

# The Classical Paradigm I: The Nature of the Performable Work

## 1 Introduction: Berthold and Magda Go to the Symphony

Berthold and Magda sit expectantly in their well-appointed seats at the Royal Festival Hall, immersed in the low babble of the chattering classes and looking up at the stage where the musicians make final adjustments to their instruments. The conductor briskly scans the score, baton twitching in his hand. Berthold is particularly excited. He loves Sibelius, as Magda well knows – it was she who purchased the tickets as a surprise for her partner – and the piece that is to be performed this evening – Sibelius's Second Symphony – is a particular favorite of his. As the conductor addresses the musicians, baton poised in the air, the auditorium falls silent. An almost imperceptible flexing of the conductor's wrist coaxes the opening phrases of the piece, suitably *sotto*, from the violins. Berthold inhales deeply, closes his eyes, and prepares to scale the cold white peaks of art.<sup>1</sup> It was, he will opine later as they stroll along the South Bank, a sublime, almost transcendent, rendition of the piece.

Whether or not we empathize with the particular rapture experienced by Berthold, the general scenario is certainly a familiar one – a performance by a musical ensemble of a given piece of music attended by admirers who know it well yet, as lovers do, still find exquisite pleasure in the novel inflection of familiar routines. For, of course, what we have described is a particular listening to a particular performance of a musical work that has enjoyed

artworks by providing information germane to the appreciation of those works—for example, a talk given by a curator about a painting in a gallery.

11. Throughout this book, I shall for convenience follow the general consensus in taking an artwork to be the *product* of the generative activity of the artist(s). What the artist produces, on this view, is an artistic vehicle that articulates an artistic content in virtue of those shared understandings we have termed an artistic medium. In the case of a work like Vermeer's *View of Delft*, for example, the artwork is the physical canvas understood as possessing certain representational, expressive, and formal properties. In adopting for convenience this view of artworks, I bracket my own view, for which I argued in my 2004, that artworks are properly identified not with the products of artistic activity, but with the activity itself as completed by those products. Nothing in this book, I think, turns on whether I am right in this, with one exception addressed near the end of Chapter 2.

I should also perhaps note that, while, in my 2004, I characterized the artistic activities that are, on my view, artworks as “performances,” I was not claiming that they are performances in the sense spelled out in this chapter. Artists are indeed guided by their expectations concerning the evaluative eye or ear of receivers, but it is the *product* of their activity, rather than the activity itself, that they expect to be evaluated in a certain way. See further my clarifications of what it is to act “for an audience” in section 1 of Chapter 9.

many realizations by different musical ensembles. As Berthold's enthusiastic appraisal after the concert illustrates, the lover of a musical work not only seeks out novel opportunities to experience it in performance. He or she also hopes that each performance will reveal new possibilities of the work, and assesses a performance on this basis relative to others he or she has attended. In this way, the experience of those who attend different performances of a performable work differs crucially from the experience of those who attend different screenings of a film. In the latter case, we hope that repeated viewings will enable us to better see things that were already there to be seen in earlier screenings but that we failed to register. In the former case, on the other hand, we hope to deepen our appreciation of the performable work in virtue of differences in the way the work is performed. The performance of a performable work calls for interpretation on the part of the performers, and one goal of interpretation is to reveal new artistic values in a work.

All this, as I say, should seem very familiar. We might term this conception of artistic performance – as the interpretation and rendering of a performable work – the “classical paradigm.” Let me, however, begin to defamiliarize the familiar. We customarily take for granted that there are things like Sibelius's Second Symphony that are rightly described as musical works. We also take for granted that two or more performances advertised as playings of a given work can indeed be performances of the same work, in spite of differences in the way they sound. Nor, it seems, is what we have described peculiar to performances of traditional works of Western classical music. We naturally extend this way of thinking to performances in different musical genres like rock and jazz, and to performances in the other performing arts. There are, we assume, many different productions and performances of a play like *King Lear*, or performances of a dance work like *Room Service*. In all such cases we assume that, in spite of sometimes radical differences between performances classified as being of a given work, there are certain essential features of that work that they share. But what are these essential features? And – to deepen the mystery – what kind of thing is a performable work such that it can allow of both repetition and difference in this way?

## 2 The Multiple Nature of Performable Works

It is a lot easier to say what performable works cannot be than to say what they are. There is, as we shall see, a fair measure of agreement over the first matter and an equally fair measure of disagreement over the second. The puzzling features of performable works stem for the most part from the relationships that obtain between such works and their performances or realizations. First,

as we have seen, it is part of the very concept of a performable work that it can be properly or fully *appreciated* through, and only through, performances. A work of art whose proper appreciation was not constrained in this way would thereby fail to be a performable work. This suggests that the relationship between performable works and the performances through which they are appreciated is in some ways a very intimate one. But this should not lead us to think that such works can somehow be *identified* with their performances. On the one hand, it seems obvious that a performable work cannot be identified with a *particular* performance, since work and performance may differ in their properties. Sibelius's Second Symphony is a stirring work that may have limply disappointing performances, for example. And if we try to identify the work with an *ideal* performance that shares such artistic values with the work, the work will still differ from the performance in that the former, but not the latter, *might* be performed in a limply disappointing manner.

This rests upon a more fundamental difference between performable works and individual performances. The former, as we have seen, are at least in principle *repeatable* in the sense that they can be performed on more than one occasion. But to say that a performable work *can be* multiply performed is not to say that it is *in fact* multiply performed — indeed, it is not even to say that it is performed at all. Imagine if we were to discover a score by Sibelius for what was announced on attached papers to be his Eighth Symphony, something written late in his life which, as we learn from the papers, would have been performed had not an untimely demise prevented him from making his intentions known to anyone. We have surely discovered a hitherto unknown and unperformed performable work, a work that might never have been discovered. It would sound very strange to say that the work came into existence only when it was performed, or that, had we not discovered the score, there would have been no work to discover. Furthermore, it seems equally clear that a performable work that has been multiply performed could have had fewer or more performances than it actually has. For example, the performance attended by Berthold and Magda might have been cancelled because a misfortune befell the conductor without thereby affecting the identity of Sibelius's work. Thus we cannot identify a musical work with the *collection* of its actual performances, since it may have none, and may have had a different set of performances from the ones that actually take place.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, if there is an intimate link between being a performable work and being open to performance, the work must also be somehow independent of its actual performances. The performances themselves seem unproblematic — they are just events of a particular kind, no different in this respect from other kinds of events that fit easily into our ordinary conception of what there is in the world. But the performable work begins to look much more mysterious. Again we may ask, what sort of entity can have the kinds of properties just described? What sort of entity can be somehow tied to

particular things in the world yet not identifiable with them taken either individually or collectively? What sort of entity can be repeatable in the way that performable works are repeatable? And, we may remind ourselves, we must also explain the diversity among performances, the manner in which the "repetitions," while somehow repeating the *work*, can fail in significant respects to repeat *one another*.

The repeatability of musical works is, however, only one example of a broader phenomenon that we encounter in the arts. A musical work is repeatable because different events can qualify as performances of that work. But in the cinema we have a parallel phenomenon. A film like *Citizen Kane* is also "repeatable" in the sense that different events can qualify as *screenings* of the work. Indeed, just as two performances of Sibelius's Second Symphony may occur in different locations at the very same time, one in London and the other in Oslo, so two screenings of the same film frequently occur at the same time, not just in — say — Los Angeles and San Antonio, but even in the same cineplex. And, once we are alerted to these kinds of possibilities, we will also be impressed by a parallel with other art forms where we have something analogous to repeatability, but in respect of *objects* rather than events. Many people own copies of Jane Austen's literary work *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, and many art galleries boast copies of prints of Stieglitz's photographic work *The Steerage*. And more than 20 casts of Rodin's *The Thinker*, all treated as casts of the work, exist in addition to the original cast exhibited at the Musée Rodin in Paris. In these cases, different objects can qualify as copies, prints, or casts of a given work.

