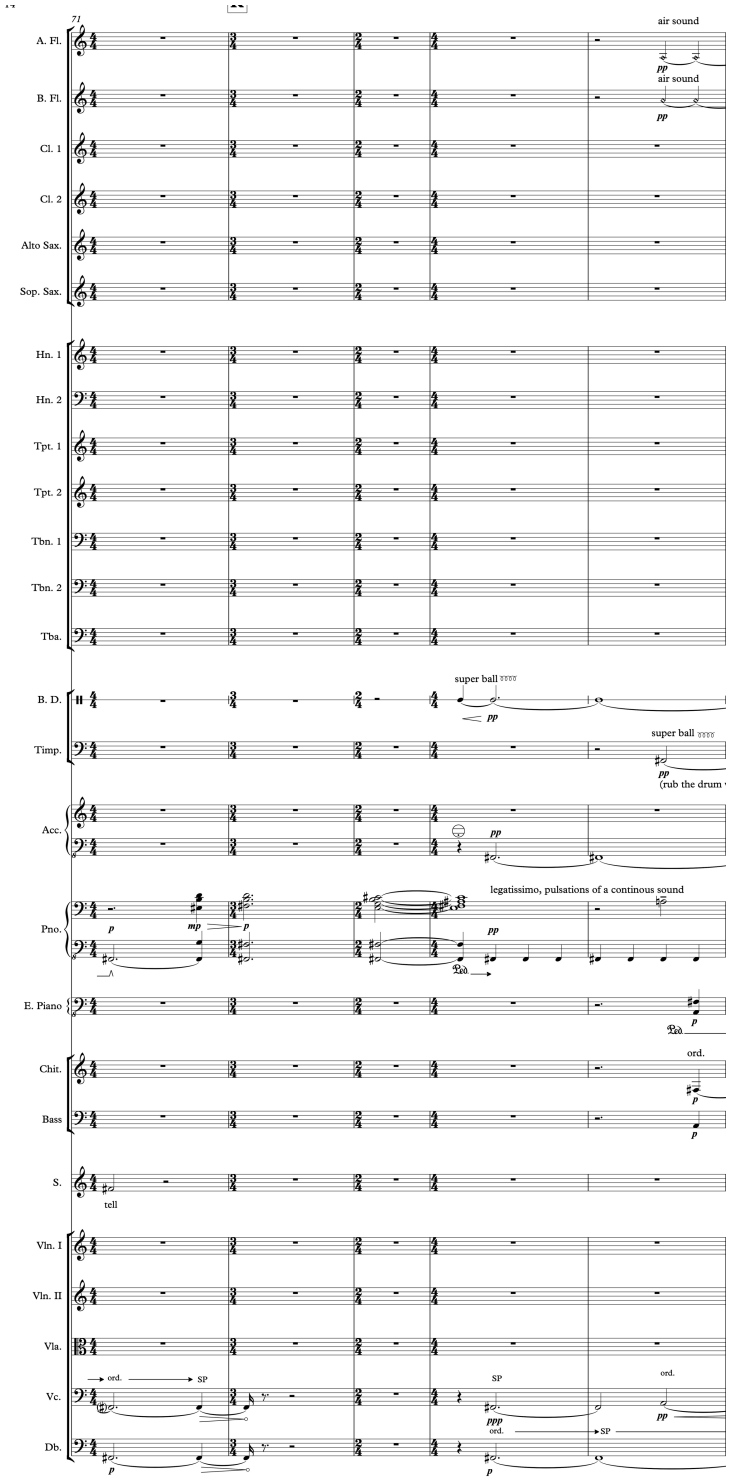

Figure 7. Bracci, *Una notte*, bars 52-77

Audio 8. Bracci, *Una notte*, bars 52-57, performed by RKST21 (Orkest de Ereprijs, Nationaal Jeugdorkest); Sterre Konijn, voice; Jurjen Hempel, conductor:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bracci-Una-Notte-selezione-b.52-75.mp3

Schubert's Lied, always present throughout my writing process, guided my choice of Dickinson's texts and their assembly. The ghostly presence of the Lied becomes more explicit when the first two verses emerge, transcribed and orchestrated with new words. This constitutes the core of *Una notte*, and while writing the first part of the piece, my aim was to establish a suitable context where there was room for the emergence of Schubert's Lied. The explicit presence of the Lied is initially revealed through the piano chords (see bars 52-56 of figure 7) mirroring the first five measures of the original (see figure 8). In the subsequent bars, I transcribed the first two verses, adapting their rhythm to Dickinson's words and rendering the vocal melodic line more essential and static.

