The Ontology of Music and the Challenge of Performance: Identity versus Variety, and the Persistence of the "Text"

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1. Introduction

One of the central targets of modern performance theory has been the traditional and hierarchical distinction between the original work and its performances. First, performance is now commonly seen less as a reproduction of a work and more as an event, and, moreover, as an event with its own independent revelations, values and social meanings.[1] Second, there have always been certain kinds of work that seem to arise as a result of performance (rather than the other way around) through acts of what we call "improvisation". And third, many developments in modern theory – the death of the author, the blurring of textual boundaries, the interest in performative meanings, the questioning of the "metaphysics of presence", the engagement with the Body as a central signifier of meaning – have sought to undermine the primacy of the "work-concept" (Goehr 1992), and instead attempted to explain the import and interest of music as a by-product of the "aura" and "authority" of performers and their activities.[2]

One reason why these issues have been difficult to resolve is because they impinge upon deep questions about the identity and "mode of existence" of works and performances – in other words they raise ontological problems. Another is that responses to these issues have varied according to the philosophical allegiances of the theorists, with major divisions of opinion occurring between those who show a preference for the methods of the so-called "analytic" school of philosophy (broadly Anglo-American in origin), and those who favor the approaches of the "Continental" school (broadly German-French in origin). Over the years these two "schools" (in fact they are "movements", rather than "schools") have glowered at each other's maneuvers with a curious mixture of suspicion and disdain. To the Continentals the

analytic school seems trapped in the past, still concerned with minute exercises in concept analysis and untroubled by the apparent relativism and essentialism of some of its operations. The analytic school replies that the "Continentals" have collapsed robust relativism into mere subjectivism, and replaced argument and evidence with meticulously asserted fantasies in the presence of life and its artworks. These are caricatures from both sides, of course, and many theorists are now drawing together the most relevant aspects of the two approaches. The danger is that bright ideas will be taken out of the philosophical toy box and used as character witnesses in verbal dramas rather than as stages in a deepening understanding, and they will become the sponsors of counter-suggestion rather than of proof and refutation. Such tendencies have enticed us all. The present paper has its basis in the analytic approach, but it is hoped that it will take proper note of objections to its perspectives as the arguments proceed.

In both the analytic and Continental traditions it is not uncommon for discussions of ontology to conflate two rather different, though related, issues. The first is the question of "individuation". For example, how are we going to explain how a particular work, apparently with a fixed set of characteristics, can retain its individual identity through a variety of different performances? This traditional problem has never been fully resolved, though the difficulties have been "characterized" by a number of different theoretical models and approaches to which we shall come shortly. The second issue embedded in the notion of ontology is the question of the "mode of existence" of musical works. For example, are they "real" things (materially present amongst us), or a kind of developing mental idea (perhaps a phenomenological construal born of culture, history, human practice, and accumulated experience, etc.)? The phenomenological approach to existence has many attractions for those, for example, who wish to free performance from the "tyranny" of the pre-existing work, and to dissolve the supposed hierarchy between work and performance. Alongside its theoretical concerns with ontology, this paper will also investigate exactly which factors in performance lend themselves to variation, and whether those elements promise any kind of freedom from the "work concept" itself. To do this it will examine a range of different performance situations, including: 1) performances that purport to be of a pre-existent notated work in the traditional manner; 2) un-notated performances (including some improvisations); and 3) performances that deny the need for any connection with a work-concept.

2. Performance functions and human agency

Clearly a central problem of variety in relation to the identity of a work arises through performance, and so we need to begin by uncovering some of the ways in which the performer interfaces with a musical text in traditional, standard cases. Since at least 1711, when Lord Shaftesbury first used the term "performing arts" (Cooper 1711, vol I. sec iii, line 240), we have become accustomed to treating those arts that display their works through human intermediaries as a special case. If we are going to understand exactly the special functions of the performer in such cases however, the first question we have to face is this: since we perform out the meaning in our heads of all the artworks that we come across – whether novels, paintings or beautiful buildings – why are not all of the arts performing arts?[3]

The usual first response to this question centers on the fact that for some artworks (paintings, for example) the exact sequence of information through time tends not to be of primary concern in the normative case, whereas in most performance arts it is. We might call this way of discovering the information we receive the *seriation function* of performance. Of course, other types of artworks, such as novels, also require a fixed seriation of the information for understanding to take place. But if we follow the connected propositions and concepts signaled by the written words, our reading will, without much difficulty, place before us what is primarily an "instance" of the text (and its meaning) without necessarily providing – in the manner of the reading – a dramatized and characterized "performance" of it on a par, say, with those given by Dickens when he gave public readings of his novels.[4]

On the other hand, just how we instill meaning into the seriations of an "abstract" art such as music is a complex issue. This is because sequences of sound are "non-propositional", and cannot themselves makes assertions about the world. It is this "non-propositionality" that makes music an abstract art, though we should note that this in no way implies that the causes and meanings of music are therefore autonomous, or cut off from the world. Even abstract sounds can connect to the world through mimicry, association, ritual and social usage, physiological impact, the recall of previous works and performances, and in many other ways. Moreover, an important first step in connecting such sounds to the world comes through what we might call the *human-agency function* of performance.