We might want to speak a bit more precisely about such matters, however. For example, it seems natural to say that some performances of musical works fail to contain all and only the notes specified in the score, some screenings of films involve damaged copies of the film, and some copies of novels contain typographical errors. We might, therefore, wish to talk not merely in the loose sense of different things that "qualify" as performances, copies, etc., but also, in a stronger sense, of things that "fully qualify" as renditions of a given artwork in virtue of not being flawed in these ways. What such entities "fully qualify" *for* is a particular kind of role in the appreciation of that artwork. To properly appreciate an artwork, whether it be a musical work, a film, or whatever, requires a particular kind of experiential engagement with the work. Someone who lacks the relevant kind of experience of a work cannot be credited with a true appreciation of it. You can't judge a book, for example, without reading what lies between its covers, and you can't judge a film or a painting or a play unless you've seen it. We hold claims to appreciate artworks answerable to such experiences because many qualities of a work bearing on its proper appreciation can be fully grasped only *through* an experiential engagement with something that can

enable us to grasp those qualities. We may talk here of an entity playing "the experiential role" in the appreciation of an artwork.

In the sense in which I shall use this term, something *fully qualifies* to play this experiential role in the appreciation of a given artwork *X* just in case it possesses *all* those experienceable properties that are *necessary*, according to the practices of the art form in question, to fully play this role. Where something fully qualifies in this sense, we may term it a *work-instance* of *X*. The latter is a technical term to be understood in the manner just specified. To say, then, that *different* events or objects may fully qualify to play the experiential role for a given artwork is to say that the work admits of a plurality of work-instances. Where this is the case, we have what can be termed a "multiple" art form. Classical music, film, literature, and cast sculpture are treated as multiple art forms in this sense. Not all art forms are treated as multiple, however. It is our practice to require, for the proper appreciation of paintings and works of carved sculpture, for example, that one experientially engage with a unique object. We assume that, to properly appreciate a work like Vermeer's *View of Delft*, one needs to visually engage with the very canvas painted by Vermeer. Only the original canvas, it is generally assumed, can possess all of the properties necessary in something capable of fully playing the experiential role in the appreciation of the work. While a good reproduction may provide us with a measure of experiential access to the work, it doesn't fully qualify for the experiential role and thus is not a work-instance. Where, as here, we treat works belonging to a given art form as capable of having only a single work-instance, we can speak of a "singular" art form.<sup>3</sup>

In those art forms generally viewed as singular, like painting, there is little mystery as to how an artist establishes the status of a particular entity as the unique work-instance of a given work. The work-instance here is just the entity, or some set of properties of the entity, that the artist brings into existence through manipulating the relevant physical medium – for example, through applying oil paint to a prepared surface. In the case of multiple works, however, the story is more complicated. In fact, as a number of writers have pointed out,<sup>4</sup> there seem to be at least three different ways in which an artist can make specific the conditions to be met by work-instances of a multiple work – that is, the conditions that must be met to fully qualify for the experiential role in the appreciation of the work. These different modes of specification correspond to different kinds of multiple art forms.

Take, first, literature. Here the author's activity in writing a literary work itself characteristically brings into existence a work-instance which then serves as an *exemplar*. I say "characteristically" because, to obtain the exemplar, it may be necessary to make minor revisions to rectify errors in spelling, etc. Further work-instances are then generated through successful attempts to emulate the exemplar in those respects determined to be relevant by artistic

conventions in place. These conventions require that other work-instances conform to the exemplar in specific respects. We don't require, for example, that all work-instances of a literary work employ the same *font*. But we do require sameness of spelling and word order in anything that fully qualifies to play the experiential role in the appreciation of a literary work.

In other arts such as cast sculpture, however, the artist makes use of a different strategy to pick out a work's work-instances. He or she produces an artifact which, when employed in prescribed ways, generates work-instances. Following Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980), we may term this a *production-artifact*.<sup>3</sup> As in the case of exemplars, conventions in place in the relevant art form determine how this artifact must be used if a work-instance, in our sense, is to result. Only those entities having the properties that would result from the right use of this artifact will be work-instances of the work. Photography and film clearly fall into this category. In the case of an analog photograph, for example, the production artifact is the negative, and images generated from the production artifact by appropriate means count as work-instances of the work. Films, on the other hand, have as their production artifacts those entities used, in various cinematic media, to generate screenings of those films – film prints, videotapes, digital files, etc., which either are, or stand in a “copy” relation to, master encodings of the film. Because the right use of a production artifact in such cases may result in entities that differ in some of their qualities – for example, photographic prints from the same negative may differ in tone – work-instances of such works may differ in these respects.

Neither of these models seems appropriate for performable works, however. The composer of a traditional Western classical musical work only rarely produces an exemplar and makes no use of a production artifact. Rather, the artist responsible for a performable work provides *instructions* that serve as “recipes” for generating work-instances if properly followed by performers who are aware of the relevant conventions and practices. Such instructions call for interpretation on the performers' part, and it is only in these cases that we characterize work-instances of multiple artworks as *performances*. In the case of performable works of Western classical music, the score plays the most significant part in preserving and transmitting the composer's instructions for generating performances of the work, although, as we shall see, other considerations may also come into play. If the classical paradigm extends to the other performing arts, an analogous role will be played by instructions transmitted to performers by playwrights or choreographers.

Performable works, then, are multiple artworks the requirements for whose work-instances are specified by means of instructions issued by those responsible for the work. This suggests how we should go about answer-

ing one of the questions about performable works raised above. We asked how we could explain the degree of diversity in the things that provide such works with their repeatability. The answer, presumably, is that it is in virtue of the interpretive freedom conceded by the composer to the performer that performances of a given performable work can vary in the ways that they do. Furthermore, the interpretive freedom given to the performer allows different performers to make manifest different qualities of the performable work, different aesthetic possibilities that exist within the "envelope" furnished by the composer's performative directives. And this explains why we can hope to discover in a given performance of a performable work qualities that were not there to be discovered in earlier performances, whereas this is not the case with a cinematic work. Also, because of the role accorded to interpretation in the performance of performable works, two performances that fully qualify, in our sense, to play the experiential role in the appreciation of a performable work — they both meet all the requirements for correct performance established by the composer — may not be equally capable of illuminating the artistic values of the work. A fully qualified performance may be unimaginative in interpretation, for example. Indeed, we might prefer a performance that is technically flawed to one that is fully qualified on just these sorts of grounds. Thus performable works may not always be best appreciated through their work-instances in our sense. We shall return to this point in the following section.

### 3 Performable Works as Types

This still leaves us with our initial puzzle. What sort of thing *is* a performable work, so conceived, given that it somehow exists independently of actual performances? There is a widely endorsed answer to this question. Performable works, it is claimed, are *types*, and their work-instances are, or are among, the tokens of those types. Indeed, it is widely believed that all multiple works are types. In order to assess this proposal, we need to say something about the notion of a type.

The distinction between types and tokens is familiar in everyday contexts where we distinguish between, say, the letters in the alphabet and particular uses of those letters. If asked, "How many letters are there in the word 'sheep'?" we can correctly answer both five (there are five occurrences of letter-*tokens* in the word) and four (there are occurrences of four different *types* of letters). Types are *generic entities*<sup>6</sup> which can have other entities falling under them. If performable works are types with performances as their tokens, this explains how, as already noted, a performable work like Sibelius's Second Symphony could have had more or fewer performances

than it actually has. For the identity and nature of a type does not change as the number of its tokens changes. The word-type "sheep" remains the same no matter how many or how few tokens of it appear on this page, and the identity of the currency type "English ten pound note" is unaffected by the enactment of economic policies that increase the number of its tokens in circulation.

But if performable works, or multiple works more generally, are types, they are types of a distinctive kind. Take our last example of a type, the English ten pound note. Something qualifies as a token of this type if it has a certain distinctive appearance in virtue of having a particular history of making. Something that looked like an English ten pound note but was the result of a skillful act of forgery wouldn't be an English ten pound note. Nor would something that, as a result of a mistake at the Royal Mint, lacked the customary watermark. More generally, the type "English ten pound note" is associated with a condition that picks out, as its tokens, those things that satisfy this condition. There are no tokens of this type that only partly satisfy this condition yet are tokens nonetheless. The condition has the form: "Something is an *X* just in case it meets conditions *C*." There can, of course, be uncertainty over whether *C* are actually satisfied in a given case, or a measure of vagueness in the terms employed in characterizing *C*. But, among the things taken to satisfy *C*, there is no distinction between "correct" and "incorrect" *X*s, and something which fails to satisfy *C* is not an *X* at all.

