



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Transcribing: between listening, memory, and invention

Bracci, G.

Citation

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

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4139206>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Conclusion

In this research project, I have investigated the process and implications of transcribing a musical work from the past – in particular, what happens to the piece and what happens to the transcriber. I have explored these issues through a close examination of my practice as a composer-transcriber, experimenting with various ways of engaging with musical works from the past. My artistic practice primarily served as a tool for investigation and reflection. I have positioned my research within a broader context, engaging my practice of transcribing in a dialogue with the work and ideas of other composers and performers, musicologists and philosophers, writers and poets. These exchanges have generated ideas, insights, and theoretical and practical reflections, which in turn have influenced my practice, thus creating a feedback loop.

I opened this thesis with the options Luigi Nono suggested of listening to oneself or to others in music, and as my research progressed, the practice of transcribing became a means of reflecting on the theme of otherness, on the relationship between self and other. Throughout this thesis, I have reflected on the practice of transcribing as a transformative relationship between the transcriber and the musical work, thus focusing on a dynamic process, instead of regarding the musical work and the transcription as static entities with predefined stable borders. I have shown how transcribing has the potential to transform both the original work and the language of the transcriber. Starting from the ideas of Jacques Derrida and Peter Szendy, I reflected on this practice as a way of listening to the other, also examining it from an ethical perspective by considering what constitutes an original musical work and what it means to respect it.

I have described the development of my research in which I investigated how far I could go artistically, but also how far I could stretch the concept of transcribing. The relationship between my transcriptions and the originals became seemingly looser with every work, but what happened was, paradoxically, the opposite: A deeper relation corresponded to a more significant transformation, both for the original musical work and for my musical language. I argued that truly paying respect indeed means operating in “absolute ingratitude,” assuming the fate of an “always threatening risk of betrayal” and of contaminating the original and being at the same time contaminated by it (Derrida 2007a, 146 and 167). Derrida’s ideas on paying respect, ingratitude, and betrayal helped me to distance myself from the traditional norms of transcribing, and to rethink what it means to transcribe. Thus, in this thesis, I have narrated a journey where I progressively sought to create more openings, allowing the

chosen original musical work to influence, contaminate, and transform my language as a transcriber. In this sense, this thesis narrates the transformation of my language as a transcriber (and as a composer) over the thirteen-year timespan between *Une petite fleur bleue* and *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*.

From this perspective, the practice of transcribing also investigates the relationship of transcribers with a musical heritage. Greater freedom and involvement, and thus reciprocal contamination between the musical work and the transcriber's language, correspond to new possible uses, as opposed to the musealization and sacralization of works from the past. By removing a musical work from an imaginary museum (see Goehr 1992) and exposing it to contamination, transcribing enables a new use of such a work, transitioning it from the sacred to the profane (Agamben 2007, 74-75), allowing for a creative engagement. This process challenges the impossibility of free use, and, disenchanting the musical work, it turns the transcriber's engagement with it – and therefore with a cultural and artistic heritage – into a creative, relational, and reciprocal process. Integrating contemporary artistic expression with one's cultural legacy indeed holds the potential to transform one's relationship with history into a dynamic and creative practice.

I have also discussed transcribing as the capacity to make audible the unavoidable mediation that connects (and separates) the transcriber from musical works of the past, as well as several transcribers' strategies to work with this distance. I have shown how transcribing as a practice does not (necessarily) produce mere copies of an original, but rather establishes a relationship capable of revealing some of the unheard, inherent capacities of a musical work. In this sense, more than simply returning to the musical work, transcriptions return with a gift – an “unforeseeable [and ‘unforehearable’] experience” (Cobussen 2002a) – that can make us hear forward, so to speak.

The insights and reflections developed in my research can open up possibilities for future developments and new directions by other musicians and artistic researchers. My research offers both theoretical and artistic contributions that may encourage new ways of thinking about transcribing, enriching the discourse on the presence of the past in contemporary music, and revealing how transcribing also enables musical works to be virtually present in contemporary music, reappearing from the past like ghosts.

