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Transcribing: between listening, memory, and invention

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Propositions

1. The copy precedes the original: What is called an original work only becomes original in and through the doubling or repetition of it.
2. The practice of transcribing – as an active and critical relationship with musical works – has the potential to transform both the original work and the transcriber's musical language.
3. Transcribing means listening to the other who inhabits the self. Transcribing does not mean perceiving the other as an entity opposed to and external to the self, but preparing an opening in one's language for the other to come.
4. Even the simple act of copying allows a deep relationship with a text. The slowness inherent in writing, as opposed to the relative speed of reading, gives access to a temporal dimension that fosters a qualitatively different engagement with a text.
5. Musicians – whether composers or performers – are (and should be), first and foremost, listeners.
6. Listening is not simply a receptive activity, but a truly performative and creative act.
7. To truly pay respect does not mean to imitate or to repeat; it requires an openness to being transformed by the encounter with the other. This entails acting with “absolute ingratitude,” and running the risk of betrayal.
8. If something like musical meaning exists, it is supplied by the listener. In other words, musical meaning resides in how the listener engages with the music.
9. Artistic research practices are not in opposition to artistic craftsmanship; they can act as bridges for artists to engage in meaningful dialogues with society.
10. Artistic practices have the potential to transform people's relationship with history and cultural heritage into a creative and relational process.