In the case of multiple artworks, however, we at least in practice allow that they can have examples that are *imperfect* in relevant respects yet still qualify as genuine examples of the work. For example, on our ordinary way of thinking about such things, the performances of a musical work include not only playings that meet all the requirements for right performance of the work, but also playings containing at least some incorrect notes. If Berthold were to demand a refund on the grounds that one of the musicians misplayed one of the notes prescribed in Sibelius's score and that he therefore did not hear, as promised, a performance of the Second Symphony, he would receive short shrift from the house manager. Similarly, it would seem, a damaged print of Renoir's *La règle du jeu* can still provide an audience with a screening of the film, albeit one that is flawed in certain respects. Types that admit in this way of both correct and incorrect examples can be termed "norm-types." Whereas ordinary types like the English ten pound note are associated with a condition that must be satisfied by their tokens, norm-types are associated with a condition that must be satisfied by their *correct or properly formed* tokens. This condition is of the form: "Something is a well-formed *A* just in case it meets condition *C*." As Nicholas Wolstertorff points out, norm-types are familiar to us from other contexts. When we say that the grizzly bear growls, for example, what we mean is that this is a property of well-formed

grizzlies. We don't think that a creature that is incapable of growling cannot count as a grizzly at all. Similarly, when we say that T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* starts with the words "April is the cruelest month," we mean that well-formed, or correct, copies of the poem start with these words. If I have a copy of a text that departs from the standard text of the poem only in beginning with the words "April is the cruelest moth," I still have a copy of *The Waste Land*, albeit an incorrect one, if this textual feature is the result of problems arising in an attempt to print out Eliot's poem. (Matters would be different if this were a feature of a correct printing of a work by a previously unknown lepidopterist-poet who happened independently upon a verbal structure differing from Eliot's only in this respect ...)

Let us take stock of what we have established thus far. Performable works, by definition, are fully appreciable only through their performances. There may be many different performances that fully qualify for the appreciation of such works – the works may have multiple work-instances, as we have defined that term. As we have now seen, if performed works are taken to be norm-types, they also by their very nature admit of *incorrect* performances. Incorrect performances fail, by definition, to fully qualify for the experiential role in the appreciation of the performable work of which they are performances, and will not count as work-instances in our technical sense. Thus not all performances of a performable work will be among its work-instances. Which features of a performance bear upon its status as a work-instance of a performable work, however, depends upon which kinds of features are prescribed by the performable work for its correct performance – which features enter into the condition *C* that defines what it is for something to be a correct performance of the work. And this is a matter concerning which there is significant disagreement amongst those writers who take performable works to be norm-types.

This disagreement has a deeper significance if, as seems plausible,<sup>9</sup> we *individuate* types according to the conditions they prescribe for their tokens, or, in the case of norm-types, for their well-formed tokens. The American five dollar bill and the Canadian five dollar bill are arguably *different* note-types in virtue of the different conditions that their tokens must satisfy. The same would apply to the American five dollar bill and the American one dollar bill. In the case of norm-types, it seems reasonable to assume that we have different norm-types when we have different requirements for being a well-formed token. And, in the case of both ordinary types and norm-types, it also seems reasonable to think that if there is *no* difference in the conditions associated with what might appear to be two different types, there is in fact only a *single* type for which we have two different labels. This would apply to the type "Canadian one dollar coin" and the type "Canadian 'loonie,'" for example. If this is correct, then, if performable works are norm-types,

we will have different performable works just in case we have different prescriptions for the correctness of performances of those works. A survey of the literature on performable works of classical music will give us a good sense of the range of positions taken on this question.

#### 4 Varieties of Type Theories: Sonicism, Instrumentalism, and Contextualism

Our question, then, is the following: What sorts of features do performable works of music prescribe for their well-formed performances? The simplest and most conservative answer to this question is some form of what is termed *sonicism*.<sup>10</sup> The distinctive claim of the sonicist is that “whether a sound-event counts as a properly formed token of [a performable work] *W* is determined purely by its acoustic qualitative appearance” (Dodd 2007, 201), that is to say, purely by the way the performance sounds. That a performance sounds a certain way is at least a necessary condition for its being a properly formed token of a performable musical work. For, minimally, the composer of such a work prescribes that performers produce a sequence of sounds meeting certain acoustic conditions. The nature of these conditions is at least partly identifiable, in standard cases, by reference to the characters inscribed in the piece’s score. The score prescribes at least that notes of specified pitches and durations be produced, either simultaneously or consecutively, in a given order, usually to a given rhythm.

We need to draw a further distinction, however, between *pure* sonicists and *timbral* sonicists. *Pure* sonicists hold that *only* these kinds of features enter into the features prescribed for correct performance of a musical work.<sup>11</sup> The pure sonicist maintains that (perhaps with very rare exceptions) to hear sounds as music is to attend only to their structural or “organizational” properties – pitch, rhythm, harmony, and melody (Scruton 1997, 20). The pure sonicist does not require that the sound sequence specified by the composer be performed on, or even sound as if it were performed on, any particular instruments, even if, as in most Western classical music after the mid eighteenth century, the composer specifies in the score that particular instruments are to be used. The “color” properties consequent upon the use of, say, an oboe rather than a flute, are not (or are only very rarely) of musical interest, on this view. One argument offered for pure sonicism is that many early composers did not specify particular instruments to be used in the performance of their pieces. But this cannot be decisive for later works where instrumentation is specified. And, even in the case of earlier works, there is evidence that many works were intended to be performed on particular

instruments or kinds of instruments, even if this is not made explicit in their scores (see S. Davies 2001, 60–63). A second argument for pure sonicism is that we have no difficulty recognizing musical works when they are played on non-standard instruments. But this, again, is inconclusive. Our interest, recall, is in determining which kinds of properties are prescribed for *correct* performances of musical works. Unless we have a separate argument to show that performances on non-standard instruments are correct performances, nothing of interest follows from our ability to associate such performances with particular performable works (see Dodd 2007, 216).

*Timbral sonicists*, on the other hand, maintain that the *timbre* of the notes produced, which will vary according to the instruments used in generating those notes, is an essential part of what the composer prescribes for well-formed performances of the work.<sup>12</sup> Thus timbral properties are partly constitutive of the norm-type with which the performable work is to be identified. The case for timbral sonicism seems particularly strong if we consider a work such as Sibelius's Second Symphony. As we shall see at the beginning of Chapter 3, the expressive qualities of this work seem to depend crucially upon the contrasting sonorities of the passages ascribed to the brass and string sections in the score. More generally, the timbral sonicist can appeal to considerations raised by Jerrold Levinson. Levinson argues that many of the artistic and aesthetic properties of musical works depend upon the use of particular instrumentation (e.g., 1980, 73–78). Some of his examples will be outlined below in the discussion of "instrumentalism." Levinson also argues that pure sonicism makes it utterly mysterious why composers do specify particular instruments in most cases (1990b, 244). Again, this seems to support timbral sonicism over pure sonicism.

The timbral sonicist makes the timbral qualities of a sound sequence partly constitutive of the performable work. But he doesn't require that, in well-formed performances of a work, this sound sequence is actually *produced* on the instruments with which we naturally associate those timbral qualities. This is what makes him a *sonicist* in the specified sense. Suppose, for example, that we had a "perfect timbral synthesizer" (PTS) capable of simulating the timbral qualities of any standard instrument – for example, the piano or the trumpet. Suppose, further, that a composer prescribes that a given sound sequence be performed on certain standard instruments and that, so performed, the sequence would have certain timbral properties. Then, the timbral sonicist maintains, a performance of this sound sequence on a PTS that simulates these timbral properties would be just as well formed as a performance on the prescribed instruments themselves.

*Instrumentalists* reject this conclusion. They insist that a correct performance of a performable work must not only have the prescribed timbral qualities, but must also be performed on the prescribed instruments.