Some of the current references of this discourse include, for example, the recent research of the composers Mikel Urquiza and Daniele Ghisi. Urquiza explores in his own work and in that of other composers the practice of composing as “memory work” that involves music from the past (Urquiza 2024). Ghisi claims that composing “has more to do with ‘discovering’ than ‘inventing,’” (Ghisi 2017, 137), and in his research he both questions the notions of authorship and originality, criticizing the composer as a solitary inventive creator facing a blank page (*tabula rasa*). As an alternative, he proposes an explorative, corpus-based approach to music “where the composer comes in contact with sets of existing

music (a *tabula plena*) and by selecting and modifying their elements creates new works” (Ghisi 2017, 17). For example, in his project *La fabrique des monstres* (2018), Ghisi developed an artificial neural network to investigate the possibilities of a musical machine capable of listening and in a sense learning from various collections of sounds, and creatively reproducing learned patterns (Ghisi, 2017, p. 136). In the end, Ghisi selected the fragments that he found most interesting and relevant from the large amount of music produced by the machine, and organized them into a musical palette. When asked whether the music produced was ultimately his or the machine’s, he responded with a question: “When I gather flowers from a field to make a bouquet, do the flowers become mine? Yes and no” (Ghisi, 2018b).

At the beginning of this journey, while working on *Une petite fleur bleue*, I had started from the idea of the original work, and especially its score, as being a prescriptive source. Later, when working on *Hortense* and especially on *Una notte*, I started conceiving of the transcription as a double of the original, with the potential to reveal otherness as something already part of the self – already with us, yet still radically a stranger. I described how in my work this recognition of otherness as part of the self corresponded musically to a transition from a third-person to a first-person narrative. Finally, in *Tutto chiudi negli occhi*, I took one step further in my reflections on the double and proposed the idea of dreaming as a model of a relationship with the other. Dreaming of something is a relationship that opposes seizing; instead, it is a way of opening the doors to otherness, recognizing it without neutralizing or domesticating it.

Repertoire

In this thesis, I have reflected on what constitutes an original, and I have argued that it is the transcriber’s choices that make it original. More precisely, it is the very practice of transcribing that transforms a musical work into an original. My choice of repertoire for this research was guided by a desire to have both my musical language and imagination contaminated by some specific works. Through the process of transcribing, and thus entering into a relationship with these works, I aimed to be influenced and transformed by them: I recognized that, among the different possibilities that inhabit musical works, there was a potential for me to unfold as a composer, and, in choosing these musical works as part of my musical heritage, I also found opportunities to refine my own musical signature. My involvement and my situatedness as a transcriber were not a limit in this process, but an enabling condition for engaging with these musical works.

I focused on transcribing works from the Western repertoire, and apart from Franz Schubert’s Lied “Der Doppelgänger,” I chose to rework polyphonic music by Girolamo Frescobaldi, Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa, and Josquin Desprez. Frescobaldi’s “Christe alio modo” was the only instrumental piece,

while in the others, the presence of voices and poetic texts played significant roles in my transcribing process.

Transcribing reveals unheard aspects of the original work, but it also reveals much about the transcriber. The choice of originals, and particularly the recognition of their potential to be expressed through one's own musical language, is a significant one. For me, this journey has been an exploration of my musical imagination, and an opportunity to become aware of and refine my own musical signature through engaging with my (chosen) musical heritage. Once more, I was not the only active agent here, the only one who could choose. These original musical works chose me too; they came to me. This happens because I cannot escape certain historical and cultural dispositions. In Derrida's words: I could (only) prepare for the other to come (Derrida 2007b, 45).

The choice of musical as well as literary and poetical examples followed the same principle: I did not seek a criterion of exhaustiveness, but rather chose examples to which I felt invited to respond with my research. While limited by my choices and desires, both in selecting the works to transcribe and in discussing the transcriptions, my research was not about the pursuit and technical description of a musical style. Of course, different musical idioms and attitudes in transcribing are entirely possible. However, recognizing (and delving deeper into) my situatedness and also limiting the repertoire has not restricted the scope of this research in its ability to provide insights and theoretical tools for thinking about this practice in new ways so that others can imagine new steps to undertake, following their own attitudes and interests.

Throughout the thesis, I have placed greater emphasis on how the musical works have been transformed in the transcribing process, and on how, through reciprocal contamination, the new music (can I actually call it "my" music? Do I own it?) gained distinctness. It is also important to note that the presence of the other work has manifested itself in my transcriptions primarily through melodic and harmonic relationships, often deeply related to the words and poetic texts present in the original musical work, while other parameters have played a more secondary role or have even been purposely overlooked. This, too, is certainly a partial choice, and, as in the example of Lucia D'Errico's work to which I referred in chapter 4, many other options are possible.

