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The Ontology of Musical Works and the Authenticity of their Performances

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The authentic performance movement is a phenomenon of the last twenty years. Once one could rarely find a recording of Baroque music played on the original instruments, and such performances often were lame and faltering because of the players' unfamiliarity with the instruments and with the appropriate performance practices. Now it is difficult to find a recording of such music not played in the "authentic manner" and different orchestras vie with each other in the vibrancy of their interpretations.

Not surprisingly, the authentic performance movement has raised a hue and cry among performers and musicologists, since it challenges entrenched traditions of performance. Very recently some philosophers also have turned their attention to the subject of authentic performance. The ontology of musical works has also attracted the interest of philosophers in the past twenty years.

There is an important connection between any theory of the ontology of musical works and a specification of the characteristics which must be exhibited in an authentic performance of a musical work, though this connection has not received much comment in the literature (but see Levinson 1987). If an authentic performance is (at least) an accurate performance of a work, then theories of musical ontology should tell us the type and range of properties which must be produced in an authentic performance of a work. In the main part of this paper I hope to characterise the debate about the ontology of musical works in a way which draws out this connection. The main section is preceded by an outline of some of the objections which have been raised to the authentic performance movement and offers replies to those objections. In the final section I draw some morals from the preceding, largely descriptive, account.

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ARGUMENTS ABOUT AUTHENTIC PERFORMANCE

Opponents or critics of the authentic performance movement have made points such as the following against the use of musical instruments and performance practices from the work's historical period: (a) The attempt to produce authentic musical sounds and styles often has resulted in dull, lifeless performances. Many features, other than literal-minded, mechanical accuracy, make for good performances. The use of unfamiliar instruments and styles can inhibit fluency and spontaneity, which are hallmarks of vital musical performances (Kivy 1988c; Richard Taruskin in Kenyon 1988). (b) Even if we could reproduce the sounds of the work as these might have been heard at the time of its composition, authenticity, as the recreation of the *experience* of the work shared by the composer and his or her contemporary audience, is unattainable, because we cannot reproduce the physical, social, cultural and historical context of the composer's time (Dipert 1980b; Young 1988). The way we hear music has been affected by the changing history of music; we cannot bridge the gap which separates us from the past. Our understanding of the work may be better than that of the composer and of his or her contemporaries, because we, unlike them, can place the work within the historical tradition which binds it to its future, as well as to its past. To sum up: the type of authenticity which so many performers take as their goal is impractical (indeed, impossible) and undesirable.

What is it that explains the appeal and success of the authenticity movement? Some authors deconstruct the notion and thereby discover (lo!) that the movement is a modern one, offering the attraction of novelty (Richard Taruskin and Gary Tomlinson in Kenyon 1988). (Often the appeal to deconstruction is used unselfconsciously, with neither a suggestion that deconstruction is itself a new and fashionable theory, nor a hint, whether of glee or embarrassment, that one might deconstruct the theory's own foundations.) These writers see "authentic" performance as a modern style of performance (no less reconstitutive of its object than have been other styles of performance) which claims for itself an illegitimate superiority through its invocation of the imprimatur of the composer.

Sometimes it is said that performers should strive for a different type of authenticity—for the compelling vibrancy which brings life to a work (Kivy 1988c). (Such a performance might follow from a mastery of old instruments and a sympathetic commitment to works from a certain period, but in that case the "authentic" approach is justified as the means to an end, and neither as an end in itself, nor as a means superior to a variety of alternative approaches.) There is no single, ideal performance of any work—performing must

be creative if it is to be convincing. Performers might allow themselves to be advised by composers' intentions, where these are known, but they should not sacrifice their creative autonomy to the fixed will of the composer, for, without the exercise of that autonomy, performance reduces to the bare transmission of characterless notes.

Against the view outlined above one might argue as follows: our aesthetic interest in music in general (and our favouring music above sounds which occur naturally, and above sounds specified and produced by us for other reasons) presuppose that composers, more often that not, succeed in writing artistically interesting works, and that they do so not by chance but by design. The musical work is known to us through its performances; the composer needs the services of the performer if his or her ideas are to be publicly presented, and the composer relies on the performer to respect that which has been specified of the work in question if the work as specified is to reach an audience of non-performers. For this reason, the so-called "intentional fallacy" is no fallacy at all insofar as it applies to the performer. The performer can be intending to perform the work in question only when intending to perform that which is constituted as the work by the composer. The hearer might dismiss the composer's intentions as worthless and refuse to allow his or her response to the work to be ruled by those intentions, but the performer, in order to be performing the work in question (and not to be improvising or fantasising on that work instead) must be dedicated to preserving those of the composer's intentions which are determinatively expressed and which identify the work as the individual which it is.[1]