At the beginning of the Lied, the voice sings "Still ist die Nacht," remaining on an F♯, which I carried over into *Una notte*, when the voice sings "and something's odd within" in bars 56-58. From the subsequent fragment of Schubert – "es ruhen die Gassen" (F♯-D-B-F♯) – I employed the open fifth B-F♯ to initiate the phrase stating "that person that I was" (bars 58-59). I omitted the vocal part's melody that revolves around the F♯ (G-F♯-E-D-C♯-F♯) on the words "in diesem Hause," instead allowing it to resonate within the orchestra, performed at a higher pitch by the first and second violins along with the piccolo (bars 58-60).

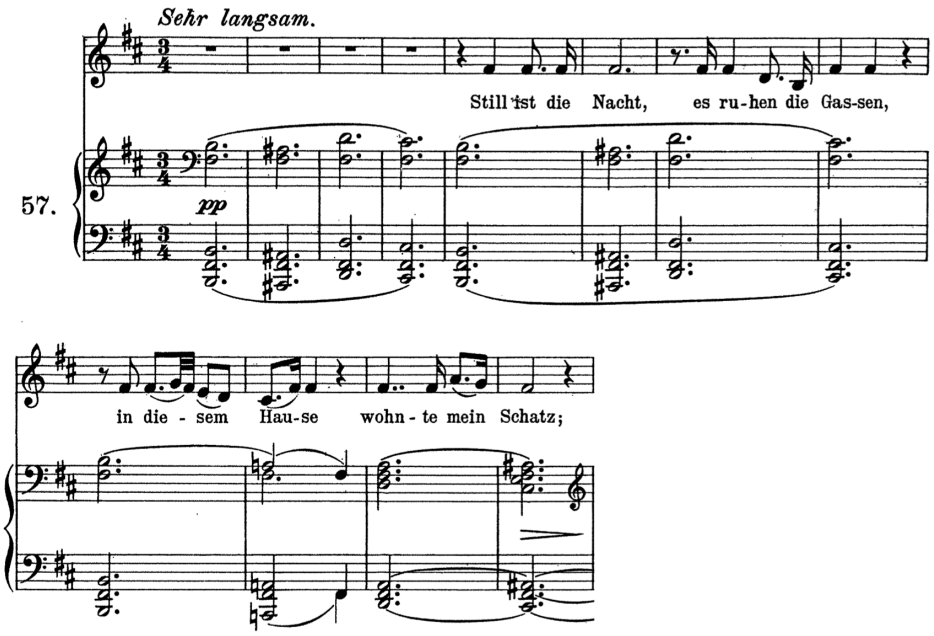

Figure 8. Schubert, "Der Doppelgänger," bars 1-12

In the subsequent verse of *Una notte* – "She was my host, she was my guest" (bars 65-67) – the vocal line keeps singing an F♯, a note that in "Der Doppelgänger" serves as the shared tone among the four chords initiating the

Lied. The F♯ also functions as a drone throughout the entire Lied, with only a few exceptions in the second part. It is noteworthy that despite its sustained nature, the F♯ acquires varied sonic qualities due to the shifts in harmonies: Harmony alters the role and the perception of the F♯ throughout the piece, enabling the listener to hear the same persistent note in different ways.
The constant presence of a note throughout an entire piece is an enticing characteristic that "Der Doppelgänger" shares with Frescobaldi's "Christe, Alio modo," which I transcribed in *Une petite fleur bleue* (see chapter 1). I regarded the presence of a drone – i.e., a single note traversing an entire composition – as an invitation, an entryway for a musical writing that concerns itself with sound and timbre rather than notes, a writing that contemplates how one listens to sound. The unchanging pitch of a note directs one's attention to the timbral element, particularly through a changing context that surrounds the note and gives it meaning.

In *Una notte*, when the voice sings "she was my host, she was my guest," the interval G-F♯, which in Schubert's Lied is sung on the word "längst," appears solely within the orchestra as a harmonic interval rather than a melodic one: The alto flute and bass flute together sound these two notes, and the G is reinforced by the doubling of harmonics in the violas and cellos (bar 67). This technique of transforming melodic tensions into harmonic dissonances is the same that I had used to transcribe the chromaticism of Gesualdo's madrigal "Languisce al fin" in *Hortense* (see chapter 3).

