



Lucia Ronchetti - Massimo Ceccarelli

William Wilson

*Action concert piece
for solo double bassist*

Text from Edgar Allan Poe

Edizioni Musicali Rai Com
FOR PERUSATI ONLY

Edizioni Musicali RAI COM

William Wilson and his Doppelgänger, the characters created by Edgar Allan Poe, are symbolized by the doublebassist and the doublebass. William Wilson's double is embodied by the instrument. The soloist should underline the rage and intolerance of William Wilson towards his double. He will play the fight against his own doublebass, and the final suicide of the protagonist. In order to reach the right effect, it would be better to perform the piece with a bass stand and a contact microphone for the voice.

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Let me call myself, for the present, William Wilson. The fair page now lying before me need not be sullied with my real appellation. This has been already too much an object for the scorn — for the horror — for the detestation of my race. To the uttermost regions of the globe have not the indignant winds bruited its unparalleled infamy?

Oh, outcast of all outcasts most abandoned! — to the earth art thou not forever dead? to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden aspirations? — and a cloud, dense, dismal, and limitless, does it not hang eternally between thy hopes and heaven?

[...]

I would not, if I could, here or today, embody a record of my later years of unspeakable misery, and unpardonable crime. This epoch — these later years — took unto themselves a sudden elevation in turpitude, whose origin alone it is my present purpose to assign.

[...]

Men usually grow base by degrees. From me, in an instant, all virtue dropped bodily as a mantle.

[...]

I am the descendant of a race whose imaginative and easily excitable temperament has at all time rendered them remarkable.

[...]

In truth, the ardour, the enthusiasm, and the imperiousness of my disposition, soon rendered me a marked character among my schoolmates, and by slow, but natural gradations, gave me an ascendancy over all not greatly older than myself; - over all with a single exception. This exception was found in the person of a scholar, who, although no relation, bore the same Christian and surname as myself.

[...]

My rival had a weakness in the faucial or guttural organs, which precluded him from raising his voice at any time above a very low whisper. Of this defect I did not fail to take what poor advantage lay in my power.

My louder tones were, of course, unattempted, but then the key, it was identical; and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own.

The same name! the same contour of person! The same day of arrival at the academy! And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner! Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that what I now saw was the result, merely, of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation?

[...]

Upon entering, I thrust him furiously from me. He staggered against the wall, while I closed the door with an oath, and commanded him to draw. He hesitated but for an instant; then, with a slight sigh, drew in silence, and put himself upon his defence.

[...]

The contest was brief indeed. I was frantic with every species of wild excitement, and felt within my single arm the energy and power of a multitude. In a few seconds I forced him by sheer strength against the wainscoting, and thus, getting him at mercy, plunged my sword, with brute ferocity, repeatedly through and through his bosom.

[...]

But what human language can adequately portray that astonishment, that horror which possessed me at the spectacle then presented to view? The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangements at the upper or farther end of the room.

A large mirror, — so at first it seemed to me in my confusion — now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait.

It was Wilson; but he spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said: “You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead — dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist — and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself.”

From *William Wilson*, by Edgar Allan Poe (1839).

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(2014, rev. 2018)

Acceso (♩ = 70 ca)

behind the bridge
alla punta

pizz. Bartók *sf* *sf*

jeté behind the bridge
arco alla punta

jeté arco alla punta pizz. Bartók *sf* *sf*

beating the strings with the fingers pizz. Bartók beating sim. behind the bridge pizz. Bartók *sf* *sf* *sf*

beating the strings with the fingers pizz. Bartók beating sim.

The musical score is written for a solo double bass in 3/8 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a rest, followed by notes marked 'behind the bridge alla punta' and 'pizz. Bartók' with dynamic markings *sf* and *sf*. The second system includes 'jeté' and 'arco alla punta' markings. The third system features 'beating the strings with the fingers', 'pizz. Bartók', and 'sim.' markings. The fourth system continues with similar markings. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *sf*, *pp*, *mf*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like 'behind the bridge' and 'arco alla punta'. The piece concludes with a final *ff* dynamic marking.