Instrumentalists maintain that, where different instruments are prescribed for producing a particular type of sound event, performances that respect those prescriptions are performances of different *works*. Levinson, for example, argues that specific "performance means," as he terms it, have been integral to the performable work of classical music since the mid eighteenth century. The aesthetic attributes of such works "always depend ... in part on the performing forces understood to belong to them" (Levinson 1980, 77). He cites, as a particularly dramatic example, Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata whose "sublime, craggy, and barn-storming" qualities "depend in part on the strain that its sound structure imposes on the sonic capabilities of the piano" (76–77). Such qualities would be lacking in a performance on a PTS that duplicates the timbral properties of the piece, Levinson claims. If this is correct, then part of what a musical work of this sort prescribes must be the use of certain instruments to realize a given sound sequence.<sup>13</sup>

The instrumentalist, as characterized above, agrees with the sonicist that a performable musical work is a norm-type, but insists that what is prescribed for correct performance is not merely a certain sound sequence but also the production of that sound sequence on the instruments specified or intended by the composer. But Levinson offers reasons to question whether performable musical works are norm-types of either a sonicist or an instrumentalist stripe.<sup>14</sup> He argues that such accounts fail in two crucial respects: (1) they don't allow for the creation of musical works by their composers, and (2) they don't account for those properties of a work that depend upon the context in which the composer establishes the prescriptions for its correct performance. Some of the issues raised by the first point are too technical for us to explore in detail here, but we can get a sense of Levinson's concerns and then assess our options in light of them.

It is natural for us to speak of artists as creators of the works that we ascribe to them. We think of a painter, for example, as someone whose inspired activity in the studio brings into being the particular pigment-covered canvas that we later contemplate in a gallery, and we naturally identify the work with that canvas. In a similar way, we credit the poet with authoring her poems and the novelist with bringing into existence his novel. Such a conception of artistic activity seems equally appropriate in the performed arts. While Shakespeare drew on various cultural resources in writing *King Lear*, the play we see being performed at the New Globe in London was, we will insist, created by the bard. And Sibelius, we may also insist, was the creator of his Second Symphony. But if performable works – and perhaps multiple works in general – are norm-types, can these common beliefs be right? How does one create – bring into being – a norm-type? It is not difficult to understand how one can bring into being the first inscription of the *score* of a performable work, and Sibelius certainly did this. But the norm-type is no more identifiable with a

particular inscription of the score than it is with a particular performance that conforms with the score. And, for reasons already rehearsed, we do no better if we try to identify the performable work, as norm-type, with the *collection* of inscriptions of the score. Norm-types are types, and types don't seem to be the sorts of entities that can exist in some determinate region of space. Where, for example, might we find the word "sheep" – as opposed to some particular token of the word "sheep"? Types are what philosophers term *abstract* objects, and only *concrete* objects have determinate spatial locations at the times when they exist. So now our question becomes, what is it for an abstract object like a type to exist, and can such a thing be brought into existence by the activity of an artist, or by human activity more generally conceived?

There is some disagreement over the answer to the first of these questions. One suggestion – term this *ET1*<sup>15</sup> – is that a type exists at a given time just in case it is possible for it to have tokens at that time. Since, for any type of sound sequence prescribed by the composer of a musical work, an occurrence of just that sound sequence could presumably have occurred before the composition of the work, *ET1* commits the sonicist to saying that performable musical works pre-exist their composition. But if they pre-exist their composition, they are discovered, not created, by the composer. The norm-type instrumentalist is only marginally better off. She might argue that a performance of a musical work is possible only when the musical instruments specified by the composer themselves exist. But since the instruments pre-exist the act of composition, *ET1* also commits the instrumentalist to the possibility, at least in principle, of occurrences of the work prior to its composition. She too, therefore, must view the performable work, qua norm-type, as discovered rather than created by the composer. So on *ET1*, it seems that both the sonicist and the instrumentalist must say that composition is not creation but discovery.

The same conclusion follows if we adopt an alternative account of the conditions under which an abstract entity like a norm-type exists. What we may term *ET2*<sup>16</sup> first identifies, for each type, an associated property the possession of which is the condition that must be met by a token (or, in the case of norm-types, a well-formed token) of the type. Then it is further claimed that types exist at a time just in case their associated properties exist at that time. This is combined with the view that properties exist eternally as long as there is at least one time – past, present, or future – at which they have, or at which they could have, an instance.<sup>17</sup> It follows from this that properties (and thus types) exist eternally if they exist at all. So if performable works are norm-types, then they exist eternally if at all. If a performable work exists, therefore, it must exist eternally and be discovered, not created, by the artist to whom we ascribe it.

It might be argued that there is nothing wrong with this conclusion. Composers, it might be said, are esteemed not for their ability to *create de*

*novo* the performable works we ascribe to them, but for the *creativity* they display in discovering those works, something that parallels the creativity of mathematicians in discovering novel proofs of theorems, for example (see, for example, Dodd 2007, 112–121). But, if we do want to preserve the idea that the artists to whom we ascribe performable works are their creators, and not merely their creative discoverers, then we cannot accept the identification of performable works with norm-types on either a sonicist or an instrumentalist construal of the latter.

Levinson raises a second problem for the sonicist and instrumentalist norm-type accounts. He claims that they fail to take account of the significance, for the identity of a performable work, of the art-historical context in which the artist was working. He defends a form of *contextualism* about the identity of musical works. In so doing, he sides with philosophers who have defended contextualist accounts of works in other arts such as literature and painting.<sup>18</sup> Contextualists hold that at least some of the properties that must be grasped to properly appreciate an artwork do not depend only upon *manifest* properties of the artistic product – the perceptible properties of a painting, for example, or of a sound sequence that complies with a composer's prescriptions. Nor are they dependent only upon these properties suitably *supplemented* by consideration of the medium employed in their production – the kind of pigment used in a painting, or the kinds of instruments used to generate a sound sequence, for example. Rather, they also depend upon features of the art-historical *context* in which the artist was working. Such features include the body of existing artworks upon which an artist draws, the intellectual resources available in her culture, and her own developing *oeuvre* taken as manifesting more general artistic projects. It is in virtue of these contextual variables that the artistic product serves as the articulation of certain specific artistic contents and possesses certain specific kinds of artistic value.

The most common kind of argument for contextualism asks us to consider situations where artistic products indistinguishable in terms of their (supplemented) manifest properties are generated in markedly different art-historical contexts. We very rarely encounter such situations in our actual artistic practice, although certain monochromatic paintings offer perhaps the closest approximation.<sup>19</sup> But contextualists offer us thought experiments in which we are asked to imagine a situation where there *are* such doppelgängers. Levinson (1980), for example, offers us five hypothetical cases where we have doppelgängers for actual musical works, where work and doppelgänger prescribe the same things for their correct performances. He argues that, in each case, the actual work and its doppelgänger differ in their aesthetic or artistic properties. They do so because of differences in the musico-historical contexts in which they were composed. However, if *A* and *B* differ in their properties, they must be different entities.<sup>20</sup> So

if, in the hypothetical cases, there is a difference between the appreciable properties of the actual work and those of its *doppelgänger*, then the *doppelgänger* must be a distinct work. But, *ex hypothesi*, the actual work and its *doppelgänger* share a norm-type, whether the latter is construed in a sonicist or an instrumentalist fashion. Thus the norm-type sonicist or instrumentalist must view them as two occurrences of the same work. So, the contextualist concludes, performable musical works cannot be types or norm-types of either the sonicist or the instrumentalist sort.

The properties that Levinson cites in differentiating between an actual work and its *doppelgänger* are of two kinds: *aesthetic* properties – properties that the work is properly experienced as having in abstraction from comparisons with other works; and *artistic* properties – properties that relate the work more explicitly to its art-historical context. The aesthetic properties in question pertain to what a work is taken to express or how it is appropriate for us to respond to it. The artistic properties pertain to the ways in which a work should be appreciated in light of other works – its originality, for example, or its deliberate allusions to the works of other composers. To cite one example, Levinson asks us to consider a work by Beethoven identical in its sonicist and pure instrumentalist properties to Brahms's Second Piano Sonata. In listening to Brahms's piece, we rightly note how it reflects the influence of Liszt. But this would be anachronistic if applied to the hypothetical piece by Beethoven. Similarly, we would rightly ascribe a visionary quality to the Beethoven piece but not to the piece by Brahms. The individuation of performable musical works must therefore take into account not only what is prescribed for correct performances, but also the context in which the prescription occurs.