I have described transcribing as a significant learning experience and as a strategy to enter into someone else's composing workshop, considering every note as something that has been selected but that could have also been different. Thus, I proposed transcribing as a practice that allows one to deeply engage with the creative process of another composer. I have considered slowness as an important element that allows for intimacy and a qualitatively different contact with a musical work. Slowness is also a musical feature of my transcriptions, where the tempo is meant to intensify the listener's attention, enabling them to focus on the sound itself and its changes. The tempo therefore reflects my slow

and intensive listening to the originals, and it is one of the tools to make my listening experience somehow accessible to other listeners – that is, to performers as well as the audience.

As mentioned above, I have limited my transcriptions to repertoire from the Western tradition. This research has primarily been a way for me to engage with the main tradition that has shaped my background and studies in Rome, Florence, Amsterdam, and The Hague. Personally, it has been a way to come to terms with the heritage that has significantly influenced my education from university to conservatory. I graduated in philosophy with a thesis on the sixteenth-century heretical philosopher Giordano Bruno, and my conservatory education in Italy placed a strong emphasis on the study of Renaissance and Baroque polyphony alongside composition. Working and actively reflecting on my musical heritage has been a way to attempt to reconcile an often overwhelming presence of the past with the future. It has thus been a search for a way to make the past both present and active in my musical creation, without neutralizing its otherness, but instead opening a lively and critical channel of communication with it.

While the path I have followed is personal – which is inevitable in any artistic practice or artistic research project – others can benefit from and build upon the knowledge and insights produced by my research, as well as its theoretical framework, to explore new paths and perspectives. For example, my reflections on the relationship with the other in the practice of transcribing can contribute to the discourse on engaging with repertoire from musical traditions to which one does not belong. The critical reflections on what it means in transcribing to be faithful and to pay homage can be fruitfully challenged by important themes such as cultural appropriation and other post-colonial issues that I have not directly addressed in this thesis.¹

Music has the ability to bring people, languages, and cultures into dialogue. As musicologist Giovanni Bietti asserts, “cultures have always spoken through sounds; dances, melodies, and musical instruments have traveled for centuries, interacting with the local realities they encounter along the way” (Bietti 2018, vii).

¹ Throughout this thesis, I have presented a different approach to the problematic concept and practice of appropriation. I have endeavored to rethink and deconstruct the concept of respect, particularly in a Derridean sense of “ingratitude.” Furthermore, in my work, I do not regard musical works from the past as objects or as stable entities to be preserved within an “imaginary museum” (Goehr 1992). Instead, I explored the practice of transcribing as a reciprocal, transformative relationship with a musical work – one in which the work is transformed, while at the same time responding to and affecting my practice. Every choice I made was inevitably subject to a process of inclusion and exclusion: Ultimately, (artistic) decisions have to be made, even if they take place only by passing through their inherent undecidability. Paradoxically, a decision “cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, conclusion, or explication” (Derrida 1995, 77).

Understanding the practice of transcribing in light of reflections on otherness, respect, and ingratitude, can offer insights into navigating a different context, where the nature of the other raises urgent and topical political and cultural questions.

A fruitful example in this direction is the music of composer Christopher Trapani. In his recent project *Noise Uprising* (2023) for the electric guitar quartet Zwerm and the singers Sofia Jernberg and Sophia Burgos, Trapani aims to uncover hidden connections between geographically distant genres and different plucked instruments, thus creating a polystylistic atlas that reveals a subterranean, cross-cultural network. The works he composed for this song cycle take as a point of departure gramophone records from the 1920s of jazz, fado, son, rebetiko, tango, and many more genres, and are intended to “call into question notions of cultural appropriation and authenticity, to challenge rather than romanticize notions of the exotic, and to draw attention to the dangers of ‘overtourism’ and the unreflective, superficial consumption of place” (Trapani 2023b).