The fact that performances are usually rendered by human beings makes it easier for

us to hear the intensities of the material sounds as somehow appropriate to, or as an accompaniment for, human feelings, gestures and responses. In other words the human-agency aspect of performance assists us to hear the sounds figuratively or symbolically – it provides not only a focus for human identification but, in so doing, it encourages a *metaphor function*. It becomes one of the chief means by which a mere set of notational events, a mere sequence of sonic happenings, can be heard *as if* it is a meaningful narrative, or a dialogue, or a developing argument, or an intensification of human emotions – in other words such functions contribute to our sense of the "aboutness" of abstract music. Indeed, it may be that our identification with the human agency element in performance is the very thing that persuades us that music itself is "expressive", and perhaps we should be attributing our "expression experiences" in the presence of music to the complex and persuasive interactions and identifications between human performers and human listeners. If so, that might save us from drawing upon opaque theories of metaphysical embodiment[5] in our attempts to explain how music "itself" (rather than its particular displays in performance) can seem to "be expressive".

Focusing on exactly what the performer chooses to display takes us to the next step in this complicated transaction. Any particular human performer will select from the many potential ways of displaying the notes, particular ingredients and relationships he or she wishes to foreground. In other words they will impose individualized patterns of intensity and suggestion upon the music by a process of *aspectival emphasis*, a function which we usually call "interpretation".

What we should notice here is that showing that a set of sounds can be emphasized in a particular way, or might be taken as a metaphor, is, at heart, only a neutral piece of information. What happens next is that, by their manner of display, certain performances win us over to the view that such musical interpretations – perhaps of question and answer, coherence or struggle, closure or incompleteness – are convincing, or disturbing, or partly obscure, or are worthy of our reactive imagination and sympathy. This is what we might call the *persuasive function* of performance: it convinces us, through its apt intensifications, to commit to a certain aspectival way of listening, and to appreciate the rewards of its apparent aptness and coherence.

Musical performance, of course, takes place in sounds. This means that a performance – unlike a written score, or the composer's idea, or a critic's description of a performance – can be directly sensed as displaying what we might call

"musicness", a soundscape that we perceive as having meanings than cannot be completely replaced by any other medium, whether words, analyses, expressive splashes of paint, or anything else. This is what we might describe as the musically specific, non-substitutable *aesthetic function* of musical performance. This means that we do not just glean information about details of the work from the performance. Rather, our knowledge and understanding, gained in that particular way, are infused with the special manner of their begetting, and it is through this manner of begetting that we move beyond the realm of mere meaningful remarks and into the realm of remarkable meanings. And those remarkable meanings are taken to be aesthetic.

But the relation of aesthetic qualities to the status of performance needs to be treated with some caution. Even if we could clearly establish that performances had aesthetic qualities themselves, that would not be enough to show that performance was an independent art form in and of itself. After all, a sunset might be aesthetically pleasing, but it cannot be well-crafted or ironic or a compelling commentary upon the human condition, and we would need to marshal some very tortuous arguments indeed to plead that sunsets were artworks in virtue of merely having aesthetic qualities.

This means that even if we could show that performance on its own had aesthetic features, this would still not confirm performance as an artform in its own right. Also, for traditional musical performances (as opposed to performance artworks) to constitute an independent artform, we would need to show that they operated in a genuinely independent way – that there could be brilliant, valuable performances of banal works; that we had clear notions of what constituted performing genius (aside from being able to understand someone else's works well); that performance had its own art-historical traditions of discovery and innovation, independent of changing compositional challenges and styles; and so on. Clearly, the claims of performance to some kind of "artness" would need to be made separately from the status of the things it performs, and this may not be easy because not all things done with "artistry" entail the making of "artworks". (Zen philosophy, for example, is full of advice about how to perform everyday actions with a kind of artistry, without once suggesting that the resultant processes and actions lead to construction of artworks).[6]

In traditional cases of western classical music, it is very hard to sever completely the causal links between text, performance, and the mediating force of human agency which interact in complex ways. Moreover, it will be noticed that in the list of

performance functions that arise from that interaction, there has been no straightforward acknowledgement that the performance directly displays the work. More of that later, but now we need to explain how performance variety is possible while retaining some sense of the identity of the text.

