

MERTZ DUO SAVIGNI

UNRUHE

NEW TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR GUITAR AND PIANO

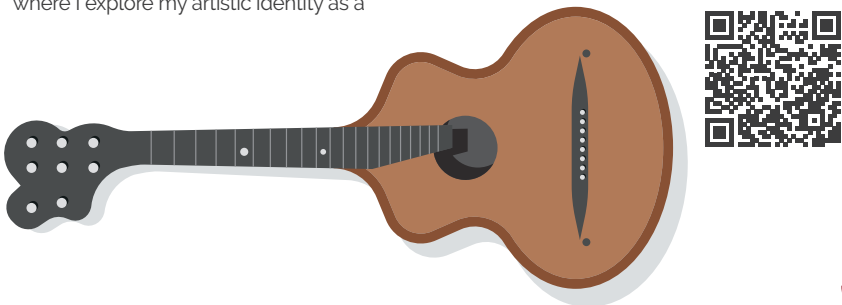


INTRO

Unruhe is a collection of five new transcriptions performed on historical instruments and recorded in the Castle of our town, Formigine (MO, Italy). These compositions by Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856), were written originally for two guitars, and transcribed by us for the guitar and piano duo.

Unruhe is part of a doctoral project that I (Enrica) am developing at TU Dublin Conservatoire, and that includes the transcription and recording of new works for guitar and piano duo. This EP aims to connect Formigine, our home, and Dublin, where I explore my artistic identity as a

performer and researcher. Because both places have an essential influence on my activity, I decided to connect them more deeply, recording part of the transcriptions in the Formigine Castle, a place of great inspiration. In addition to these five audio recordings, the project comprises two videos filmed in the Castle with Giovanni Tammaro, available on the TouchTheSound Project's YouTube Channel using this QR Code.



THE INSTRUMENTS

The instruments we used for this recording are a fortepiano Anton Walter 1805 (copy McNulty, 2020) and two terz guitars by Anton Stauffer (1842 and 1846). We chose these instruments for a specific reason as their Viennese provenience deeply connects with Mertz and Plantin, who spent several years in Vienna performing and developing a unique repertoire for the guitar and piano duo.

The **fortepiano** that Laura plays predates Josephine Plantin's activity in Vienna (see "Johann Kaspar Mertz and the transcription project"), but it represents the iconic Viennese school that inspired successive piano builders. Our **Walter** fortepiano has two knee levers which, acting like the pedals in modern pianos, modify the sound: the first is the sustain, or forte, a mechanism which lifts the dampers, prolonging the sound; the second is the moderator, which inserts a piece of felt between the strings and the hammers, softening and muffling the sound. We particularly like the moderator effect, as it allows a great variety in the sound combination with the guitar and perfectly captures the mysterious atmosphere we imagine for these compositions.

The **guitars** I played for this recording are two original nineteenth-century terz guitars (slightly smaller guitars tuned a third higher than a standard guitar) made by **Anton Stauffer** (1805-1871), part of the TouchTheSound Collection: a terz guitar with six strings from 1842, and a terz guitar with eight strings from 1846. This last instrument is of great interest as on the one hand, the resonances created by the additional basses give a typical timbre of the terz guitar a sweeter and more dramatic sound, while on the other, the scalloped fretboard influences the activity of my left hand, suggesting a different use of vibrato. Moreover, this multi-string instrument is probably close to the type of instrument that Mertz played in a duo combination with the piano, i.e. a terz guitar with four additional bass strings (Graziano Salvoni, Mertz: *L'ultimo pioniere della chitarra*, Lulu, 2020, p.399). The strings I used for the recording are gut strings, which is the material that was in use during Mertz's time.

DUO SAVIGNI

Comprised of two sisters, Enrica and Laura, Duo Savigni has been dedicated to the study of nineteenth-century repertoire on original instruments since 2012. Enrica and Laura each started their musical training at a young age and pursued their musical studies in chamber music and as solo performers.

Enrica is a classical guitar graduate with high honours from the Conservatorio di Musica Arrigo Boito, Parma, studying under Maestro Walter Pezzali in conjunction with a double major in clarinet with Maestro Roberto Saltini. She graduated in nineteenth-century guitar at Civica Scuola di Musica in Milan in 2013, and in 2021 she obtained her Master of Arts in music performance in the Early Music department of the Koninklijk Conservatorium, Brussels. She is currently undertaking DMus research in Ireland at TU Dublin Conservatoire and works as a freelance performer and a guitar tutor at Maynooth University.

Laura graduated in piano from the Conservatorio di Musica 'Arrigo Boito', Parma. She continued her studies at the 'G. Puccini' of Gallarate (VA) under the guidance of Maestro Alberto Miodini. In 2016, she obtained a Master's degree with honours in fortepiano performance at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart with Maestra Stefania Neonato. She is currently teaching at Conservatorio 'O. Vecchi' in Modena. They regularly participate in conferences and international music festivals, invited as performers and to teach masterclasses and workshops. More info: www.duosavigni.it

JOHANN KASPAR MERTZ AND THE TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT

Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856) was a Hungarian musician, considered one of the greatest guitarist-composers of his time. A fundamental date in Mertz's biography is 1842, the year that marks the meeting with the pianist **Josephine Plantin** (1819-1903); from that moment, Mertz and Plantin started travelling together and shared their private and professional lives. Throughout their careers, they enjoyed an active concert life and composed several works for the guitar and piano duo, thus creating a characteristic repertoire for this formation.