From this it does not follow (as is so often implied) that the performer's creativity is compromised by his or her pursuit of authenticity in performance (Davies 1987, 1988a). This would follow only if the composer's specification exhaustively determined every aspect of the work, so that a performer would have to do no more than copy the work from a recipe supplied by the composer. Plainly this is not the case where performers work from notations.[2] That which is specified by the composer under-determines the sound of any accurate performance of the work. If "authentic" means "accurate", then many different-sounding performances could be equally and thoroughly authentic. Moreover, because the performer's contribution to the work's realisation is by no means fully determined, authenticity and creativity in performance will be complementary, rather than exclusive. If one cannot perform the work *at all* except by exercising one's creative skills as an interpreter and realiser of the material provided by the composer, then one cannot peform the work *authentically* except by being creative.[3]

The fact that performance is creative explains the reluctance nowadays to talk of the performer as owing a moral duty to the composer (see Dipert 1980b and cf Kivy 1988b), or (though this rarely is considered) to the audience which relies on performers for access to the composer's work. Talk of performers' duties as correlative with composers' or audiences' rights, whether the duties be "moral" or not, seems to be inappropriately restrictive, given the creative freedom which is essential to the performers' fulfilling their role. But whatever difficulties there may be in the terminology, still there is an important notion which such talk aims to capture. Where musical works exist and where audiences attend performances in order to hear those works, the first aim of the activity of performance is to deliver the work in question to the audience (and a crucial further aim is to do so well). To meet these aims the performer must exercise his or her creative talents within bounds prescribed both by the composer and by the wider conventions of the composers' day which governed the performance of works of the type in question. Performers and audiences come together on the basis of an understanding of the point of the activity in which they are jointly involved. Players who are not prepared to direct their talents to the delivery of the work are unilaterally rejecting the enterprise in terms of which they have come together with the audience. If the musicians are professional and the conventional or contractual circumstances make the purpose of their employment clear, then a failure to focus their efforts in the appropriate way might well involve the dereliction of a moral duty. If the musicians are amateurs, then, still, the activity would be misrepresented as a performance of a given work unless it were a part of the performers' intentions to do what is necessary, given their capabilities, to deliver the work. Within the tradition of "classical" music, to aim at music-making is usually to aim at performing particular musicial works, and to aim at this is willingly to accept constraints on the exercise of one's freedom.

Is the above equation of authenticity in performance with accuracy in the presentation of the individual musical work justified? Authenticity obviously is a relative notion, so we might always ask: authentic with respect to what? Performances of musical works might be authentic (or not) with respect to many possible factors—the dress of the musicians, the physical environment within which the performance takes place, the size of the audience, the price of admission, the work being played. Clearly the pursuit of authenticity in performance is selective, and it is so with a very particular purpose in mind. Where music-making takes place more or less in the absence of particular musical works, authenticity is concerned with styles

of playing; where an interest in authenticity follows from a concern to present an authentic performance of a musical work, authenticity is aimed at delivering that which constitutes the work as the individual which it is. An authentic performance of a work might aim to be authentic in further respects; for example, it might (also) aim to recreate the physical environment within which the work was first performed (for example, where a film is being made of the composer's life). But this further kind of authenticity, the authenticity which goes beyond delivering the work itself, is not required in the standard concert setting. What we require from an authentic performance of the work is a performance which is accurate in the sense that it truly represents that in virtue of which the work is the individual which it is. It is for this reason that I have equated authenticity with accuracy. An interest in the work being performed is primary in that it is such an interest which gives point to the activity of performing musical works (as opposed to music-making in the absence of musical works, or for the sake of historical reconstruction, etc.) And so it is that the notion of authenticity in the performance of particular works is centrally and importantly an interest in accuracy in performance.

Now, though, having allowed that the goal from which performance takes its first aim is that of faithfulness to the composer's determinatively expressed musical ideas, it is only fair to concede that performance serves a variety of goals. When a work is familiar and often performed, the attempt to approach the work in a fresh and unusual manner might become desirable. After all, the composer presumably intends that performances of his or her works be interesting, as well as faithful, and what an audience will find interesting in a performance depends on what they already know of the work. That is to say, where the first goal of performance already has been realised in other performances (and the audience is familiar with the work in question), other purposes of performance rightly come into greater prominence (see Levinson 1987).