The proposal in the final chapter of this thesis – a proposal which I explored in and through *Tutto chindi negli occhi* – is to see dreaming as a model for the relationship with the other. This idea resonates with *Ludic Dreaming*, a book where the authors propose dreaming as both a method for thinking and an alternative mode of knowledge:

[...] dreams are not in competition with waking observation, and neither are they threatened by other ways of understanding how we experience the world: they are a peculiarly (post-)critical mode of knowledge that blends fact, fiction, and pragmatic effects to yield a delirious world in tension with itself and its possibilities. In this, dreams teach us how to imagine otherwise, how to imagine the world not as it *is* given but how it could *never* be given.

(Cecchetto et al. 2017, 15)

Dreaming is indeed capable of bringing distant realities together, and dreaming the other can offer a mode of relationship distinct from the one of domination, providing a critical and intimate perspective to address the complex theme of cultural appropriation.

Beyond the score

In all the transcriptions I have presented in this thesis, the scores have been the privileged media, both in the relationship with the originals and in the realization of the transcriptions. Reading and writing have therefore been my primary ways of engaging with, imagining, and (re)inventing the other.

While the scores of the musical works I transcribed were central to my practice, in my research, I progressively moved away from the idea of the score as a

prescriptive entity, aiming to find – in absolute ingratitude – artistic freedom in an active and transformative relationship with the musical works.

Particularly with *Una notte*, as described in chapter 4, I considered the practice of transcription from a performative perspective, primarily through the ideas of Hans Zender, Heloisa Amaral, and Lucia D’Errico. From this perspective, creativity and authorship are no longer solely the domain of composers who produce autonomous works that then happen to be performed or transcribed. In this view, “Music is always at work; performances and replays are not copies of an original. Re-enactments are not returns; they point us in a forward direction” (Cobussen, 2002b). The musical work acts as both the starting point and the source of inspiration for exploring a wider and more divergent musical experience, rather than being the ultimate goal of an artistic journey.

In my research on transcribing, I argued against the conception of the score as “an authoritative grid, mainly designed to facilitate unidirectional instructions from composer to performer” (Cobussen 2017, 111). Nevertheless, the output of my transcribing process has always resulted in a new score. These new scores may be just as prescriptive – if not more so – for a performer as the original works. How does one deal with this issue? Starting with the insights from my research, new steps for me and for others could be to investigate and delve into this issue, reflecting on the openness and prescriptiveness of traditional scores, and drawing inspiration and consequences for the practice of transcribing. Potential steps in this direction might involve investigating collective practices in the transcribing process, or exploring different degrees of prescriptiveness by implementing forms of open notation.

An example that questions the role of notation and the composer’s authorship through the practice of transcribing can be found in the research of composer Cassandra Miller, who compares and contrasts her approaches in creating notated and non-notated compositions. With both approaches, she uses a sound recording as the source, and mimics it in different ways, “incompletely or imprecisely, and in doing so transforms it” (Miller 2018, 15). In one of her notated compositions, *About Bach* (2015) for string quartet, Miller takes as a point of departure the recording of a short excerpt of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chaconne from *Partita 2* (1720) for violin, and she submits it to a lengthy transcription process, first converting the audio file into a MIDI file through “computer listening,” and then rewriting it into a score and refining it in order to obtain a single phrase for viola that renders the exact rhythmic musicality of the live performance, also capturing accidental sound artifacts produced in the editing process. In *About Bach*, this transcribed melody is then harmonized by Miller into a chorale, repeated several times, and transformed by an almost imperceptible process of subtraction until the melody disappears (Miller 2018, 56-57). In her “post-notation practice,” Miller engages in process-driven work – that is, work carried out in a way that values and prioritizes the experience of

making over the object made – inspired by the work of composers such as Éliane Radigue and Pauline Oliveros, and “challenging the dynamics of authorship and product-hood inherent in that composer-performer economy” (Miller 2018, 43-45). A central method in her practice is the process of “singing-along,” in which one – Miller herself, or one of the performers with whom she collaborates – attempts to mimic in real time the recording that they are listening to through headphones. This mimic performance is then recorded, holding the potential for further soundings and listenings.

Miller’s work includes the use of recordings and computer listening (which also includes microphone listening), and her research exemplifies the imprint of technology on any kind of mediated transcribing process. Since my transcribing practice primarily relies on written scores and the use of music-writing as a tool for imagining and (re)inventing, I have not addressed the role of technology as a medium for accessing the original musical works in this thesis. However, in my artistic practice, I have explored the practice of live remixing as a form of mediation to an original work – dealing with various recorded sound sources and practices such as sound-editing, remixing, and improvisation – in a dance and music performance resulting from my collaboration with the dancer Suzan Tunca, which I will discuss in the final paragraph of this conclusion.