3. Theories of Performance Variety: Descriptions v. Explanations

Just how flexible can performance be in relation to the identity of a musical work? Many philosophical theories provide models that accept *that* the relationship is a flexible one (they describe a scheme that accommodates the fact that it happens), but very few tell us exactly *how* the identity of the work is maintained in the case of conspicuously varied performance (the detailed explanations tend to be rather "thin"). A typical way in which analytic philosophers deal with this issue is to say that we should imagine the work as a kind of abstract template, a so-called "type", and that any particular performance or score is therefore a concrete token of that type.[7] The type-token distinction was first suggested by the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, but its use in aesthetics was established by Richard Wollheim (1968, sec. 35), and it now appears in various guises and adaptations. In relation to individual tokens, it does not matter if some of the scores are on pink paper and others on white, or if decibel levels vary between one performance and another (these are contingent matters), but it is generally part of the theory that all tokens are required to share the right number of notes in the right order, otherwise – philosophically – they become tokens of a different type, a different abstract work. This might be called the "one-wrong-note problem", and it weakens the theory considerably, because it is counterintuitive, and because it requires us to postulate a new abstract type every time an adventurous or mistake-prone musician takes the stage. In other words, it does not allow us to account for variations in performance in relation to the identity of the work – the very issue we are interested in.

Similar difficulties can arise in phenomenological or hermeneutic approaches. In the influential theories of Roman Ingarden, for example, the work is seen as an intentional object (neither fully real, nor fully ideal), which must be "concretized" into an aesthetic object by the experiences of those who receive it. Moreover, all such works have elements – "spots of indeterminacy" - that are not fully explicated called "schematized aspects". In relation to music, of course, these "schematized" elements can be many and varied, and what we want to know is what kinds of concretizations

(interpretations) count as concretizations of the work, as opposed to merely free explorations or reveries in the presence of the "schema". Ingarden tells us that "as long as the sound base revealed in the performance is in accordance with what the score designates, and if, moreover, all the remaining qualities of the work revealed in performance do not extend beyond the work as a schema, then every performance fulfilling those conditions is 'proper' " (1986, 150). However, in such a theory, even if we leave aside the obscurity of how the "qualities of the work revealed in performance" could belong to the work but conflict with those suggested by the "schema" of the work, what else are we being told about the conditions for compliant performances? What exactly is the distinction between the "sound *base*" of a performance and the "sound" of a performance, and precisely how might we go about defining those limits set by the "schema" that must not be exceeded? This seems to be another typical example of how the fact that there is flexibility is recognized, but no clear indication is offered of exactly how the flexibilities are of a type that will not break the link between performance variety and the identity of the work.

4. Archival notation, strategic notation, reading cultures and heuristic paths

To get closer to the types of flexibility involved we need temporarily to shift our focus from performance to the musical score. There are various ways in which notations might be categorized – for example, there are analogue notations (the standard pitches and rhythms on the stave showing "height" and "depth" of sound and movement through time), executant notations (tablatures showing in a schematic way where to put the fingers on a fret-board), prescriptive notations (standard scores which offer a template for a performance), and descriptive notations (notations used by ethnomusicologists and others studying oral cultures to record un-notated performances that have already taken place). For our purposes, however, we need to get at the different functions of notation within any type or system, and for that reason it might be helpful to make a distinction between what we might call archival and strategic functions. The archival elements would consist of specific rhythms, pitches, forms and the like, whereas the strategies would involve invitations to produce certain kinds of effect in the most appropriate manner on the occasion of the performance. Some of these strategic elements are already quite familiar to us in terms such as "cadenza", or "rubato", or "espressivo" – after all, we know what effect is required by the term "espressivo" but it would be very difficult to define what archived feeling, if

any, was supposed to be represented in an "espressivo" moment. To go alongside these familiar kinds of strategic terms, there are also, one imagines, strategies implied by the score that inform even our use of the archival elements such as particular tempo markings, rhythms and dynamics. Such implied strategies might include "please use all the archival elements to create in some way a sense of dénouement at bar 200"; or "please create a sense of balance in the texture and formal structure – even if your ways of achieving this are not ones envisaged by me, the composer". I mention this last condition because we have evidence from several composers, but especially from Brahms,[8] that on occasions they were delighted by interpretation-solutions that they had never foreseen or were at odds with what they had originally intended.