What of the point raised so often about the inaccessibility of the significance of past events, given the number of beliefs and experiences which are no longer common to us and our musical predecessors? The issues raised by this question are subtle and complex, but I shall comment only briefly. Such an objection to the project of authenticity will work only if there are insurmountable differences between us and our predecessors and only if those differences are such as to affect totally the experience of the musical work *qua* the work that it is. No doubt there are many respects in which our experiences of music are bound to differ from those of its contemporary listeners, and no doubt many of those differences

are ineradicable, but to allow this is to be far from having to accept that authenticity in performance is undesirable and unattainable, for it is not obvious that inter-personal judgements of authenticity are rendered impossible by just any disparities in the experiences of different listeners (Davies 1988b).

THE ONTOLOGY OF THE MUSICAL WORK

Different theories of the ontological character of the musical work describe it as variously thin or rich in properties. At its most spare, the musical work is said to be a sound-structure of (timbre-less) rhythmically articulated notes, or a relationship between notes, or some combination of these two (Goodman 1968; Webster 1974; Cox 1986). (To use Webster's example, on the view that the work is a set of pure pitch relationships, one would be performing the Bach E major violin concerto just so long as one preserved the appropriate note relationships, which one might do by playing the piece in B major with piano and Sousaphone.) At the other end of the spectrum is the view according to which it is essential to the musical work's being the piece that it is that it possess a sound-structure with tempo, timbre etc., which must be produced by the playing of certain types of instruments, and which must have been composed by a particular individual at a particular time and place (Levinson 1980a; also see Walton 1988). (For example, on this view one would be performing the Bach E major violin concerto accurately only if a violin and orchestra such as is specified in Bach's score were used to produce the sound of the work and only if a causal thread might be traced between what one was doing and Bach's having composed that work at a particular time and place.) Between these poles, alternative views are possible—for example, that the work is a sound-structure with a certain tempo and timbre, but that the means by which such a sound-structure is produced are not part of the identifying features of the work as such (see Kivy 1988a). Whether or not the work is taken to include expressive properties depends upon what one takes to be the musical substrate of such properties. If pure note relationships can be expressive, expressiveness might be a property of the work according to the thin characterisation; if they are not, it will be performances or interpretations, rather than the work itself, which are expressive (see Pearce 1988a). Alternatively, if expressiveness derives as much from the manner in which sounds are produced as from the sounds themselves, only the thick characterisation of the work could include expressiveness among the work's properties (Levinson, in press c).

The dispute between theorists with different views on the ontology of the musical work takes a number of forms—whether an

analysis of the concept should be ruled by ordinary language, as opposed to whether analytical perspicuity is needed to penetrate the confusions of ordinary language (Goodman 1968); whether two composers who independently produce specifications which would be interpreted as generating identical sound-structures (produced by identical performance-means) have composed one or two works (Levinson 1980a; Anderson 1982); whether any work might have been composed by a different composer, or at a different place and time; whether a musical event which aims to preserve no more than the thinly characterised sound-structure of a work really is a performance of the work; and so forth. (For the most part discussion has centered on musical works of the type written from 1650-1940. Surprisingly little has been said about works such as Cage's 4'33", or pieces in which chance plays an important function, but see Ziff 1973, with comments by G. Sircello (1973) and K. Walton (1973); also see Tormey 1974 and Cavell 1976.)

One part of the current debate concerns whether musical works are discovered or created. If a work exists (between the times of its performances) as the possibility of its production, then it exists also prior to its composition just so long as it is logically possible that it might be instanced prior to the time of its composition. And if it exists prior to the time of its composition, then the composer must discover, rather than create, the work. Thus, if the musical work is characterised as a thin sound-structure (and anything which reproduces that sound-structure is an instance of the work, if not a performance of it), then the work might be instanced prior to its composition and must exist for all time, since it might be instanced at any time (Wolterstorff 1975; Cox 1985). Partly in reaction to such a view, the thicker characterisation of the work as necessarily including a performance-means and as necessarily being indexed to a person, time and place, rejects the claim that the work exists eternally (Levinson 1980a). This view ties the work into the world of time and space, so allowing that the work is created and not discovered—and, hence, it rejects the idealism of the alternative view. That is, the argument specifies that an instance of the work must be a performance of it, and that performances of the work become possible only from a particular time. The reply to this argument might take different forms: simply, one could reject the inclusion of performance-means within the account of the work's ontology, and thereby allow for the possibility of instances of the work which are not performances of it (Kivy 1988a); or one could pry the work free of the world by arguing that it might always have been composed by another person, at another place and at another time, and so might always have been performed at some time before