Another example of deconstructing the authority of the composer, the transcriber, and the score is *Tenebrae* (2016), by the ensemble Blutwurst, a collective transcription which takes as its starting point Gesualdo’s vocal work *Tenebrae factae sunt* (1611), a responsory for *tenebrae* (Latin for “darkness”), the Holy Week ritual in which candles are gradually extinguished to symbolize the passion and death of Jesus. Blutwurst has a background in radical improvisation and contemporary music, and in their work, they share every stage of the process as a collective. In their practice, the music score that guides their performance is thus the result of this collaborative creative effort. In Blutwurst’s *Tenebrae*, Gesualdo’s music is subjected to a process of extreme time-stretching, orchestrated in a way to allow for the musical exploration of long, sustained tones and slowly changing sound patterns. In addition, in some sections of *Tenebrae*, the ensemble’s sound is further manipulated by analog magnetic tapes, emphasizing the mediation process through which Gesualdo’s music passes and reappears as a ghostly presence.

New contexts

I began this research primarily considering myself to be in the role of a contemporary music composer engaging with my own musical heritage. However, the research itself – and especially being in dialogue with the ideas of other artistic researchers – has led me in the end to shift my perspective towards a broader horizon and a wider scope of action: It has invited me to think in a more curatorial way, allowing my work to interact meaningfully within various contexts. This approach could mean presenting contemporary (and early) music

more generously, imagining new contexts to explore its possible roles and meanings. This opening could also be described as a loss of innocence.

But I call innocent music that which thinks only of itself and believes only in itself, and which on account of itself has forgotten the world at large – this spontaneous expression of the most profound solitude which speaks of itself and with itself, and has entirely forgotten that there are listeners, effects, misunderstandings and failures in the world outside. (Nietzsche 2011, §255)

I previously referred to this aphorism by Friedrich Nietzsche in my master's thesis about childhood and new music (Bracci 2012, 24), considering it as a reference for thinking about the enchanting autonomy of music, and relating the oblivion of the outside world to the image of children playing among themselves, unaware of the existence of an audience. I connected this image with Simone Weil's thought of seeing "a landscape as it is when I am not there" (Weil 1947, 53), and I imagined music to listen to as it is when I am not there.

Today, I read the same aphorism as an invitation to step out of the musician's "deep solitude" and investigate what happens to music in different contexts, what questions it raises, what new understandings or misunderstandings, what new ideas and reactions. In fact, I believe that today it is important for musicians to be able to think of themselves not only as composers and performers who address the *outside* world, but to go beyond these roles and think of themselves as artists and artistic researchers creatively caring for music *in the world*, thus also creating and shaping its contexts. This feeling resonates with the idea that "the autonomy of art music and musical works, can today be perceived as an obstacle to connecting music makers with society" (Craenen 2024, 96).

Another possible development of this research, which focused primarily on the transcriber's relationship with the musical work, is to make the results engage within different contexts. For example, presenting these transcriptions at early music festivals could help raise productive and unexpected issues, especially since discussions of authenticity and interpretation have been central to early music discourse in the recent past. Moreover, transcribing could be a way of establishing fruitful collaborations and exchanges with performers and programmers who are not (only) specialists in contemporary music. I expect that interactions with performers who are specialized in early music would also generate new ideas, questions, and reflections, as well as perhaps resistance and misunderstandings, and therefore possible further developments of this practice.

As mentioned before, in this thesis I discussed the capacity that transcribing has to compose the distance and make audible the mediation that connects the transcriber to a musical work from the past. I also mentioned how transcribing can make musical heritage (virtually) present in contemporary music. The

reverse is also true: Transcribing can make contemporary music (virtually) present in the music of the past – thanks to the contamination between the transcriber’s language and the musical work – and can actualize unheard virtualities of musical works of the past. These theoretical reflections can help to concretize, from a curatorial perspective, the relationship of transcribers, musicians, and audiences to the music of the past, which could be a way to critically contextualize it in contemporary culture.