Normally, of course, the archival elements in a score are far more in evidence than the strategic ones, but there are two further points to make here. One is that in any case the strategic elements can certainly on occasions take precedence over the local archival details (think how a cadenza might be notated as compared with what any particular performer might actually do), and that therefore performance variety is sometimes subsumed in the notation usage, and into the reading culture (an important element in relation to this debate) implied by its use. The other is that some works – particularly avant-garde compositions of one kind or another – are almost entirely written in strategic notation rather than archival notation. A famous case in point is Cage's *4'33"*, the notation of which provides a strategy for creating a certain kind of event or effect (in that sense Cage's intentions are fully encoded in the work, despite his denials), but it can make no attempt to archive the specific details of the ambient sound content on any particular performance occasion.[9] All of this is to say that the identities of works can be defined as much by strategies that leave their exact realizations to the performer, as by archives which do not. However, since all notations (including strategic ones) imply a reading culture, these identities cannot be defined by the notations alone, but must involve some account of the assumed reading culture that guides us towards the intended heuristic path.

Reading cultures can unsettle our notions of the identity and meanings of works because they themselves can have purposes and reasons beyond those of the individual work. For example, Glenn Gould in his performance of the fifth variation in the first movement of Mozart's A major piano sonata, K.331, ignores the "Adagio" marking and plays it "Allegro" because he wishes to subject the movement to a

"Webern-like" scrutiny, by opening the movement with deconstructive slowness and gradually accelerating through each section to restore a sense of coherence at the end. He felt that the standard performance approach was too well known and needed to be de-familiarized (Page 1984, 40-41). This is performance variety arising not from something the performer has to "say" about the musical work *per se,* but from something the performer wishes to "say" about our experiences of hearing it performed – it is a comment upon the stultifying, over-familiar results of the "reading culture" itself. As so often with works of art, the "meaning" arises not just from what the artist or performer wants to "say" concerning the work, but what further things they wish to say (about traditions, the role of the artist, audience expectations, etc.) by saying it under certain cultural conditions. A variant performance such as that by Gould should not be seen as impinging on the identity of the work (if anything it is a kind of "performing out" of an analysis of the work); rather it acts instead as a warning that not all performances are "identity-relevant", and show us that it may not be possible in any simple way to think of a work as somehow arising from the sum of its performances.

Usually reading cultures act on performance in a more direct way than in the above example. In terms of cultural background, there can be few performers who do not understand that art forms (whether of jazz, classical music, African drumming, or anything else) have conventions and a history. Also that cultural knowledge is usually encoded in some kind of "stylistic common practice" when reading and/or performing works. This means that the performers need to mediate between the basic denotations of the musical symbols (pitches, rhythms, etc.) and their connotations within certain cultural, stylistic or expressive settings. This is rarely a purely subjective or "open" activity – very few musicians invited to perform a solo in "free" jazz, for example, would elect to burst into pastiche Mozart; "authenticity" and "fidelity to style" are alive and well in the performance of all kinds of avant-garde music. This is also true of the "styles" of listening to music, which draw upon the conventions of a particular listening culture. After all, John Cage's *4'33"* was not the first "silent" work to be composed, though it was the first to be "received" in the particular way it was in 1952. For example, in 1897 the French humorist Alphonse Allais published a funeral march "for the burial of a deaf man" consisting of 24 blank bars of written "music".[10] But what was missing in 1897 was the readiness of the audience to "hear" such a "silent" work at all, let alone to hear it as giving access to Zen experiences, or as

opening the realm of music to ambient sounds, or as a calculated "sneering" at the traditional meanings attributed to art (as Jacques Attali famously claimed of Cage's work) (1985, 136).

What is interesting about the two "silent" music examples is that, although the "reflexive transaction" between work and audience expectations had changed from the time of Alphonse Allais to that of Cage, it had not changed completely. In both cases the non-appearance of traditional notation retained a sense of "absence", of bewildering non-denotation, which had in some way to be overcome – in Allais' case with a joke, in Cage's case by questioning the notion of absence. In other words traditional meaning was not absent from these works, but rather formed the basis of a re-construal, a transformed perspective within a certain continuity of cultural meaning. Both of the contexts worked on a more culturally sustained meaning so as to manipulate it for another purpose. We can perhaps see more clearly how this works by taking a verbal example. If someone says "that was clever" when a child drops and smashes a vase, that does not mean that the word "clever" has suddenly changed its meaning to "stupid" (if that were the case then the ironic tone would be completely lost); rather it means that the cultural connotation of the sentence uttered in those circumstances is equivalent to the sentence "how clever was that?", which in turn invites the thought: "not very". The "meaning" here can be seen to arise out of a "reflexivity" between the intended message and the anticipated listening culture of the audience member.[11]