These contextualist arguments can be challenged, however. For example, it can be argued that "artistic" qualities such as originality or influence pertain not to the proper evaluation of musical artworks as aesthetic objects, but to our assessment of their place in art history.<sup>21</sup> Contextualists will respond that to properly evaluate something as an artwork is in part to evaluate its place in art history and not merely to assess it in terms of its aesthetic properties.<sup>22</sup> A further proposal<sup>23</sup> is that contextually based properties of musical works are *relativized* properties of the form: being-*x*-as-produced-in-art-historical-context-*y*. A work can quite consistently possess both this property and the property: not-being-*x*-as-produced-in-art-historical-context-*z*. So, in the case of Levinson's Brahms–Beethoven thought experiment, the sonicist or instrumentalist can insist that there is a single work that is a norm-type while also allowing that this work possesses such properties as being-Liszt-influenced-as-composed-by-Brahms, and not-being-Liszt-influenced-as-composed-by-Beethoven. The contextualist may object, however, that this fails to correspond to the way we talk about works. We take a work to be Liszt-influenced *simpliciter*.

## 5 Other Theories of the Performable Work

Rather than pursue these matters further, we should consider what other possibilities remain open if we don't accept the norm-type theory of performable works in the forms considered thus far. I shall briefly examine four proposals to be found in the literature:

- 1 Performable works are indeed types, but they are "indicated" types that are by their very nature contextualized and, as a consequence, creatable.
- 2 Performable works are not types that exist independently of their realizations, but are "continuants."
- 3 Performable works are not types, pure or indicated, but are *indications* of types, actions performed by the composer.
- 4 There are in fact no such things as performable works. Talk of such things is just a useful "fiction" that helps keep track of the ways in which we group performances.

### *Performable works as "indicated" types*

The initial attraction of the idea that performable works are types is that it provides the most natural explanation of their repeatability. Types are by their very nature repeatable because they can have multiple tokens.<sup>24</sup> But, as we have seen, if the type-token theory is understood in the way that sonacists and instrumentalists understand it, we cannot easily account for either the creatability of performable works or their possession of properties that depend upon their contexts of creation. This suggests the following compromise: performable works, we might say, are indeed types, but they are types that are by their very nature contextualized and, as a consequence, creatable. This is Levinson's own strategy (see Levinson 1980). He proposes that we think of performable works as what he terms "initiated types." These are to be understood in something like the following way: a musical work is a sound/performance-means-structure-as-indicated-by-*X*-at-*t*, where *X* is a variable ranging over persons and *t* is a variable ranging over times. Thus, if we assume that Sibelius's Second Symphony prescribes the sound sequence *S2* to be performed on instruments *I*, then the performed work is identical to *S2/I-as-indicated-by-Sibelius-in-1902*.<sup>25</sup> "Indication," here, is a matter of prescribing certain things for correct performance of the work one is creating (see Levinson 1990b, 260). To indicate a structure is thus to specify what is prescribed by one's work, qua norm-type. The work is not the norm-type per se, but rather the norm-type-as-specified-by-*X*-at-*t*. The norm-type itself is what Levinson terms an "implicit type," which exists

in virtue of the possibilities for generating sequences of sounds in various ways. As such, the norm-type pre-exists the compositional activity of the composer. The norm-type-as-indicated, on the other hand, is an "initiated type" that comes into existence only through an intentional human act of the appropriate kind. Thus performable works, as initiated types, are creatable. Furthermore, in virtue of the contextual elements intrinsic to them, they are finely individuated in the manner that the contextualist requires. In addition, since performable works, as initiated types, are *types*, they are repeatable through those performances that are their tokens. More specifically, according to Levinson, the work-instances of a performable musical work are events that comply with everything prescribed through the work's S/PM structure and that stand in the right causal/intentional relation to the composer's act of indicating that structure. As we saw earlier, a performable work may have performances that fail to qualify as work-instances. Such performances, for Levinson, stand in the right kind of causal-intentional relation to the composition of the work, but fall short of *full* compliance with the work's prescriptions while still succeeding to a reasonable degree.

This option is very attractive if we are persuaded by the arguments for contextualism or believe that performable works are the creations of their authors. However, some have found the idea of initiated types, as entities, puzzling (see, for example, Currie 1989, 57–61; Dodd 2000). More significantly, it has been suggested that, to the extent that initiated types are still *types*, they must exist eternally and therefore cannot be created. In arguing for the creatability of performable works qua initiated types, Levinson relies on the criterion of type existence we characterized earlier as *ET1* according to which a type exists at a given time just in case it is possible for it to have tokens at that time. He reasons that an initiated type cannot have tokens until it is initiated, which in this case is when the relevant norm-kind is indicated by the composer. If, however, it is *ET2* and not *ET1* that provides the correct criterion for the existence of a type, then it seems that even initiated types will not be creatable. *ET2*, we may recall, identifies, for each type, an associated property that sets out the condition that must be met by (well-formed) tokens of that type. It then claims that types exist at a time just in case their associated properties exist at that time, and that properties exist eternally as long as there is at least one time – past, present, or future – at which they have, or could have, an instance. It follows that properties (and thus types) exist eternally if they exist at all. If this is the right account of type existence, then Levinson's proposed conditions under which we have a work-instance of a performable work qua initiated type will furnish us with our "associated property" for the initiated type. If works are taken to be norm-*types*, whether indicated or not, they will still be individuated in terms of a condition for correct instantiation that can be expressed as a property.<sup>16</sup> This property (and, by

ET2, the “initiated type” with which it is associated) will exist eternally if at all. So we have not shown multiple works, as norm-types, to be creatable, if ET2 is the correct account of the existence conditions for types.

*Performable works as “continuants”*

The standard “type” theorist, as we have seen, asks us to surrender our intuitions about the creatability of performable works in the interests of accounting for their repeatability. What other than a type, after all, could be repeatable in the way that performable works are repeatable? “Continuants,” some philosophers reply. Since the notion of a continuant is not one with which most of us are familiar, we need to ask two questions: First, what are continuants? And, second, how do they manage to be both creatable and repeatable? While different “continuant” theories of performable works have been proposed, I shall focus here on one developed by Guy Rohrbaugh (2003).<sup>27</sup>

Rohrbaugh invites us to consider the nature of words.<sup>28</sup> Words, we may recall, were our initial example of types. But words change and evolve over time, and could have evolved differently, whereas types are supposed to be fixed and unchanging. Furthermore, words enter into and go out of the languages in which they have their places. These properties of words, Rohrbaugh claims, are characteristic of continuants, which are essentially historical individuals that depend for their existence on those concrete entities that are their *embodiments*. He identifies three properties that differentiate continuants from types. The first is “modal flexibility.” Something is modally flexible if it could have differed in its “intrinsic” non-relational properties. Houses are modally flexible, for example, in that a particular house could have had more or fewer rooms than it actually has, or could have been constructed of different material than it actually was. The second property is “temporal flexibility.” Something is temporally flexible if its “intrinsic” non-relational properties are changeable over time. Houses are temporally flexible in that something remains the same house even if it is internally remodeled, or has its roof replaced. The final property is “temporality.” Something possesses this property if it comes into and goes out of existence. Individual buildings are obviously temporal, being erected and demolished at particular times.

Continuants have these three properties because of the relationship in which they stand to their embodiments. An embodiment of a continuant is a spatio-temporally locatable object or event, and the continuant itself is a “higher level” object that depends for its existence upon its embodiments. Take again our example of the house. A particular house comes into existence only when someone produces a particular ordered arrangement of physical matter. This is its first embodiment. It continues to exist as long as it has an embodiment of this kind suitably causally related to earlier

embodiments, and it goes out of existence when no such embodiment exists. The existence of a particular house at a given time depends upon its being embodied in some arrangement of physical stuff at that time, but over time the physical stuff in which it is embodied will change. The house survives changes in the physical stuff in which it is embodied, and could indeed have been made of different stuff in certain counterfactual circumstances.