Among musicians and researchers there is a growing interest in linking early and contemporary music. The Italian ensemble *Azione_Improvisa*, for example, has as part of their vision the explicit goal of “combining the knowledge from the ancient music world with the most actual research in contemporary music” (*Azione_Improvisa* 2024). Its lineup combines modern and early music instruments: It is a quartet consisting of accordion, theorbo, electric guitar, and electronics. “Anamorphosis,” one of their recent programs, “was created with the desire to actualize an increasingly necessary dialogue between contemporary music and the music of the past” (Berlanda 2023), and it features transcriptions of Claudio Monteverdi’s music by composer Daniela Fantechi alongside new compositions that rethink Monteverdi’s use of word and gesture (*Azione_Improvisa* 2023).

Another example of this approach is the program “La Lontananza: 21st Century Cori Spezzati,” realized at the Venice Music Biennale in 2013, which utilized Wave Field Synthesis (WFS), a sound production technology capable of simulating and synthesizing virtual acoustic environments using 192 speakers arranged in a square formation of 10x10 meters (The Game of Life Foundation, 2024). The program combined music by Monteverdi and Nono, which was spatialized using WFS, along with a new work by Ji Youn Kang composed specifically for this technology.

Yet another example is the work led by the composer and artistic researcher Carlo Diaz (Diaz 2024a), who proposes a cross-pollination between theoretical reflections around early and contemporary music. Diaz takes as a point of departure for his theorization two complementary analyses and considers them alongside each other: “[...] critiques of the authenticity of historical performance on the one hand, with Richard Taruskin providing the classic example, and critiques of the possibility of artistic originality on the other, especially by Rosalind Krauss” (Diaz 2024b). Diaz’s research aims to overcome the impasse faced by these two criticisms, viewing both early and contemporary music as “fundamental syntheses of mimesis and invention, memory and imagination” (Diaz 2024b). Furthermore, he explores strategies to make music out of fragments – that is, materials bearing the historical weight of damage, loss, or incompleteness – in order to be challenged to “imagine beyond what’s actually there” (Diaz 2024b), thereby investigating and interweaving the concepts of recovery and musical invention.

Education

My research on transcribing may also contribute to the critical discourse on aspects of classical music education, specifically on musicians' creative engagement with their musical heritage. In recent years, the focus of the discourse on curriculum design in classical music education has shifted towards a new profile of musicians who are more creative and socially engaged. In the influential article "Musicians as 'Makers in Society': A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education," Helena Gaunt et al. identify "engaging with music as the preservation of cultural heritage and music as an art form creating new work" as one of the axes of "partnering values" on which they propose constructing the profile of the professional musician as a "maker in society" (Gaunt et al. 2021, 8), thus aiming to move beyond the traditional dichotomy of preservation versus creation.

The practice of transcribing can be an effective educational tool that enables students to engage in a creative process and develop a transformative relationship with a musical heritage, following musicologist Nicholas Cook's proposition of shifting the focus from the musical score as the representation of music to the study of music as performance (Cook 2014).

In his analysis of nearly three hundred research proposals from music performance students at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, Paul Craenen has observed a growing interest in practices related to making arrangements and transcriptions. These practices are particularly valued as tools for exploring and realizing connections to a repertoire and to the students' cultural backgrounds and heritage (Craenen 2024, 108 and 112). Furthermore, Craenen notes that what emerges from the students' proposals is "foremost a desire to connect their musical practice to the world they live in, and a realisation that the traditional classical music format prevents them from doing so" (Craenen 2024, 112). Craenen's analysis and reflections confirm the validity of the profile of the performing musician as a "maker" and accurately describe "the complex position of many students, attempting to find a balance between tradition and modernity, the local and the global, preserving heritage and opening up to other musics" (Craenen 2024, 121). The practice of transcribing can be one of many valuable tools for students to navigate their complex position in between several (musical) worlds.

So far I have conducted two seminars on transcribing: one in 2020 at the Italian Accordion Academy in Amsterdam, and another in 2024 at the Conservatory of Fermo. I observed a greater interest in this practice among students who had prior exposure to contemporary music and those who were interested in music pedagogy. Moving forward, I intend to propose seminars and workshops on this topic at higher education music institutions, exploring transcribing as a teaching and learning tool.

