Musical Works: Ontology and Meta-Ontology

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Abstract

The ontological nature of works of music has been a particularly lively area of philosophical debate during the past few years. This paper serves to introduce the reader to some of the most fertile and interesting issues. Starting by distinguishing three questions – the categorial question, the individuation question, and the persistence question – the article goes on to focus on the first: the question of which ontological category musical works fall under. The paper ends by introducing, and briefly considering, meta-ontological questions in the ontology of music.

1. Introduction: The Very Idea of the Ontology of Works of Music

Ralph Vaughan Williams's Concerto for Oboe and String Orchestra in A Minor was composed by him in 1944; and it is this work – this very thing – that ensembles perform whenever they perform it. The work, like all works, is *repeatable* in the sense that it can be multiply performed or played,[1] and that each such datable, locatable performance or playing is an *occurrence* of it: an item in which the work itself is somehow present, and which thereby makes the work manifest to an audience. The work is fully presented in any such performance or playing of it, even in two performances occurring in different places at the same time.

Not all artworks are repeatable. Paintings aren't, and in noting the differences between singular artworks, such as paintings, and repeatable artworks, such as works of music, we may get a firmer grip on the relevant notion of repeatability in use here. Consider Constable's painting, *The Haywain*. This is a physical particular made of canvas and paint that can, of course, be *copied*: a forger might succeed in exactly reproducing its visual array. Crucially, though, any such copy is a distinct work from the original. Things are different with works of music. Whereas a copy of *The Haywain* is another work that resembles the original, the performances and playings of Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto are the means by which we encounter the concerto itself: they are its occurrences. The fact that Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto can have occurrences, whilst *The Haywain* can merely have copies, explains why the former, but not the latter, can be perceived in different places at the same time.

When it comes to the question of the ontology of works of music, however, these remarks are only the beginning. We do not merely want to say that musical works, unlike with singular artworks, are intrinsically repeatable; we also want to but give a rich account of their *ontological status*: that is, explain which ontological category musical works belong to, what their identity conditions are, and under what conditions they persist. Let me say more.

To place works of music within an ontological category – to answer what I call *the categorial question* in the ontology of music – is to gain an initial handle on their ontological nature by revealing what *kind* of existent they are. It is to put our finger on such works by virtue of treating them as a kind of entity with which we are, it is hoped, familiar. Given a prior grasp of the category to which musical works are assigned, a correct such assignment will tell us quite a lot about how we are committed to viewing such works. So, for example, if Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto were to be identified with the composer's autographed copy of the score, it would follow that the work could literally be mislaid, ripped up or burnt; if, by contrast, we were to identify the piece with an intentional object before the composer's mind ('the tune in his head'), it would seem to follow that, strictly speaking, the work could not be listened to; and if we were to identify the work with the set of its performances, then – given some plausible principles in set theory[2] – it would follow that the work could not have had more, or fewer, or different performances than it has had actually.

But merely assigning works of music to some ontological category or other does not exhaust the ontologist of music's responsibilities. We would also like to know, given this assignment, how musical works are *individuated*: what the identity conditions of such works are. That is, we feel owed something of the form 'Work W = work W* if and only if . ..' that fills in the blank space correctly and informatively. Just how one thinks this gap should be filled will be determined by one's views on whether – and if so, under what conditions – it is possible for two composers, working independently of each other, to compose the same work of music. For instance, do two such composers compose the same piece just in case their respective compositions sound exactly alike? Or must the works' respective composers also have been situated in the same musico–historical context? Or is it just flat out impossible for two such composers to compose the same work, even if their compositions are sonically indistinguishable, and even if they were working at the same co-ordinates in the history of music?[3]