its actual but contingent time of composition; or one might argue that the work still exists eternally as a possibility prior to its composition, even if (as a contingent fact) that possibility could be realised in this world only with the birth of (for example) Beethoven, with the realisation of the possibility of the instrument we call a piano, with the realisation of a particular cultural and musical context, and so on (Kivy 1987; Walhout 1986). And to complicate what is already a complex issue, one might argue about the difference, if any, between creation and discovery, and about what is supposed to hang on that difference (see especially Kivy 1987).

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE WORK AND ITS PERFORMANCE

The connection between a work and its instances has been characterised on the model of a class to its members (Goodman 1968), a kind to its instances (Wolterstorff 1975), and a type to its tokens (from Wollheim 1980). The differences between these analogies is not always as clear as it might be, but might come to this: a class is the collection of its instances and does not usually share many properties with its members; a kind stands as a concept the propositional content of which (subjunctive conditional) specifies the nature of its instances without its being a collection of those instances; a type is an abstract individual which possesses and shares the definitive properties of its tokens.

If one thinks that there may be such a thing as an imperfect performance of a musical work—something which misrepresents some characteristic of the work while remaining recognisable as an instance of the work—then one might introduce the suggestion that the relationship between the work and its instances is normative, rather than descriptive (Wolterstorff 1975; Anderson 1985). This view tends to be associated with the account of musical works as kinds, but I can see no reason why the alternative views might not avail themselves of some such notion. Thus, the class which constitutes the work might be the sub-set of those of its performances which are correct in all relevant respects; the norm kind might specify the properties that a correct performance should have; the type may be betokened by more or less well-formed tokens.

On any view, the work determines or exemplifies the properties which its instances must display in order that they be instances of it; ontologically speaking, it is the nature of the work which determines those properties of its instances by virtue of which they are its instances. However, the epistemic process goes in reverse. We come to know the work through its performances. We abstract the work from its instances, stripping away from its performances those

of their properties which are artistically irrelevant, and then stripping away those artistically relevant properties which are properties of the performance but not properties of the work, and thereby exposing the work and its properties.

Even if one does not know what properties Beethoven's Fifth Symphony has except by recovering them from performances of the work, one could not recover the work without the aid of some theory about the ontological status of musical works (or of musical works of this type). One can distinguish the irrelevant from the relevant properties only in terms of a theory which establishes criteria for relevance. Theories of musical ontology are *a priori* in this sense: our acquaintance with musical works is indirect, mediated, and we can separate the message from the medium only in view of a conception of what it is that distinguishes the two. Unfortunately, the range of theories presented in the literature suggest that there is little agreement at the level of the intuitions which ground the relevant *a priori* judgments.

I offer just one example by way of illustration: R.A. Sharpe (1979) has denied that performances stand to musical works as tokens stand to types; if they are tokens of anything, he concludes, they are tokens of interpretations. Sharpe arrives at this conclusion by suggesting that it is a feature of the tokens of any given type that their equivalent parts may be interchanged without their status as tokens being impaired—a part of a linen flag might be replaced by an equivalent part of a plastic flag and one would still have a flag, he suggests. But, so continues the argument, parts of different interpretations of a musical work are not similarly interchangeable; what are interchangeable, instead, are parts of performances which are interpretationally consistent the one with the other.

Now, one might challenge this argument on a number of grounds. (a) One could begin by pointing out that there is no bar to a single item's being at the one time a token of more than one type, so one cannot show that performances are not tokens of musical works by showing that they are tokens of interpretations of musical works. (b) Or, pointing out that internal interpretative consistency is not a necessary condition for something's being a performance of a given work, one might suggest that Sharpe is wrong in denying the possibility of substitution between different interpretations (Kivy 1983). (After all, an internally inconsistent performance often is played without any substitution having taken place!) (c) Or one might question the claim that intersubstitutability of parts is a definitive test of a common betokening function. This final criticism ties the objection to the point made above—what one takes to be a token (or class member, or kind instance) depends upon one's view

as to the nature of the type in question (Dipert 1980a). Whether **the**, *the* and the, all are tokens of the same type depends upon what one takes the type to be—they all are tokens of the definite article, but they are not all tokens of a type of typeface. Sharpe's objection to the type/token account of the work/performance relation reveals an implicit commitment to a theory about the nature of the musical work (as well as of the type/token relation).