Continuants, then, are temporal, modally flexible, and temporally flexible. Types, on the other hand, arguably possess none of these properties.<sup>29</sup> And artworks in general, Rohrbaugh claims, are like continuants and unlike types in this respect. He argues first with respect to paintings, and then extends this account to multiple artworks like photographs. However, he intends his argument to apply to multiple artworks in general, including performable works. As continuants, artworks are creatable, and are embodied in various particulars. A traditional photograph's embodiments, for example, include the negative, but they also include what Rohrbaugh terms "occurrences," which are distinctive in that they display those qualities of the artwork that bear upon its appreciation and criticism. In terms of our own terminology, a photograph's occurrences include both work-instances and flawed prints of the work. A photograph is repeatable, then, because it can have multiple occurrences – and multiple work-instances – among the embodiments upon which its existence depends. The same applies, according to Rohrbaugh, to other kinds of multiple artworks, including performable works. The embodiments of a performable musical work will include its scores, and also those events that are its correct and flawed occurrences – its performances. This preserves the independence of a performable work from its actual performances. An artwork comes into existence when the artist produces an embodiment of that work, but that embodiment need not be an occurrence. Since a score of a performable work counts as an embodiment, the work, qua continuant, can exist unperformed.

Rohrbaugh's theory of performable artworks as historical individuals promises to deliver on both the creatability and the repeatability of such works. But critics have raised doubts about both the intelligibility of the notion of "continuant" and the claim that artworks are continuants. In the first place, there are two ways of understanding the essentially historical nature of continuants and the relationship in which they stand to particular objects and events. For the *perdurantist*, continuants are *constituted* by their embodiments, which are taken to be their temporal parts just as a football field is constituted by those areas of the playing surface that are its spatial parts. The idea that performable works are perduring entities of this sort is not without its defenders (Caplan and Matheson 2006, for example), but it faces some serious objections. For example, it seems that, on this view, only part of a performable work is ever present in a performance, and it

needs to be explained how something that is a “fusion” of temporal parts could have had *different* temporal parts in the way that a performable work might have had different performances.<sup>30</sup> Rohrbaugh espouses an alternative understanding of continuants, according to which they are *enduring*, rather than *perduring*, entities that depend upon, but are not constituted by, their embodiments. So construed, continuants are higher order entities that are always present in their entirety in their embodiments, thereby evading the first objection to perdurantism, and that could have been dependent on different embodiments, thereby evading the second objection. But it needs to be explained just what kinds of things continuants, so conceived, are, what the relation of “dependence” involves, and what it is for this relation to obtain in those cases where continuants are claimed to exist.

Even if these challenges can be met, there is a further problem with the claim that *artworks* are continuants of the sort proposed by Rohrbaugh. For this claim rests upon the assumption that artworks are modally and temporally flexible, something that is open to dispute both generally and in the case of performable works. Dodd, for example, argues that there are no good reasons to think of musical works as either modally or temporally flexible. Any locutions that might tempt us to think otherwise are, he claims, most plausibly understood in terms of suitable paraphrases. Where a work  $W^*$  differs in its intrinsic properties, either modally or through time, from a work  $W$ , or from a work  $W$  at a time  $t$ , then we should view  $W^*$  and  $W$  as distinct works, albeit distinct works that closely resemble one another, he maintains (Dodd 2007, ch. 2). While Dodd’s arguments don’t by themselves show that at least some multiple artworks *are* modally and temporally inflexible, they raise questions as to the force of Rohrbaugh’s claims to the contrary.

#### *Performable works as indicatings of types*

Let us take stock. We have found reason to question the idea that performable works are eternally existing entities that are discovered rather than created by those to whom we attribute them. If types, including norm-types, are eternal existents, then we have reason to resist the idea that performable works are types. To counter that *initiated* types are indeed creatable seems to fall foul of at least one plausible account of the existence conditions of types. An alternative account of the repeatability of multiple artworks takes them to be continuants some of whose embodiments are occurrences. But we found the notion of a continuant to which Rohrbaugh appeals somewhat murky, and his argument for viewing multiple artworks as continuants rests on the contested assumption that they are modally and temporally flexible.

The challenge then is to find an account of performable works that allows them to be (1) repeatable and (2) creatable. We should also prefer an account

that does not rest upon contestable claims about the modal and temporal flexibility of works. Indeed, claims about such matters should arguably be resolved *on the basis of* an otherwise adequate account of the nature of performable works, rather than serve as premises in formulating such an account. One option is to try to rework Levinson's proposal in such a way that it does not appeal to the notion of type. Dodd comments on Levinson's notion of an "indicated structure" that it contains a reference to a time and thus seems more like an event than a type (Dodd 2000, 440). While Dodd intends this as a *reductio*, we might view it rather as a suggestion as to how we might amend Levinson's view to evade the objections brought against it. Suppose, instead of holding that a performable work is an indicated structure and thereby a kind of type, we hold that it is the *indicating* of a structure, and thereby an event. More specifically, we might say that a performable work is the action of prescribing certain things for correct performance. Performable works are then repeatable because different performances on the part of others can count as fulfilling those prescriptions. This can be generalized to multiple artworks whose instances are specified in other ways – for example, by the production of an exemplar or of a production-artifact. In each case, we might say, the artwork consists in what is done in order to define a class of entities as work-instances. To appreciate the work is to appreciate what has been done. This crucially requires that we determine what artistic content is rightly ascribable to the work-instances defined by the work, qua action, and thus to the work itself.<sup>11</sup> Thus Sibelius's Second Symphony differs from his First Symphony in two crucial respects: (1) what Sibelius did in coming up with the sets of prescriptions for the former work was a very different – arguably a much greater and more original – artistic achievement than what he did in coming up with the set of prescriptions for the latter, and (2) the aesthetic and artistic properties realizable in performances that conform to the set of prescriptions for the former work are very different from the aesthetic and artistic properties realizable in performances that conform to the set of prescriptions for the latter. And a parallel account might be given of different photographic works by Diane Arbus or Edward Weston. Indeed, if we are at all tempted by an account of multiple artworks as identical to the creative acts of their authors, why shouldn't we extend this approach to artworks in general? Artworks, it might be said, whether singular or multiple, just are the artistic acts of their authors that are generative of an artistic vehicle of some kind that articulates a particular artistic content.<sup>12</sup>

The advantages of such a view in the present context should be obvious. Since artists are responsible for initiating their generative actions, they are in this sense the creators of their works. We also have an explanation of the repeatability of multiple artworks that doesn't identify the works themselves with types. The challenge to explain how there can be multiple

correct performances of particular performable works is answered if we can explain how we are able to group certain events as a given work's correct performances, and such groupings can be explained in terms of the relationship in which such performances stand to the artist's generative activity. The "of" here need not be the "of" that relates generic entities like types to their elements. Rather, a performance can be "of" a work in something like the sense that a copy can be "of" today's *Times* because it stands in a certain causal-intentional relationship to the activity of journalists, editors, composers, and printers. Indeed, by analogy, a print can be "of" a photograph by standing in a certain causal-intentional relationship to something done by a photographer. If there are nonetheless types elsewhere in the mix — types of sound sequences for example, as what the composer prescribes — this is not in itself an obvious difficulty. Levinson, for instance, is quite happy to grant that *implicit* types are eternally existing entities as long as artworks are not.

But of course there is a significant fly in the ointment here. For it sounds very odd to say that artworks are generative actions of artists productive of artistic vehicles. Surely, we want to protest, the artwork is the artistic vehicle itself together with the artistic contents articulated through it. While, like the contextualists, we may be eager to integrate the history of making of an artistic vehicle into the identity of the work, it seems much more plausible to do so by following Levinson in characterizing the work as the product-as-generated-in-a-context, rather than as the contextualized action of generating that product.