Finally, there is the question of the persistence conditions of works of music. Under what conditions does a work come into existence, remain in existence and cease to be? Most philosophers assume that Vaughan Williams's compositional act brought his Oboe Concerto into being;[4] but clear intuitions are harder to come by when it comes to the question of whether – and if so, under what conditions – works can be destroyed or

otherwise cease to be.[5] How would the world have to be for Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto to go out of existence? Presumably, the work may exist unperformed: after all, one might point out, the work could be unperformed at t and yet still exist at *t* in the form of the copies of its score that are to be found at various places around the world. But equally, it is tempting to think that a work continues to exist at *t* even *if* it is unperformed *and* no copies of its score exist, just so long as it is remembered by at least one person at *t*. Finally, however, one may doubt that even the disappearance of the last memory-trace of a work is enough to cause its demise. For many have thought that works of music 'once created, last forever' (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is, Again' 263). Much depends here on whether or not we should regard a work of music as *ontologically dependent* upon (certain of) what we might call its *embodiments* (i.e. its performances and score-copies, and memory traces of it), or whether there is available some other, more plausible, account of the existence conditions of works of music that eschews such a thesis.[6] It is telling that neither our pre-theoretical intuitions nor our music-related practices give us any clear steer on this question.

Neither, it seems to me, do the beliefs and practices of musicians and listeners unequivocally speak in favour of one particular way of individuating works of music. Everyone accepts that works of music − in part, at least − are individuated by how they sound. Two composers could only count as independently composing one and the same work of music, if the works they composed sounded exactly alike. But it is a moot point whether such sonic equivalence is sufficient as well as necessary for work-identity. Some philosophers, who we may call *sonicists*, appeal to what they claim to be the unreflective and natural judgements of listeners in order to suggest that sonic character alone is relevant to work-identity (Kivy, 'Platonism in Music: Another Kind of Defense'; Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 8–9). Such a view has, though, been challenged on two fronts. First, self-styled *contextualists* construct thought-experiments which they take to reveal our latent strong commitment to the thesis that two composers operating in differing musico-historical contexts invariably compose numerically distinct works, even if the said works sound exactly alike. Such thought-experiments, it is claimed, show that sonically indistinguishable works composed in distinct musico-historical contexts invariably differ with respect to their artistic and/or aesthetic qualities and, hence, by Leibniz's Law, cannot be one and the same (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is'; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again'). Second, philosophers we can Christen *instrumentalists* (Levinson, 'Authentic Performance'; S. Davies) argue that certain of a work's aesthetic and artistic properties can only be transmitted by a performance, if certain specific means of sound-production are used: a fact, which they take to entail, *pace* sonicism, that sonic doppelgängers will count as distinct works if their respective scores specify distinct forms of instrumentation.

When it comes to arbitrating in these disputes, however, we immediately face a problem: namely, that all sides appeal to elements of our ordinary thought and talk about works of music. For example, whilst contextualists present their thought-experiments as teasing out our tacit beliefs concerning the individuation of musical works, sonicists appeal to what *they* claim to be our intuitions concerning musical works' individuation in order to make a case for sonicism's *prima facie* correctness, arguing that this justifies a strategy of holding firm in the wake of the contextualist's thought-experiments, even if this means jettisoning some other aspects of our folk view of musical works. Typically, a sonicist will attempt to draw the sting from the contextualist's thought-experiments by denying that any such imagined case sees a genuine conflict between sonicism and Leibniz's Law: either because the variant artistic properties supposedly possessed by exact sonic duplicates are really only possessed by composers and their actions; or else because no such thought-experiment genuinely presents us with a case in which sonically indistinguishable works differ aesthetically (Kivy, 'Platonism in Music: Another Kind of Defense'; Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 9).

In what follows I shall be largely focussing on the first of our three questions in the ontology of music: the categorial question. There are three reasons for this. First, it would seem to be this question that is the most immediately pressing. Compare, for a moment, the question of the ontological status of musical works with an ontological question with which, perhaps, we are more familiar: the ontological nature of events. Until we have placed events in an ontological category – for example, as havings of properties by objects at times, as recurrent universals, or as particulars[7] – it seems that we know precious little about them. Are events datable, locatable occurrences, or can they recur? Do events have objects, properties and times as constituents? Basic questions such as these – questions that need to be answered, if we are to get any sort of handle on the nature of the things to which our word 'event' applies – cannot be answered without addressing our first question.