HOW DOES ONE RECOVER THE WORK FROM ITS AUTHENTIC PERFORMANCES?

Already I have emphasized that one could abstract the work from its performances only in the light of a theory about the nature of musical works. But granting that, how does one do it? A crude but tempting answer, perhaps, is this: find the lowest denominator common to all authentic (accurate) performances of the work, discard those common factors which, according to one's theory, are not relevant to its identity—that all performances took place in the evening, for example—and what one has left is the work. However, some reflection suggests that this approach is mistaken. If every element of the work were determinatively fixed, presumably some such procedure might succeed, but, if the work contains elements which are variable, with only the limits of possible variation fixed, then the lowest common denominators under-specify the work. For example, where the work contains a figured bass, the only elements common to accurate performances of the work might be the melody, the bass-line and an harmonic structure between the two. But that does not mean that the realisation of the figured bass is not part of that which gives the work its identity. Even if different realisations of the figured bass are possible, so that different (but equally accurate) performances of a given work contain different realisations of its figured bass, an essential part of the work might be the fact that its middle parts be realised in accordance with quite definite sets of conventions, where those conventions allow for a freedom which acknowledges the lee-way between what is written and those limits. This suggests then that, in determining the identifying features of any particular work, we need to look beyond the level of common factors and to include variable elements where there is a pattern to their variation from performance to performance.

Those who would concentrate their attention exclusively on the musical parameters (pitch, rhythm, texture, instrumentation, timbre etc.) common to a work's accurate performance are likely to favour a thin characterisation of the ontology of the work, because, at that level, the common factors may not go far beyond the notes and the relationships between them. And such theorists are likely to regard

conventions allowing for variations in performance as matters of musical style, where style is a characteristic of schools and movements, rather than part of that which gives any particular work its identity. On the other hand, those who favour the thicker characterisation of the musical work are likely to regard the style in which a work is properly to be played as essential to the work's being the work that it is. Accordingly, they will tend to include in their account of the work's ontology, as well as the lowest common denominators, the patterns and limits of allowable variation. Where such patterns are common to a number of works (as they are likely to be, given that usually the conventions are not codified), they constitute a style.

The emphasis I have placed, both on conventions of performance and on conventions for the transmission, where appropriate, of the composer's intentions to the musician who will execute the composer's work, will strike some people as too insecure a basis for an account of musical ontology. Artistic conventions are not more than rules of thumb, and the history of art just is the history of the overthrow and alteration of such conventions. How could the conventions secure the work unless we have a check upon what they are and how they are being used? And how, without something such as a score, could we draw the crucial distinction between the composer's making a mistake in accidentally breaking some convention and the composer's deliberately altering some convention? The reply to such questions is two-pronged: (1) It is not the case that, wherever music puts aside or minimises the role of notation, we get styles of music-making without thereby getting (performances of) musical works. In the absence of highly developed systems of notation, there is a tendency for musical works to become simpler and for improvisational and performance-skills to become more important for their own sake, but this tendency is neither necessary nor universal. Javanese notation is far less detailed and complex than is orthodox western notation (and the general run of Javanese musicians never have occasion to refer to this notation) but there are long and intricate individually named works for the gamelan orchestra. Many of these works have been in the repertory for hundreds of years. The survival of long and complex musical works largely in the absence of a notation is made possible by the fact that the conventions of performance are complex, stable, widely understood and generative in nature (in that the widely differing parts for various instruments each can be derived, in terms of the convention appropriate for that instrument, from the work's melodic foundation). The first point then is this: there can be a tradition of performing and preserving individual musical works, some of

which may be complex and prolonged, in the absence of a complex musical notation. (2) Where a complex musical notation exists, the manner in which it is to be read is governed by conventions which may be invisible only because they are so familiar to those at home with the notation. Not only are there conventions for reading the score, there are also conventions for going beyond that which is given in the score — decoration, double-dotting, a preference for stopped rather than open strings unless the contrary is directly indicated, fingerings, the method for realising a figured-bass, etc. etc. Whether something is recorded in the score depends upon how well-known and wide-spread various of the conventions are—the composer does not always spell out the limits within which the performer is free just because those limits are established already within the musical culture, period and style. Because it is contingent whether or not some particular part of the work (or of the manner of its performance) is recorded in the notation, I believe that there is no reason for insisting on a sharp division between the score and the conventions controlling performance-practice with respect to such scores, no reason for confining the work to that which is notated and dismissing the rest as a matter of style which could play no essential part in shaping the identity of the individual work.[4]