Composers, performers and listeners engage in this kind of reflexive interplay with traditional meanings all the time. This does not mean that meanings are eternal or essential, but neither does it imply that meanings change constantly or whimsically. To understand the "meanings" of performance, and the sustained identity of works (and the interactions between them), we need theories of performance to take into account the various relatively stable background "texts" of culturally established meanings in which they operate. And in this current period of globalization some of those meanings seem to be widely understood to a significant degree, as the spread of popular musics and films across the globe demonstrates. Almost no society receives such artifacts in a totally uncomprehending manner, even if they are sometimes taken to be reprehensible colonial pollutions of the indigenous culture. In recent years it has been interesting to observe, too, how the implications of Umberto Eco's famous notion of the "open work" (1989) in which the reader or listener or performer is

invited to participate in the creation of its meaning (through "unlimited semiosis") have been scaled back by the same author. In a series of publications on "over-interpretation" and "mis-readings", the reader/performer is now entreated to understand the "evidence" of the work in "sensible" ways, and avoid the "unlimited semiosis" that causes us to drift away from what is important in the work (Eco 1990, 23-43).[12] These kinds of difficulties were anticipated in the early years of the twentieth century by the founder of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure:

> The fundamental principle of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign does not prevent us from distinguishing in any language between what is intrinsically arbitrary - that is, unmotivated - and what is only relatively arbitrary. Not all signs are absolutely arbitrary. In some cases, there are factors which allow us to recognize different degrees of arbitrariness, although never to discard the notion entirely. The sign may be motivated to a certain extent" (1983, 130).

Such a "reflexive" model for meaning is not, of course, attempting to tell us how we must listen to works or perform them. Instead, it is trying to identify what principles make it possible for us, in any relatively stable cultural situation, to listen to works as individual, intentional entities, and to appreciate them as music – if that is what we want to do. Moreover, it recognizes that within a culture, the reading cultures in respect of a work might still contain variations depending on the purpose. For example, music analysts or editors might need to read the score of a Rachmaninov piano concerto in a very different way from a performer, since some "essential" elements of identity for them (individual ways of unfolding structures, the authority of the manuscript sources, etc.), may have little direct significance for a performer who is interested in the romantic character of its melodies, and the opportunities for individualized expressive display.

The point here is that all of these elements contribute to the identity of the work (because they imply a particular history of production and intention), but the hierarchy of identity-markers changes with the circumstance. It is very important in the performance situation to prioritize the display of the romantic character of the Rachmaninov, and less important to account for every note (as an analyst might), or present a passage as if it were a controversial choice between conflicting surviving versions as an editor might (the performer cannot perform a footnote). The task of the

performer is to take a set of neutral marks or instructions from the composer (which of themselves hold little aesthetic or emotional interest) and assimilate them through performance into an already-known wider referential world of "style" and "musicness" and "expressive expectation". Of course, the context-relevant identity-markers of a Rachmaninov piano concerto performance must have enough notational features for it to *resemble* other instances of the work, but not so many that the resemblance always collapses into mere replication, or suppresses other characteristics essential to the performance context. Moreover, we negotiate this space between resemblance and replication by treating the performance itself as an intentional event – by gathering evidence (consciously or unconsciously) that the performance is taking the score or "text" as a guiding structural principle in the way in which the performance unfolds, even if the "archival content" of the performance does not match exactly (for reasons of incompetence, momentary distraction, etc.) the archival content of the score.

5. Un-notated Performances and the Persistence of a "Text"

It could be argued that although we have explained why a musical text might need performance, we have not explained why performance might need a musical text. Indeed it is often assumed that certain kinds of performance, such as improvisation, do not need a text. The situation, however, is complicated. In the first place some "improvisations" are almost fully prepared or schematized, so that in fact there is a kind of virtual notation if not a material one. The following report of an interview between Neil Sorrell and the Indian master Ram Narayan offers a clear example:

> How much does an improvising musician improvise? … At first Ram Narayan expressed outright hostility to the view that Indian music is mainly improvised, and blamed other Indian musicians for helping to perpetrate this misconception. … His argument was that because so much discipline, effort and knowledge are necessary to understand the ragas, and – very important – to keep the ragas pure and distinct, then logically there cannot be improvisation. For him improvisation suggested unusual experiments which flout accepted tradition …(1980, 113)