Una notte is not an orchestral piece containing a quotation from Schubert. Schubert's Lied served rather as the starting point and a constant presence throughout my entire writing process. This presence unfolded in various ways: in my selection of Dickinson's texts, and in the overall dramaturgy of the piece, depicting the night wherein the encounter with the double occurs, a moment mirrored in *Una notte* as the convergence of Dickinson's words and Schubert's music.
Furthermore, the Lied is echoed in the choice of notes for the final vocal phrase, following a line present in the initial chords of Schubert's Lied (bars 3-6: D-C♯-B-A♯). This final phrase of *Una notte* can be seen in figure 9 and heard in audio example 9.

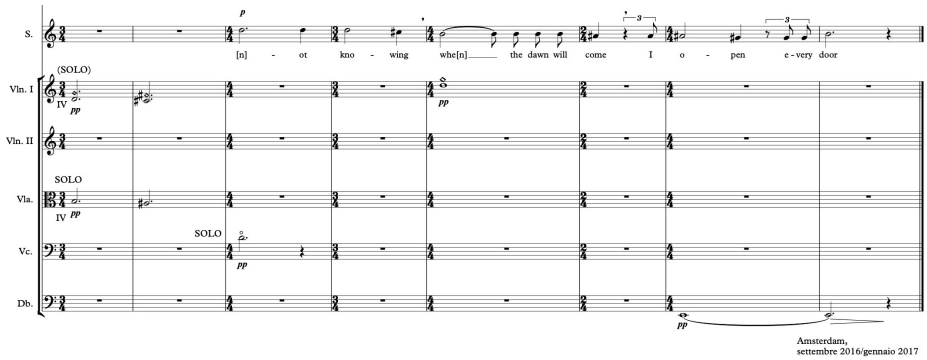

Figure 9. Bracci, *Una notte*, bars 97-104

Audio 9. Bracci, *Una notte*, bars 97-104, performed by RKST21 (Orkest de Ereprijs, Nationaal Jeugdorkest); Sterre Konijn, voice; Jurjen Hempel, conductor: http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/E07227-05-Giuliano-Bracci-Una-Notte_last-bars.mp3

Nieder's transcription of Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger"

In an interesting coincidence, another composer transcribed Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger" in the same year that I wrote *Una notte*. Fabio Nieder's *Dem Doppelgänger in memoriam* (2017) is also a transcription for voice and orchestra, and his transcription is worth considering as a fascinating experiment with the idea of the double.

The theme of the double guides Nieder's transcribing in several ways. First, akin to a play of mirrors, his transcription is embedded within another Lied by Schubert. The record of a version for piano and baritone of "Das Wandern ist des Müllers Lust" is played on a turntable – not by the musicians on stage – at the very beginning of the piece, and then reappears near the end. In this way, Nieder creates a duality between the music performed by the singer and the orchestra on one hand, and on the other, by the record playing on stage alongside the orchestra, featuring a voice and piano recording of the other Lied. This doubling causes a disorientation regarding what constitutes an original: We are faced with a live orchestra playing a transcription and a turntable playing a supposed original. Yet, upon closer inspection, even the Lied played by the old, crackling turntable "reveals that the time between us and Schubert has irreversibly passed. Much like the tape recordings in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*" (Nieder, 2018b).

In Samuel Beckett's theatrical work *Krapp's Last Tape*, first published in 1958, the elderly Krapp, the protagonist and sole character, obsessively listens to old reels on which he recorded a personal diary years earlier. Krapp's presence and his voice recorded years before convey a significant temporal gap. However, unlike in Nieder's transcription, in Beckett's work, the tape recorder is a newly invented instrument. Consequently, the play seems to be set in the distant future, while

the old recorded memories are contemporaneous with the audience of the late 1950s. For today's audience, Beckett's reels and Nieder's turntable likely evoke similar sensations of old objects and voices from the past.

Second, Nieder divides the orchestra into two groups, apart from the baritone, celesta, and percussion, which hold a central position. One group is comprised of a clarinet in A, horn, two double basses, viola, cello, and six violins, while the other group – mirroring the first – is comprised of horn, bass clarinet, two cellos, two violas, harp, and five violins. The singer is thus positioned between the two orchestras, which play the original song by Schubert simultaneously with its twelve transpositions performed one after another (Nieder, 2017). Split between the two orchestras, the baritone embodies two voices: The chest voice consistently aligns with the first orchestra, adopting the style of a Lieder singer. His second voice, the head voice, follows the twelve transpositions, which escalate chromatically throughout the piece. Figure 10 shows Nieder's transcription of the first two verses of Schubert's Lied: "Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen, / In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz." The baritone sings both the first transposition (one semitone higher) for the first verse, and the second transposition (one tone higher) for the second verse.