How are mistakes in composition to be distinguished from innovations? The existence of a score guarantees nothing. That which is printed in the score might be mistaken (type-setting errors, copying errors); or, even if the score correctly records that which the composer wrote, that which the composer wrote might contain an error (for example, a slip of the pen, such as a failure to cancel an accidental with a natural within the same bar). So, again, how can we separate composers' innovations from errors, given that the standards of correctness are set only by mutable conventions? The answer: by seeing whether composers repeat themselves, correct themselves when their attention is drawn to the matter, teach their students the same procedures, describe the matter in their theoretical treatises, and so on and so forth.[5] Obviously careful attention must be paid to the background of musical practice against which the composer and performers work and, in particular, to those conventions which stand fast for the work (or type of work, or musical period) in question. (An interesting case is that of the Javanese gamelan orchestra in which "wrong notes" standardly are played so that the gods will not be offended by the pride displayed by humans who act as if they believe that they might attain perfection. Being a musically fastidious people, there are conventions within the performance tradition which govern which wrong notes will be

played and the instrument which will play them. In this case an authentic performance would have to contain "wrong notes".)

Could the account offered above explain radical rejections of, or alteration in, musical conventions, such as were involved in the overthrow of the modal system, or in the move to twelve-tone technique? Yes, and for two reasons. (1) Despite what is often said, it is not the case that whole systems of conventions are overthrown at a single bound. Systems of conventions are eroded (and restructured), rather than being dumped *holus bolus*. The discontinuities are very marked to those who stand near, but, with the passage of time and the wider perspective which is thereby created, often we become increasingly aware of the continuities which always had tied the new movement to the heritage against which it reacted. (2) The accumulation of small changes can, in time, produce wholesale alterations. Moreover, even small changes might make possible spectacular aspect-shifts, so that the tiniest innovations could turn one's musical world on its ear.

It is common to suppose that acquaintance with artworks comes from first-hand experience and that, in the musical case, the experience (for the audience, if not the composer) will be an experience of performances of the work. But if a person can become acquainted with a musical work solely from a reading of its score, the second part of the conjunction false. And if a few people can experience a musical work solely from reading its score, perhaps they can also experience it in the following case: several people call out the pitch-names of notes and their relative durations, the whole being preceded by an announcement that the work is to be played on the piano (from Carrier 1983). Under such circumstances what one has, I think, is a "performance" of the score, rather than a performance of the work. Nevertheless, it may be possible for some people to recover the musical work specified by the score from such a "performance."

HOW DOES ONE RECOVER THE WORK FROM ITS INAUTHENTIC PERFORMANCES?

An inauthentic performance is a performance which misrepresents the work of which it is a performance, but which remains recognisable as a performance of the given work, despite its inaccuracies. The possibility of inauthentic performance presupposes the possibility that mistakes in performance can be recognised as such. I explained above how this might happen: (a) an audience familiar with a work might recognise the way in which one performance of it differs from others, or (b) an audience familiar with performance conventions appropriate to the work in question might recognise that those con-

ventions have been violated, and might come also to know that this was not intended by the composer and, hence, that the violation was an accident of the work's performance. Sometimes, of course, one might suspect that an error has ocurred but not know if it is an error made by the performer, the printer of the score, the composer, or if in fact it is an error at all.

If one is able to recover a work from an inauthentic performance of it, it must be possible not only to detect errors as such, but also to be able to determine what would have been correct. Very often this is possible. Most people, I am sure, can tell in some contexts not only that a note has been sung wrongly, but also which note should have been sung instead. One might make the general point as follows: musical works are very complex. One kind of atomic unit of musical content (the unit an alteration in which might make a difference to the musical sense of any given passage)—is the pitched tone.[6] (I allow that duration, timbre, and dynamics each might also have their atomic units of musical content.) The level at which musical significance arises is that of themes, motives, ostinatos, chords, etc. Many atomic units contribute to the creation of any unit of musical significance. It is always possible that some atomic units be mischaracterised without this resulting in the destruction of the molecular level of organisation at which musical significance begins to operate. (Indeed, were this not the case, one could never have the same theme in both a minor-key and a major-key version, or in an embellished version, etc.). Because there are conventions for the generation of units with musical significance from the atomic units it is possible not only to tell when an atomic unit has been mischaracterised, but also to tell, within the wider context of musicial significance, what that unit should have been. But having said all this, it is obvious that the business of recovering a work from its inauthentic performances is likely to be less secure than that of recovering it from its authentic performances.