#### *Fictionalism about performable works*

The idea of performable works as indicatings of norm-kinds rather than as indicated norm-kinds clearly stands in need of further defense if it is to strike the reader as convincing, and this is not the place to attempt or to assess such a defense. There is, however, another approach that promises to free us from all of the difficulties in whose python-like grip we have found ourselves in the preceding pages. Our problem has been to explain the nature of the performable work. The latter, we have assumed, is the entity that is performed in traditional concerts of classical music, and, we might think, in traditional theatrical and dance performances as well. It is qualities of the performable work Sibelius's Second Symphony that sent Berthold into aesthetic raptures during the performance described in our opening paragraph, for example. From the austere conception of the performable work as an eternally existing abstract entity, we have moved first to the less esoteric idea of performable works as abstract entities initiated by composers, then to the promising if mysterious idea of performable works as particulars of a higher order

somehow embodied in lower order particulars, and finally to the idea that performable works are simply the actions of artists that provide a way of grouping certain other events as performances or instances of the work.

But, now that we have acquired a taste for minimalism, why not go all the way? If the point of our talk of performable works is to explain the ways in which we group performances, why operate with such misleading talk of a "performable work" at all? Or, since we clearly do operate with such a locution, why not think of it as merely a useful *façon de parler*, a device that helps us to keep track of the kinds of groupings of performances that interest us. Why, in other words, shouldn't we be *fictionalists* about performable works, viewing them as simply useful fictions?

Fictionalism is a philosophical view that until quite recently was thought to have been definitively laid to rest. But philosophical views are the undead of the intellectual world, ever rising in a new guise to haunt our reflections. So it has been with fictionalism, which has enjoyed somewhat of a resurgence over the past few years, as a means of clearing what some have viewed as ontological slums without having to rehouse the occupants. Thus it is not surprising, in view of the difficulties we have encountered in wrestling with our theme, to find that the idea of a fictionalist view of musical works, and thereby of performable works more generally, has recently been canvassed in the literature.

Fictionalism is one way of denying that there "really are" the things to which we seem to be committed by the form of discourse that we employ in a given practice or domain of inquiry. It is thus a way of declining to be a *realist* about that form of discourse. Realism concerning a form of discourse *D* can be taken to involve the following claims: (1) sentences in *D* are to be taken at face value, rather than as disguised ways of saying something expressible in a different vocabulary; (2) taken at face value, they are genuine representations of a putative domain of fact, rather than, say, prescriptions as to how we should act; (3) acceptance of a sentence *S* in *D* is warranted in proportion to the grounds for thinking that *S* is *true* – *D* "aims at truth"; and (4) warranted sentences in *D* generally *are* true, or at least increasingly true.<sup>33</sup> The fictionalist about *D* accepts (1),<sup>34</sup> also accepts (2),<sup>35</sup> and may remain agnostic about (4).<sup>36</sup> The defining characteristic of fictionalism about *D* is the rejection of (3). What warrants the use of *D* in general, and what warrants the acceptance of individual sentences of *D*, is to be cashed out not in terms of the truth of those sentences but in terms of some other property that we value. And the attitude adopted to those sentences of *D* that we accept is not belief – for to believe something is to believe it to be true – but something more pragmatic – for example, a readiness to act *as if* we believed those sentences to be true, to defend them against criticism, etc.

The fictionalist may be making a *descriptive* claim about *D* as we actually use it, or a *prescriptive* claim as to how we should revise our use of *D*. It is the former kind of fictionalism – what is termed “hermeneutic fictionalism”<sup>37</sup> – that might be advocated in respect of our talk about performable works.<sup>38</sup> The fictionalist claims that, while there are actually no such things as musical works, we have shared ways of representing such things in our musical practice.<sup>39</sup> These shared representations play a valuable part in that practice, and this justifies continuing to talk as if there were such works even if the world contains no such things. The kinds of properties we have been assuming that musical works must have – creatability and repeatability, in particular – play an important part in sustaining different elements in our musical practice. But the tangled philosophical disagreements over the nature of musical works explored earlier in this chapter suggest to the fictionalist that there may in fact be no entities that correspond to our conceptions. Nonetheless, the fictionalist argues, “it would make no difference if there were no musical works, strictly speaking, as long as we all continued to behave as if there were” (Kania 2008, 440).

The fictionalist’s claims raise deep philosophical issues that cannot be properly pursued here, but a few observations may at least give a whiff of the chasm from whose edge we strategically withdraw. In the first place, there seems no obvious reason to think that the fictionalist argument, if valid, holds only for musical works. Presumably the very same considerations would argue for a fictionalist view not just of other performable works but of multiple works in general, since, as we have seen, all multiples seem to raise the same general set of questions. Second, the fictionalist might deny that she is motivated by a more general resistance to abstract entities, and maintain that there is no reason to think that the arguments presented against musical works would also apply to other abstract objects such as numbers or properties. But then one wonders what kind of existence is being denied to multiple artworks yet extended to other abstract objects. What would it be for there to be something that corresponds to the conceptions of works that animate our artistic practice – in other words, what precisely is the fictionalist denying?

The fictionalist might respond that the difference between performable musical works, on the one hand, and numbers and properties, on the other, is that we do not need to posit the actual existence of the former in order to explain what is going on in our musical practice, whereas we do need to posit numbers and properties to explain what is going on in our mathematical and scientific practice.<sup>40</sup> To assess this response we would need to consider at least the following. First, to what model of explanation is the fictionalist appealing in claiming that abstract entities like numbers can “explain” our practice? If abstract entities of any kind are to explain our practices, it might seem that they must be capable of causing those practices

to be one way rather than another, but the causal mechanisms in question are not clear. Second, if it be responded that the kind of explanation in question does not require such causal mechanisms, but involves our capacity to make sense of our mathematical and scientific practices, then the very role accorded by the fictionalist to our talk of musical works might seem to warrant ascribing a similar explanatory function to such works. Third, the assumption that our criterion for the existence of something is its ability to perform a particular kind of explanatory role itself stands in need of some clarification and defense.

We must leave these questions in the air, however, and turn to more pressing issues. We introduced the notion of the performable work at the beginning of this chapter when describing Berthold's attempts to deepen his appreciation of a particular performable work through attending one of its performances. This, indeed, is one of the principal ways in which the concept of the performable work animates our engagement with artistic performances. But we need to address more systematically an issue that has occasionally punctuated our discussion. How in fact are performable works to be appreciated through their performances? How are the properties of performable works that bear upon their appreciation made accessible to us in performance? And — a question to which we have already seen a number of answers, but which requires more thorough investigation — what features must a performance have if it is to play this mediatory role in the appreciation of performable works? These questions present themselves even if we accept the fictionalist's claim that talk of performable works is just shorthand for talk about the different groupings of performances that we effect in our musical practice. For we still need to understand how the qualities of individual performances bear upon what is rightly said about such groupings. It is to these matters that we turn in the following two chapters.

### Notes

1. See Bell 1914, 33.
2. Could we meet these objections by identifying a performable work with the set of all its *possible* performances? This might seem attractive to someone who wants to avoid a "type" theory of performable works (see section 3 below) because they regard types as ontologically non-kosher. But, if performable works actually exist, then this option presumably commits us to the view that their possible performances themselves actually exist, which is itself a somewhat dubious ontological claim. And sets of *possibilia*, if they do indeed exist, don't seem to be the kinds of things that can be created, so we still face one of the more contentious implications of the "type" theory, as we shall see below.