Figure 10 presents page 5 of the score, with the beginning of the first verse. The repeated and transposed words that the baritone sings are written in parentheses. As heard in audio example 10, the voice moves between these two poles, and so between the two orchestras. Nieder turns the duality conveyed by the Lied into a musical principle that has consequences on his transcribing, and especially on his vocal writing. In *Dem Doppelgänger in memoriam*, one can hear Schubert's music contaminated and transformed by Nieder's writing, as well as Nieder's writing contaminated by the encounter with Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger."

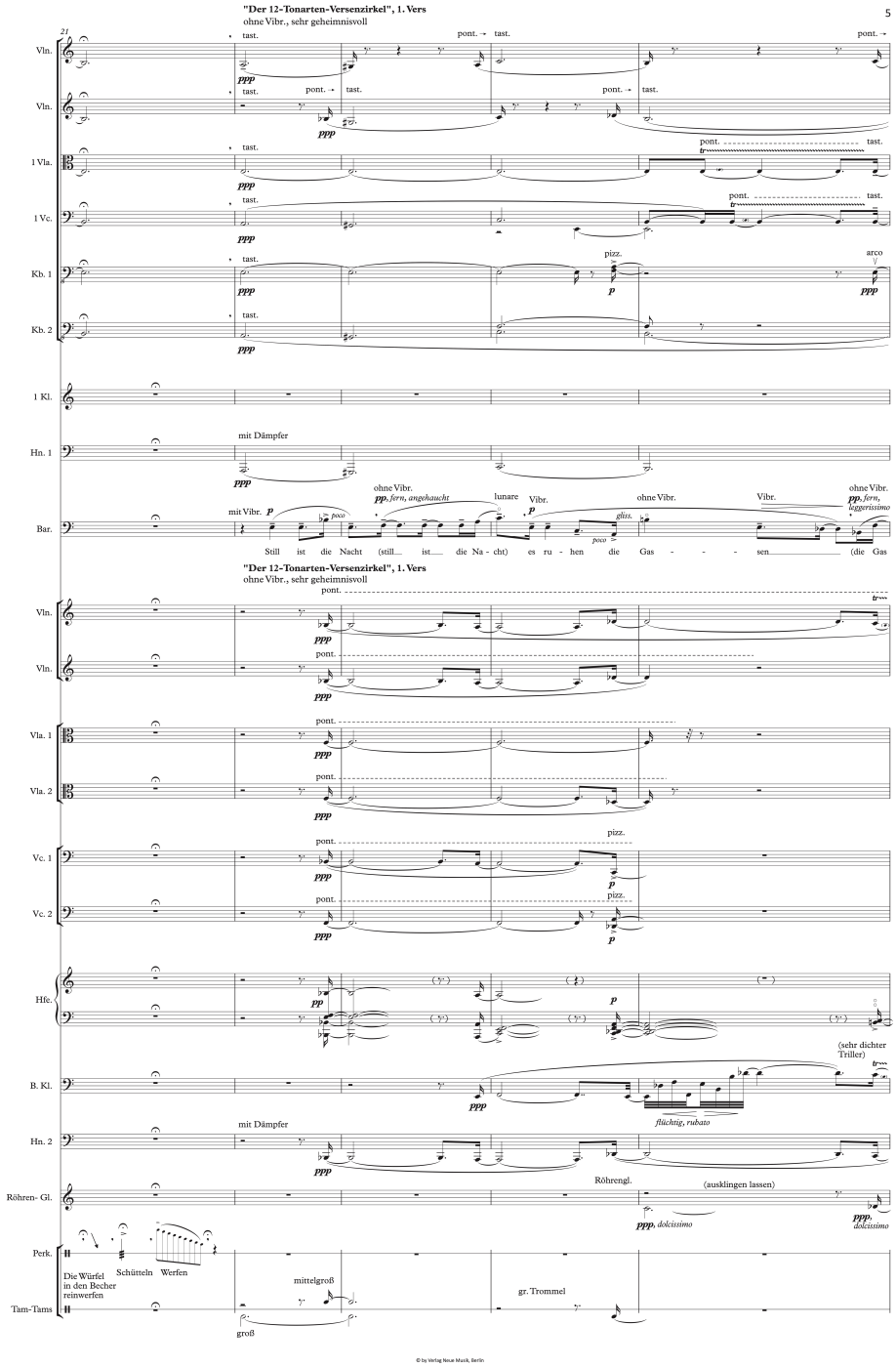

Figure 10. Nieder, *Dem Doppelgänger in memoriam,* bars 21-25

Audio 10. Nieder, *Dem Doppelgänger in memoriam,* bars 22-46, performed by Michael Nagy, baritone, and the München Kammerorchester, conducted by Clemens Schuldt:
http://giulianobracci.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Nieder_-Dem-Doppelganger-in-memoriam_Audio-22-46.mp3

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reflected on *Una notte*, a transcription where my aim was to further explore the possibilities of the approach I had when writing *Hortense*, which was strongly shaped by the poetic text featured in a Gesualdo madrigal.