Could one recover Bach's Violin Concerto from a performance played by piano and Sousaphone, given that all the notes were played to tempo and given that one was told that the work was written for the baroque violin? Some people might do so. But notice that it is not a requirement of something's being an inauthentic performance that the work be *entirely* recoverable from the performance. What is required is only that enough of the work be recoverable that the work to which this stands as a performance is disambiguated from other works. That is, a performance may be recognisable as a performance of a particular work even if it is not possible to recover all of the work from the performance. So, even if one could not easily appreciate how Bach's work would sound for the violin if

one heard it played on a Sousaphone, it does not follow from that fact that it is not a performance of the work that one is hearing.

MORALS TO BE DRAWN ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ONTOLOGY AND AUTHENTICITY

At least one of the connections between musical ontology and musical authenticity should be obvious by now: if an authentic performance is an accurate performance, then what is to count as an authentic performance depends upon presuppositions about the ontology of musical works, since the ontology determines what it is that constitutes the work as the individual which it is, and an accurate performance is a performance which reproduces all that is constitutive of the work's individuality. That is to say, not only is the notion of a musical work an artifact of theory, so too are the notions of a performance and of an authentic performance.

However, granting the above, to the extent that the theorists of musical ontology aim to characterise our intuitive notion of the musical work, it should be possible to test their theories against our intuitions and against the terms in which we identify and discuss musical works and their performances. Now, some philosophers might regard ordinary language as hopelessly sloppy and treat philosophical analysis as prescriptive rather than descriptive. In such cases there is always a difficulty in our accepting that we should abandon our intuitions and ways of talking for the sake of a philosophical theory. However, most philosophers *do* take themselves to be analysing our present concepts and, if it turns out that our concepts are sloppy and obscure, then it will be part of the philosopher's job to map the limits of those obscurities and point to the source of our conceptual sloppiness. The majority of the philosophers who discuss musical ontology take themselves to be performing some such descriptive role and it is possible (therefore) to test their views against our shared intuitions—in theory.

Nevertheless, in practice that test seems not to get us anywhere fast—as I indicated at the outset, there are no widely shared intuitions about the nature of musical works entrenched firmly enough that the philosophical debate about musical ontology can easily be resolved. However, in view of the connection between ontology and authentic performance for which I have argued above, it is possible perhaps to reconsider the debate about musical ontology in terms of our intuitions about musical authenticity, so long as those intuitions are firmly based. The issue is not one about whether authenticity in performance is desirable; neither is it one about whether we can experience authentically performed music as it was experienced by the composer's contemporaries. Rather, the issue is

whether we are agreed on what is involved in aiming at authenticity. If we are, it might be possible to draw inferences from the agreed facts which reflect on the debate about musical ontology.

Are we so agreed? It seems to me that there is a considerable measure of agreement about what is involved in aiming at authentic performance for some kinds of music, at least. Consistently performers have tried to achieve authenticity by the use of the instruments for which the composer wrote, by the adoption of styles of playing and by the adoption of the performance practices for reading and interpreting notations which held at the time of composition, and so on. If we consider the kind of ontology presupposed by such a view of authenticity, it appears that we must favour a thicker rather than a thinner characterisation of the nature of the musical work. If the use of the appropriate performance means is important not simply because other means of producing the appropriate sounds are not available, but in the fuller sense that the use of those means is integrally and inescapably a part of the process by which authentic performance is to be achieved, then musical works are not viewed as pure sound structures.