3. Some writers have resisted this distinction, holding that, even in the case of painting or sculpture, it is at least theoretically possible for a work to have multiple work-instances: for, were we to have a *copy* of the "original" – the entity produced by the artist – that was guaranteed to be perceptually indistinguishable from the original, then this copy would also fully qualify to play the experiential role in the appreciation of the work. We need not pursue these issues here, but see D. Davies 2010.
4. See, for example, Wollheim 1980, 78–80; Wolterstorff 1980, 90–98; S. Davies 2003, 159–63. See also Carroll 1998, chapter 3, on film as a multiple art form.
5. Other terms used for the entity that plays this role in the specifying of work-instances in an art form like photography are "encoding" (S. Davies 2003) and "template" (Carroll 1998).
6. See Wollheim 1980, 75–84. Wollheim distinguishes types from other generic entities, such as sets, properties, and universals, and offers an account of how such generic entities differ from one another.
7. Nelson Goodman (1976) notoriously argues that we should insist that performances of a musical work conform to all of those prescriptions explicitly specified in musical notation in a work's score. See the discussion of the "Goodman argument" in Chapter 3.
8. See Dodd 2007. Dodd here follows Nicholas Wolterstorff, who uses the term "norm-kind" rather than "norm-type." See Wolterstorff 1975 and 1980. To avoid confusion, I shall use the term "norm-type" in discussing both Dodd's and Wolterstorff's views.
9. See Dodd 2000 and 2007, 9.
10. See S. Davies 2001, 60–65, for a critical discussion of sonicism, both "pure" and "timbral." See also Dodd 2007, 201–217.
11. Defenders of pure sonicism include Kivy 1983, 1988, and Scruton 1997.
12. Dodd 2007, 212–217. Timbral sonicists, like "instrumentalists" (see below), may restrict the scope of this claim to Western classical music composed after a certain date – see also Levinson 1980, 64–65.
13. The timbral sonicist might grant that a musical work's aesthetic properties depend upon its being *heard as* played on a particular instrument, but deny that correct performances of the work must actually be played on those instruments. See, for example, Dodd 2007, 230–235. This strategy, however, which separates the requirements for properly appreciating a musical work from the requirements for its correct performance, may be an unstable one for the timbral sonicist to adopt. For consider the following plausible principle: (AP) If  $W$  and  $W^*$  are artworks and if  $W$  and  $W^*$  have different properties that bear on their proper appreciation, then  $W$  and  $W^*$  are distinct artworks. The anti-instrumentalist strategy just canvassed seems to allow for works that share their timbral sonic properties but that have different properties bearing on their proper appreciation because they have to be *heard as* played on different instruments. Consider, for example, the *Hammerklavier Sonata* and a timbral sonic equivalent that is to be heard as played on a PTS. The timbral sonicist

must say that there is only a single work here, since both the *HS* and its doppelgänger prescribe the same timbral sound sequence for correct performance. But, by AP, the *Hammerklavier Sonata* and its doppelgänger must be different works. For more on this, see D. Davies 2009b.

14. Levinson's target is the view that musical works are types rather than norm-types, but his arguments can be applied to the latter view as well as the former.
15. *ET1* is endorsed by Wolterstorff in his 1975, 335, and by Levinson in his 1980, 65. For arguments against *ET1*, see Dodd 2000; 2007, 104–106.
16. See Dodd 2000; Dodd 2007, 60–69.
17. Dodd's formulation of *ET2* in his 2000 differs from his formulation in his 2007. In the former, he holds that a property exists eternally as long as there is at least one time – past, present, or future – at which it *has* an instance. In the latter, what is required is that there is at least one time – past, present or future – at which it *could have* an instance. An obvious difficulty with the 2000 formulation is that, as applied to musical works as norm-kinds, it wouldn't allow for there to be unperformed works.
18. See, for example, Dutton 1979; Danto 1981; Currie 1989; D. Davies 2004, chs. 2 and 3.
19. Danto's "gallery of red rectangles" introduced at the beginning of his 1981 is a hypothetical example of this sort, but the white paintings of Kazimir Malevich, Yves Klein, and Robert Ryman are a real example of works whose differences cannot be reduced to the differences that exist in their (supplemented) manifest properties.
20. This follows from Leibniz's Law of the Indiscernibility of Identicals. This states that if *A* is identical to *B* – for example, if the morning star is identical to the evening star (they are two ways in which the Ancients picked out the planet Venus) – then *A* and *B* must have all their properties in common. It follows that, if there are any properties that they do not have in common, they cannot be identical.
21. See, for example, Dodd 2007, ch. 9.
22. A stronger but more controversial response is that in fact it is only through historical contextualization that we can properly assess a work's aesthetic properties. See, for example, Currie 1989, ch. 2; Baxandall 1985, 6–11.
23. See, for example, Wolterstorff 1991.
24. This is one of the reasons why Dodd treats the type-token theory of musical works as the default position. See Dodd 2007, ch. 1.
25. On an alternative formulation considered in Levinson 1980, pieces are indexed not to individuals and times but to musico-historical contexts. If we represent the musico-historical context in which Sibelius composed his Second Symphony as *MHC-S2/I*, then, on this alternative formulation, the performable work is identical to *S2/I-as-indicated-in-MHC-S2/I*. Since Levinson prefers the first formulation, and the alternative formulation seems to have counterintuitive implications for the modal properties of musical works, I shall focus on the first formulation in what follows.
26. The property in question will presumably be something like this: being correct if successfully complying with the performance specifications set out by

- B* in context *C* and standing in an appropriate intentional-historical relation to that act of specification.
27. An alternative view of musical works as continuants is defended in Caplan and Matheson 2006. For criticisms of both accounts, see Dodd 2007, ch. 6.
  28. He draws here on Kaplan 1990.
  29. Dodd argues for this view of types in chs. 2 and 3 of his 2007.
  30. See Dodd 2007, ch. 7, for these objections and Caplan and Matheson 2006 for attempts to answer them.
  31. As we shall see in the next chapter, the content will be predicated of the work "analogically" rather than univocally.
  32. See D. Davies 2004 for a defense of such a view. For critical responses to this view, see, among others, Dodd 2005; Kania 2005; Stecker and Dilworth 2005.
  33. It might be thought that a realist about a given discourse *D* need only subscribe to the first three claims, and that realism about *D* is quite consistent with skepticism about the truth of statements in *D*. But to reject (4) is to advance an "error theory" with respect to *D*, and error theories, such as John Mackie's account (1977) of ethical discourse, are usually described as forms of non-realism. In any case, I shall use the term "realism" to encompass both a claim about the content of a given discourse (claims 1–3) and a claim about the general truth of statements in *D* (4).
  34. Philosophers who reject (1) for a given discourse *D* may be described as having a "reductionist" view of *D* – they want to reduce the content of sentences in *D* to the content of sentences in another discourse.
  35. Philosophers who reject (2) for a discourse *D* are described as "non-factualists" about *D*.
  36. As just noted, philosophers who accept at least (1) and (2) but reject (4) for a form of discourse *D* are described as "error theorists" about *D*. Some fictionalists are error theorists, but think that, in spite of its falsity, we should still use *D* because of its other virtues.
  37. This terminology derives from Burgess 1983. Calderon 2005 contains a good collection of contemporary papers on fictionalism.
  38. Kania 2008 explores without fully endorsing such a fictionalist option.
  39. The idea is that we have shared ways of representing musical works just as we have shared ways of representing unicorns. In neither case does the existence of such representational practices require that the represented entities themselves actually exist.
  40. I am grateful to Andrew Kania (private communication) for suggesting this response.

# The Classical Paradigm II: Appreciating Performable Works in Performance

## 1 Introduction: Talking Appreciatively about Performable Works

In the notes that accompany the CD of Sibelius's complete symphonies played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lorin Maazel, Timothy Day comments on the Second Symphony as follows:

From his modest orchestral forces, Sibelius is able to conjure up astonishingly varied sonorities, eloquent and powerful in the Finale where he exploits the full range of the brass instruments, or harsh and forlorn, as in the slow movement, with thin textures and the dark colour of the lower registers of the orchestra. Sibelius is rarely serene: the pastoral quality of the opening *Allegretto* is tinged with melancholy and there is a solemnity in the triumph of the work's conclusion.

The first movement is a sonata-form structure. Its themes give the impression of evolving from each other rather than presenting sharp contrasts, and indeed, in the recapitulation, material from the first and second groups of the exposition is contained without strain or distortion. This coherence adds great strength and inevitability to the movement's predominantly sunny and relaxed mood. The second movement is a more rhapsodic structure with a succession of beautiful themes. It begins, slightly menacingly, with a single melodic line played pizzicato by cellos and double basses, joined later by two bassoons in octaves intoning a modal lament, marked *lugubre*. A series of impassioned climaxes ensue and the movement ends in a solemn mood.