Dancing

Transcribing is a practice that allows a musical work to be adapted to new contexts, thereby bridging different realities. In the introduction, I described remixing as another way of thinking about transcribing. Throughout this thesis, this approach has diverged from the initial research trajectory I had set, and I focused on the practice of transcribing written music, which in turn has led to new scores. However, in my artistic practice during the same years that I was working on my doctorate, I explored the practice of remixing in my collaboration with the dancer Suzan Tunca, as mentioned above. We worked on *SEI*, a project that culminated, after several stages, in a dance and music performance on the border of improvisation and choreography, blending immediate intuitive and predetermined acoustic and choreographed movements. This performance then constituted the artistic component of Tunca's doctoral defense, "Spiritual Corporeality: Through a Dance Language towards Embodied Gnosis."

Tunca's research focuses on searching for a dance language that originates from a state of being suspended between the physical sensory and the metaphysical supra-sensory. In her research, the gap between non-verbal corporeality and verbal, analytical discourse is bridged by the key concept of embodied gnosis, "a radical opening toward the unknown, with trust" (Tunca 2023a, 27). In Tunca's work, dance serves as a medium to explore and communicate this embodied gnosis, with music playing a crucial role in a quest for a specific quality of corporeal consciousness and dimensions of knowledge within the danced experience.

Tunca aimed to conduct this exploration in dialogue with Bach's Chaconne from *Partita 2* for violin, a musical work to which she felt a profound connection. In the first part of our collaboration, which resulted in an initial version of the performance, I remixed live two different recordings of the Chaconne. I spread these recordings across several tracks running simultaneously, some of which were slowed down, pitch-shifted, or modified using various sound filters. During the performance, I was able to open and close each track, move it within the space surrounding the dancer (and the audience), and control some of the sound filters applied to the individual tracks, maintaining a constant dialogue with Tunca's dance. My role was to support Tunca's exploration of inhabiting multiple layers of corporeality, allowing her to respond to music that was simultaneously well-known and significant from an artistic and spiritual perspective, yet also unpredictable. This unpredictability provoked the dancing body's immediate intuitive reactions, disorientation, and consequently, unexpected reorientations.

In subsequent stages of the research, we explored various other approaches and interactions. Ultimately, the music for the performance, which had started with the Chaconne, came to include many more sound sources, including my own electronic music, modified recordings of excerpts from some of Bach's other

works, and field recordings. The improvisational nature of live remixing allowed for real-time interaction with the dancer.

Tunca's research is thoroughly documented in her dissertation. The video excerpts and reflections that constitute her instances of retrospective dance writing are particularly valuable and are available online in the Research Catalogue (Tunca 2023b). Notably, in April 2022, we collaborated during a two-week residency at the University Theater of the University of Amsterdam to integrate all the parts of our collaboration into a single performance. In video example 1, there are three fragments from one of the performances at the University Theater.

Video 1. SEI, performed by Suzan Tunca and Giuliano Bracci, 16 April 2022, at University Theater of the University of Amsterdam.

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/520371/2129758?c=8>

From the perspective of my research, a crucial point is that my practice of transcription – in this case, the live remix – enabled Tunca (and myself) to engage with Bach's Chaconne in continually renewed ways. Through remixing I made the mediation with a musical work audible. My role as a transcriber transformed the bilateral relationship between Tunca and the Chaconne into a triangulation that could be renewed with each performance. The musical dimensions created through remixing supported Tunca's exploration of a polyphonic body: a multilayered resonating space that integrates physical and metaphysical layers of being, seeking to unite dichotomies between gravity and levity, and between matter and spirit.

The artistic and theoretical insights from my own research proved to be useful in guiding my collaboration with Tunca, particularly in reflecting on and making decisions about the introduction of extraneous musical materials, and in constructing a musical dramaturgy where everything blossomed from the relationship with Bach's Chaconne, serving as a means to explore its depths and unheard aspects. Concurrently, collaborating with Tunca has been a profoundly enriching experience that has, in turn, deeply inspired my research on the practice of transcribing.

In this conclusion, I have discussed the contributions of my research across various contexts, outlined potential new steps to undertake, identified different directions to explore, and suggested new interlocutors to engage with. These efforts aim to be useful for myself and others – composers, performers, researchers, teachers, philosophers, musicologists, dancers, and more – in continuing to investigate and reflect on this practice and its theoretical and artistic implications in the field of contemporary music and beyond.