The point that I have made above is an important one, I believe, in its implications for the correctness or otherwise of different accounts of musical ontology. But by focussing on a narrow area of performance and musical history, its significance might easily be over-estimated. If we take a wider perspective and consider the way in which an interest in music might range from a concern with music-making in the absence of musical works, through an interest in music-making within which musical works are minimally important and the stress is on the improvisational skills of the peformer, and finally to music-making in which the primary object of interest is a complex and more or less determinate musical work and the music-making is the means by which that work is presented—then what emerges, I think, is the realisation that the notion of authentic performance has no single, fixed essence. The more it is that the musical work drops out of account—for example, because it exists as no more than a cipher which the performers must expand and develop in the creation of a performance—then the more it will be the case that authenticity in performance is concerned with faithfulness to styles of playing than to the work itself. The more it is that the musical work is sufficiently complex and stable to become the focus of attention—for example, because it is recorded by means of a sophisticated notation, or because conventions for performances are sufficiently complex and detailed to allow for the preservation of the individuality of long works—then the more it will be the case that authenticity in performance is concerned with faithfulness to

a determinative text. Moreover, because musical conventions are mutable, as are complex systems of notation, what it is that can be determined by the composer and the conventions as the text of a musical work will be relative to the time of the work's composition. Accordingly, what it is that can be required in the name of faithfulness from a performance of a given work will depend very much upon the work's period.

Given this wider perspective, what emerges, I suggest, is the idea that the criteria for authenticity in musical performances are variable. In some cases it is essential, if authenticity is to be achieved, that particular types of instruments be used, because the use of those instruments is specified by the composer, and the performance practice of the day treats such specifications as determinative. In other cases, a variety of instrumental ensembles might be employed in different, equally authentic performances, because the conventions of the day allowed the composer to determine nothing more definite than a range of possibilities. By the mid-nineteenth century, notated phrasing and dynamics are determinative and must be observed in an authentic performance; in the mid-eighteenth-century these musical parameters are variable within wide limits and notations of them had the status only of recommendations. Perhaps, in some extreme cases, the limits of choice permitted to the performer are so wide that the work appears to be no more than a pure, timbreless sound structure which might be realised authentically on a synthesiser since not even an historical limitation on the work's instrumentation would be recognised by its creator and the musical culture within which that composer worked.

If what I have said on the basis of this wider perspective is correct, it might appear to be appropriate to draw the paradoxical conclusion that all the theories of musical ontology which I have mentioned are correct, and that none of them are. More carefully, the moral to draw perhaps is this: the totality of musical works from culture to culture and from time to time do not have any *single* ontological character. Some musical works are thick with properties, others are thinner—some works include the performance-means as part of their essential nature, and much more besides, while others are more or less pure sound structures.[7]

Notes

[1]Not everything recorded in the score need be determinative. Conventions of performance practice and score-reading, as well as composers' intentions, set the standards for determinativeness. For a fuller account of this issue see Davies 1987.

[2]Some contemporary composers and transcribers have attempted to make notations as specific and detailed as possible—see Bartok's transcriptions of Hungarian folk music, where

many supplementary notational symbols are used. Simply, I doubt that any written notation can fully specify every aspect of the sound of an accurate performance of it; certainly the standard musical notation does not.

[3]Admittedly, the notion of creativity appealed to here is minimal and is consistent with thoughtless, even mechanical playing. The creative element in most performances may often go beyond this minimal level, but this is not always the case.

[4]Goodman (1968) does make such a division because he argues that, if the score specifies the work univocally and recoverably, it can do so only if it meets various syntactic requirements (which would not be met by conventions of the type which I mention). He is happy to depart from ordinary usage in denying that performances differing by a single note cannot both instance the same work; to do otherwise, he thinks, is to undermine the notion of the transitivity of identity. On similar grounds he denies that the verbal language of tempo (Allegro molto, etc.) is notational. For a discussion see Boretz 1970; Goodman 1970; Kulenkampff 1981.

[5]When Jane Torville and Christopher Dean competed in the Olympic Games in Calgary in 1984, they appeared to make a mistake and the shocked crowd gasped. The dance, which followed a prescribed pattern, was twice repeated. On the first repeat, when the questionable pattern of movement recurred, some people gasped again. On the second repetition, no one gasped because everyone recognised that they were seeing an innovative and risky step, and not a mistake.

[6]It is my intention here to indicate a musical unit equivalent in status to that of the phoneme in language. The danger of such an approach, of course, is the temptation to draw too close a parallel between music and language—to describe music as a semantic system generating "sentence-like" units of meaning from the combination of "word-like" units according to rules of musical syntax. Like so many others, I reject the view that music is a semantic system, which is one reason why I call the atomic units "phoneme-like" rather than "word-like." As I use the analogy, units of musical meaning are combined to form patterns with musical significance; the patterns are significant in that someone who understands music must recognise and appreciate such patterns. The crucial disanalogy lies in the fact that those musical patterns no more have semantic content than do the marks left by a snake as it travels across the sand.

[7]I am grateful for the helpful criticisms of an anonymous reader for this journal.

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