What this suggests is that the crucial distinction is not between "written" and "oral"

cultures, but between prepared and unprepared elements in a performance. Moreover, in prepared performances there is always a "text" of sorts, and so we should resist the idea that in such un-notated performances "what the work is" emerges simply from the sum of its performances. First, in such cases it is difficult to explain how we know exactly which performances are relevant to the construction of a particular work without already having some shadowy notion of the work against which to check them. Second, some performances might contradict others, or the last performance might be cancelled - and in the latter case we would need to give some account of how we knew that it was indeed the "last" performance, the one needed for final completion to take place. Finally, what could those performances possibly be "interpretations" of, since the work – we are told - does not exist until they are all over? We shall return to these issues later.

The presence of a virtual "text" may not be so obvious in all cases where the performance is prepared. For example, in discussing his work the jazz saxophonist Lee Konitz tells us: " … my way of preparation [is] not to be prepared. And that takes a lot of preparation!".[13] Here Konitz seems to be suggesting that there are different kinds of preparation, and ones that eschew any direct models or templates. However, these types do not necessarily reject a general "bracketing" of previous performances experiences (thus calling them to mind), and neither do they abandon the employment of attitudinal strategies presumably directed towards some kind of goal, and some notion of success or failure. In such cases, it is a complex issue to discern exactly what kind of freedom is being represented by the "non-preparation". Clearly there is a certain kind of *freedom from* direct (structural? harmonic? melodic?) models, but that does not guarantee a *freedom to* release a completely unfettered flow of previously unconceived new material: "escape" freedoms do not automatically lead to "fulfillment" freedoms in any kind of creative work (or indeed in politics).[14] Moreover, from the listener's point of view, even when there is completely new material the gestural surface of the performance display makes us feel as though the performance must be *about* something, and it is difficult not to take that "something" to be a "text" of some kind, even if the "text" is little more than the skill-set of a particular performer heard through a concatenation of the playing techniques displayed in the performance. What this amounts to is that the human-agency element of performance encourages us to construct persuasive metaphors of coherence, and the listening culture frequently guides us to hear non-texted performances such as

improvisations *as if* they are revelations of a text, even if that "text" is unfolding for the first time before the ears of the performer as well as the listener.

However, there is an important difference between the Indian raga example and the jazz example above. In the latter case, the "text" (the revealed and remembered event) comes after the performance in the causal hierarchy, where as in the Indian example (employing a kind of virtual score) it is prior to it. The notion that some "texts" might arise from performances rather than instigate them will be explored in the final section of this paper.

6. Works of Music v. Works for Music

We now need to suggest some specific ways in which we might theorize the links between performance variety and the fixed identity of the score. Part of the problem seems to be that when we refer to what we call a musical work, we are really referring to something that has two rather separate components – there is what we might call the identity element (the things that distinguish this creative design from other creative designs), and there is the "musicness" element (that is those aspects that result from the performer transforming the created instructions into audible music). Note that even a visitor from Mars could probably spot the distinct identity of a notational scheme without even knowing what music was. True, the Martian might mistake the marked page for a unique kind of wallpaper, but he or she (or it) would not need to know that the marks represented sounds. Of course we, not being Martians, know that notations and scores and the ideas of composers however signaled - even though they usually have distinct identities - are not yet music, they only have the potential to give rise to music and need to be realized through performance. For that reason we should perhaps not call scores "music" (the German language, unlike English, clearly preserves the distinction between "Noten" and "Musik"), but rather, for the sake of clarity, refer to them as "performables".[15] What then happens is that the performer brings to bear his or her cultural understanding in relation to the use of the "performable" (score), and out of that transaction the work is revealed to have musical import as well as an identity.

This separation does lead to the conclusion that there are no musical works as such, there are only musical performances – a formulation that splits the criteria for identity from the criteria for musicness. The so-called "works" (actually "performables") are not *of* music, they are *for* music. And this means that neither the score alone nor the

performance alone encodes what we think of as the "musical work" completely. Instead the notion of the "musical" work is something that arises in virtue of a combinatorial act – an act that outlines in its structural features an identity in keeping with the notated or intended scheme, while creating in the goal-driven intensities of its sonic surface an instantiation of "musicness". Moreover, one further thing to note is that "musicness", as an entity, also has an identity in its own right. Thus this suggests that we might require a kind of double ontology to fix the identity of what we call in a general way a "musical work" – the ontology of the individual performable, and the ontology of the generic type "musicness".[16]