Before directly addressing my transcription work, I considered certain ideas about possible approaches to a musical score. First, I discussed Zender's *Schuberts "Winterreise,"* especially his ideas about how it could be considered a "composed interpretation" of Schubert's famous song cycle. Zender's thoughts provided valuable insights into the practice of transcribing. His description of what reading a score could mean for a composer-transcriber sheds light on the potentialities and the freedoms of (re)reading, a practice that holds the potential to unlock the latent virtualities within a musical score. Furthermore, his consideration of the composer, the performer, and the audience as peers due to their shared practice of active and productive listening allows musical texts to be considered as unfinished entities, and thus positions the performers as co-creators of the work. Zender's perspective, which resonates with Barthes's ideas of the reader as a co-creator as expressed in "The Death of the Author," allows transcriptions to be perceived as composed interpretations.

Second, in line with the idea that brings transcribers and performers together, I examined the radical approaches to music performances of Amaral and D'Errico, two performers and artistic researchers who have actively explored innovative performance practices for Western notated art music and have challenged the boundaries of freedom for classically trained musicians. Amaral and D'Errico position themselves outside a traditional paradigm of reproducing and reiterating past musical works. In their practice, the works serve as points of departure and sources of inspiration to explore a broader and divergent musical experience, rather than being the goal or endpoint of an artistic journey.

Third, I reflected on my transcribing process in *Una notte*, my transcription of Schubert's Lied "Der Doppelgänger" for voice and orchestra. As happened in *Hortense*, the poetic text of the musical work strongly informed my practice, but in a different and unforeseen way. Transcribing Schubert's Lied – a nineteenth-century piece for voice and piano, and distinctly different from the Renaissance polyphonic works that I transcribed before – I deliberately placed myself in a new situation to observe how my creativity would react. Initially, I found that the absence of a polyphonic space to inhabit and to rearticulate – as I had learned to do in my previous transcriptions – was an obstacle. Subsequently, I decided to look for different texts to set to music, and Heine's poem guided my choice of Dickinson's verses that deal with the theme of duality and the unsettling encounter with another self. This theme is central to Schubert's Lied, and, as I mentioned before, a transcription can serve as a double of an original work, revealing and actualizing some of its unexpressed virtualities.

In addition to the theme of the double, the night is another central element of my transcription. As Schubert's Lied unfolds entirely in one night, the dramaturgy of *Una notte* is constructed around the waiting and arrival of the night during which the encounter with the double takes place. Mirroring this encounter, and at the core of *Una notte*, Dickinson's words and Schubert's music converge. At that point, the constant but ghostly presence of Schubert's "Der Doppelgänger" becomes more explicit.
After reflecting on my working process and discussing some more technical aspects of my approach, I concluded this chapter by examining Nieder's transcription of the same Schubert Lied. This allowed me to position my work within a broader context and provided a noteworthy instance of a distinct approach to transcribing the same musical work by another composer.

In conclusion, in this chapter, I have explored more radical possibilities of utilizing a poetic text within a musical work to influence its transcription on different levels. Compared to my previous transcriptions, *Una notte* also stands out in my research as the transcription that is the most free in terms of its relation to the original. In the next chapter, I will discuss *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*, my transcription for string quartet of "Nymphes des Bois – La déploration sur la mort de Johan Ockeghem," by Josquin Desprez (1450-1521).
Every transcription – and each subsequent chapter of this thesis – has been a step further in my exploration of the practice of transcribing. In *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*, I aimed to harvest the fruits of these explorations and take yet another step forward in a practice that has the potential to connect contemporary artistic expression with our cultural heritage, transforming our relationship with history into a creative and relational process. With *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*, a listening experience centered around memory's power to alter, preserve, and destroy recollections, I created a musical dramaturgy based on the text used by Desprez, alternating different approaches to the musical work. In *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*, Desprez's "Nymphes des Bois" resonates as a reference and as an apparition. Or as a palimpsest – i.e., a manuscript from which the original text has been erased but traces of it are still legible.