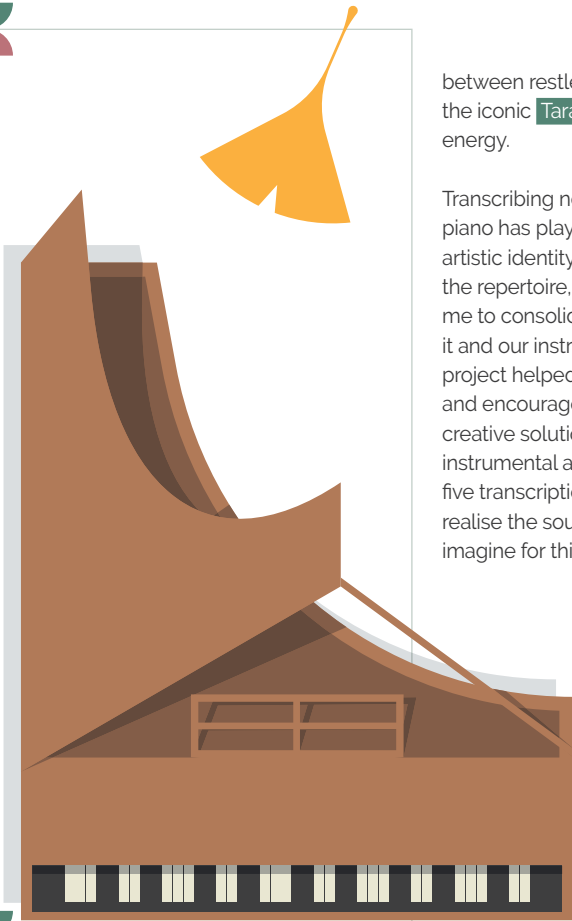
The guitar and piano duo had a central role in Mertz's chamber music repertoire, representing the formation (after the solo guitar) for which he wrote the most. Among these compositions, four notable works differ from the rest of the repertoire: *Barcarole*, *Wasserfahrt am Traunsee*, *Einsiedlers Waldglöcklein* and *Mazurka*. These pieces, composed together with Plantin, are beautiful concert works that present elements of instrumental virtuosity

and profound expressiveness. They are short characteristic pieces composed in a musical style that differs from the rest of the repertoire for this formation, exploring evocative characters and musical contrasts. Hence, this transcription project started with the aim of expanding the guitar and piano duo literature in this style and exploring the unique sound possibilities of this formation.

Drawing from Mertz's repertoire for two guitars, which has very similar characteristics to the repertoire for guitar and piano, I selected five compositions with different characters: *Impromptu*, *Deutsche Weise*, *Unruhe*, *Ständchen* and *Tarantella*. **Impromptu** stands out for its melodic sweetness and for the dialogue possibilities between the two instruments suggested by Mertz's writing; **Ständchen** for its lyricism; **Deutsche Weise** for the timbral possibilities prompted by characteristic passages (such as the twelve bells toll); **Unruhe** for the great contrast

between restlessness and quietness; and the iconic **Tarantella** for its explosive energy.

Transcribing new music for guitar and piano has played an essential role in my artistic identity; not only has it expanded the repertoire, but it has also allowed me to consolidate the relationship with it and our instruments. This transcription project helped me explore my imagination and encouraged me to search for creative solutions, strengthening my instrumental awareness. Through these five transcriptions, Laura and I have tried to realise the sound and expressive world we imagine for this repertoire.



THANKS TO

We want to express our gratitude to those who helped us realize this project. First of all, we sincerely thank the **Municipality of Formigine** and the Department of Culture for their contribution and active support.

Special thanks to **TouchTheSound Project** and **Gabriele Lodi**, who allowed us to discover the sound of instruments of the past of rare beauty, and to the **TU Dublin Conservatoire**, **Cliona Doris** and **Maria McHale** for their specious support.

Thanks to **Matteo Staffini** for the beautiful photos, to **Riccardo Pagliani** for transforming them into drawings for this graphic project, and to **Federico Pelle** for the precious work on the sound.

And finally, many thanks to **Marco Ramelli**, **Giovanni Tammaro**, **Elis and Rosa** for their constant support, collaboration and encouragement, as well as for their brilliant ideas and patience.

Formigine (MO - Italy), June 20, 2024

DUBLIN

TOUCH THE SOUND

FORMIGINE

STUDIO GRAFICO RICCARDO PAGLIANI

CASTELLO FORMIGINE

STUDIO GRAFICO RICCARDO PAGLIANI