Taking these elements together we can begin to a construct a taxonomy of the link between the varied displays of "musicness" and the fixed identity of "performables" in our scheme. First, in the case of the performables, the notation already combines definite archival information (pitches, forms, and so on) with various types of strategic instruction (cadenza, "open the piano lid for 4'33" ", etc.). These features inherently leave open various pathways for their fulfillment, and signal within the performable itself the anticipation of varied performance display. Second, as we have seen, the priorities between the various identity-markers of the performable (the right notes in the right order, the authority of the manuscript source, the various types of composer intention, etc.) can change with the context – whether engaged in editing, analysis, performance, or some other task. Third, what also needs to be in evidence is at least an intention for the performance to be governed in principle by the archival and strategic elements encoded in the performable. Fourth, through the act of performance a further set of attributes (sonic aesthetic qualities) will be contributed in the service of "musicness" – that is, in the service of the general type of artefactuality ("music") that the schematic "work" (performable) will possess. And, as we know, performances can employ a varied range of techniques to evoke the generic type "music", since in that facet of their activity they only have to be faithful to the general type of artefactuality, not the particular schematic "work".

7. Afterword: The challenges of performances without a text-concept or work-concept
At some level, it is not difficult to describe the kinds of attribute a performance event would have to have, were it to wish to operate without a text-concept at all, and to reject the notion of its being a "work". The performance would provide the content of the event, it would not be the mere medium through which a "text" was instantiated.

The traditional "illustrative" presentation of a work would be replaced by sonic and somatic presentations, where the body and certain accompanying events (perhaps sonic events) became the focus of attention. Moreover, the performance might take on a project-like character, directed towards a particular kind of achievement or response.

So far, however, we have described performance in terms that could be applied to perfectly ordinary events in life – hand-washing for example, or walking down the street. Something more is required for these actions to become artworks, and if there is a desire for them to be considered in that way then the "artist" must already know what art is, and believe in its kudos, otherwise why would there be an attempt to include it in that realm? Such ideas in relation to art originate, not in some subjective, solipsistic feeling, but within the wider "text" of culture and tradition, and this public aspect is difficult to eradicate from art. Even performance art gains credence from the context in which it is displayed; it draws its audience into a kind of community theatre and is almost always public in some sense. Moreover, if we wish to call something an "artwork" then we are implying that there is a difference between an artwork and a mere real thing, and for that to be true then that difference needs to be realizable in some way – most frequently through a difference of experience. Moreover, the goal to transform experience though artistic activity already carries within it the possibility of a certain kind of success or failure.

Normally in "free" performances the notions of "artistic" success or failure still tend to lean, not so much on the idea of "inherent" values contained within the artistic object or product, but on a belief in the sanctioning attributes of creativity and imagination as displayed through the event or its instigating ideas. Such an approach, of course, still draws strongly on traditional ideas embedded in the culture – ideas of the importance of the distinction between trivial, banal novelty and wider innovation; and between a routine re-mixing of ideas already linked by convention and habit, and insightful re-conceptualizing. After all, not all "creations" are creatively discovered, and not all "imaginings" are imaginatively done, and some have argued that the implied standards here are more difficult to achieve in "spontaneous composition". For these and other reasons the criteria for value in free performances have shifted away from the compositional "work" model, and moved towards the special attributes of "spontaneity" in performance, and the "inherent" values of the "texture" of the event.

This is not the place to conduct a deep analysis of these issues, but in the case of spontaneity we should at least recognize that in the performance arts "spontaneity" sometimes refers to a style of display rather than acting as a causal explanation of the origins of the material. It is for this reason, for example, that the nineteenth century saw a rise in genres of composed classical music that invited this kind of display from the performer – impromptus, rhapsodies, fantasias – and presumably why a jazz musician like George Gershwin felt there was no contradiction in meticulously composing his *"Rhapsody"in Blue*. There is, of course, a strong alternative claim that the success or failure of the free performance is not "about" styles of performance or its status as a "work"; it is "about" the "texture" of that experience on its own. However, it is still an experience which contains within itself a trace of the particular (artistic) manner of its begetting and unfolding – a particular event with a particularized content which we capture imaginatively as a kind of "text" to which we can refer back in some detail in order to develop and conclude our aesthetic and conceptual ruminations, even if for technical and other reasons we cannot reproduce the "text" exactly. Artistic performances that are not "about" *something*, and are not the performing out "of" *something* (even if only a concept), are difficult to include in the realm of art at all, whether traditional or contemporary.

Of course, "free" performances are usually characterized as being "in the moment" and semi-detached from the work concept. Moreover, they are now more usually assessed not in terms of criteria taken from analytic philosophy, but via notions taken from Continental traditions of phenomenology. One such approach, for example, can be found in Bruce Ellis Benson's book *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue* which conducts a hermeneutic analysis, partly derived from the methods of Husserl, of the "referential insights" (historical, social, and so on) contained within the experiences we have in the presence of performance. However, as we build up the hermeneutic picture of our insights it is difficult not to see in this picture a shadowy "text" to which we refer to make sense of our experiences, even if the significance of that picture changes in the wake of the ongoing cultural "game" between all of those involved in the arena of music (Benson 2003, 191). By contrast, Gary Peters, in his *The Philosophy of Improvisation*, tends towards an ontological type of phenomenology derived from Heidegger. He treats such performances as stages in the "infinite Becoming" of the concept of improvisation, the stages of which are themselves an improvisation of continuing understanding. As for the performance, the

implication is that it is not so much a question of "being present at the live event", but rather of developing an ongoing "awareness of the performative thinking" displayed in that event, despite its apparent fixity in time and place (Peters 2009, 146 and 152). In this enterprise, the emphasis is less on the realm of objective meaning and more on the realm of ongoing immediate experience. Of course, in such an enterprise it does not mean that there is no "text", but rather that the text has an afterlife, and that it is taken on a journey towards the "unconcealment" of its meaning for us. Such "texts" stand at the beginning, rather than the end, of that journey towards identity and "truth", but they suggest an instigating identity none-the-less, and in so doing provide a focus for success or failure, and the "meaningfulness" of our experiences in the presence of art. If texts did not exist we would have to invent them.

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[1] See, for example, (Frith 1996), especially Chapter 10. On the opposition between 'works' and 'events' see: (Dahlhaus 1983, 132ff). The ontology of 'events' is at least as complex as that of 'works': see (Lombard 1995, 140-144).

[2] A classic account of the 'aura' of performers occurs in: (Benjamin 1973, 211-244).

[3] See for example in (Nancy 1996), Chapter 1: 'Why are there several arts and not just one?'.

[4] For a sustained attempt to make clear distinctions between instantiation and performance see: (Kivy 2006).

[5] It may be indicative of the problematic nature of the term that not one of the following recent guides to aesthetics even attempts an article on "embodiment": (Kelly 1998); (Levinson 2003); (Kivy 2004); (Gaut and McIver Lopes 2005); and (Stephen Davies et al. 2009). Nor does the term 'embodiment' occur in the indexes to those books, or in standard guides to metaphysics such as (Kim and Sosa 1995).

[6] For some important distinctions between the aesthetics of actions, making art with artistry, and the art-ness of artworks, see: (Brinker 1987).

[7] For recent surveys of ontological theories of music see, for example: (Davies 2001), which engages in greatest detail with the work of Goodman, Levinson and Wolterstorff, and supports a contextualist theory of ontology; (Dodd 2007), which rigorously develops a Platonist conclusion; and (Gracyck and Kania 2011), Chapters 4 and 53, which attempt a responsible outline of the major theories (analytic, phenomenological and otherwise).

[8] See: (Musgrave and Sherman 2003, 5, 21, 23, 24, 31 and 32); and (Day 2000, 187-8).

[9] On the various notated versions of the score of *4'33"* see (Fetterman 1996, 69-84).

[10] Printed in: (Allais 1897). The "work" was first presented at the Salon des Incohérents in 1884, along with an entirely white painting ("Anaemic Girls [dressed in white] on their way to their First Communion through the Snow"), which anticipates in appearance the infamous white canvas paintings of Robert Rauschenberg produced 67 years later. Allais' work is available at: http://alphonseallais.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/blog-post_11.html .

[11] For a classic philosophical discussion of the "reflexivity" of meaning as arising between intended "messages" and anticipated responses, see: (Grice 1989).

[12] See also: (Eco 1992).

[13] Quoted in: (Hamilton 2007, 207).

[14] See: (Berlin 2002, 166-217).

[15] I have borrowed this term from the philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff, but apply it in a rather different way. See: (Wolterstorff 1992, 310-14: at 310).

[16] The detailed philosophical arguments for this must wait for a more technical paper (forthcoming). However, for a classic account of one sort of "double ontology" see: (Aristotle 1933, Book VII (= Book Zeta), sec. 4-6), where he discusses the notion of "man" in conjunction with "musical man" (section 4). See also the commentary in: (Bostock 1994, 116-18). To be brief, following the work of W. V. Quine in the 1950s it was thought impossible to prove that that there were "real essences" or that properties true of an object were essential to that object; more recent work has complicated the issue.