Second, and relatedly, placing entities of a given type within an ontological category goes some way (although by no means all the way) to determining answers to the question of such entities' identity and persistence conditions. For example, if we treat events as entities that have objects, properties and times as constituents, then events are identical if and only if they combine the same constituents in the same way; and if we accept Kim's suggestion about the ontological category to which events belong, it will follow that events do not exist at any time at which at least one of their constituents does not exist.

As for events, so for works of music. An answer to the ontological question will tend to commit us to theses concerning works' identity and persistence conditions. For example, it is acknowledged by all participants in the rapidly burgeoning literature that a conception of works of music

as *sound structures* (i.e. as abstract sequences of sound-types) at once commits its propounder to the thesis that such works at exist eternally (that is, at all times).[8] Likewise, Levinson's suggestion that musical works belong to the (supposedly neglected) ontological category of 'indicated structures' ('What a Musical Work Is'; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again') is precisely motivated by the presumption that such an account entails certain results with regard to works' persistence and identity conditions. For if, as Levinson recommends, a work of music is 'a contextually qualified, person-and-time-tethered abstract object' ('What a Musical Work Is, Again' 216) that has specific means of sound production integral to it, then two things would seem to follow: that musical works can only exist from the time to which they are tethered; and that such works are individuated more finely than the sonicist supposes (since exact soundalikes 'are necessarily distinct if composed either by different people or at different times' (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is' 80), and also count as distinct if their respective composers specify distinct instrumentation in their scores).

I shall return to the details of Levinson's ontological proposal in section 3, but, for now, it is enough to see that an examination of the various answers to the categorial question will, *en passant*, tend to see us considering works' identity and persistence conditions in any case. But more than this (and this is my third reason for focussing largely on the question of which ontological category works of music fall under), our intuitions concerning the identity and persistence conditions of works of music are both too varied and too malleable for us to get a decent purchase on these issues. As we have noted already, whilst certain philosophers have constructed ingenious thought-experiments designed to show that our thought and talk about works of music commits us to viewing them as both contextually individuated and as items in which specific means of sound production are integral (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is'; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again'; 'Authentic Performance'), others report having contrary, sonicist intuitions, and, as a result, embark on a project of explaining away the pull of anti-sonicist thought-experiments (Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 8, 9; Kivy, 'Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense'; 'Platonism in Music: Another Kind of Defense'). Likewise, it is just not clear what 'we' think about works' persistence conditions: that works depend for their existence on there being at least one performance, playing recording or memory of them; that works, once composed, exist forever; and that works are genuinely brought into being by their composers are all theses the intuitiveness of which has been disputed by philosophers.

The moral is that our musical practice does not speak to us with one voice: we cannot hope to read off nascent accounts of works' persistence and identity conditions from our everyday thought and talk; and, furthermore, it is unclear how we could arbitrate between philosophers with contrary intuitions on these matters. This being so, in a somewhat bold step, I propose the following strategy for approaching the ontology of musical

works. We should start by focussing squarely on the categorial question, hoping that an answer to it can be, to a certain extent, determined by theoretical considerations: perhaps there is a feature or phenomenon of such works that can only be explained, or is best explained, by one of the competing ontological proposals. With a specific answer to the categorial question in place, it is possibly not too much to hope that we could achieve some independent purchase on the troubling questions of the individuation and existence conditions of works of music.

2. Repeatability and the Type/Token Theory

The feature of works of music that demands explanation – the feature that, as philosophers, we should be puzzled by – is what was introduced in section 1 as their repeatability. Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is an entity that is intrinsically repeatable in the sense that its multiple performances and playings are occurrences, rather than copies, of it: that is, episodes that serve as an audience's conduit to the work itself, and which may occur at different places at the same time. How could there be things that are repeatable in this way? In what could their repeatability consist?

It is because one prominent kind of ontological proposal – *the type/token theory* – answers this question so elegantly that it has assumed a hegemonic position on the categorial issue. The thought is this: works of music should be construed as types of sound-event (i.e. as types of performance or playing) because, first, it is plausible to suppose that the repeatability of such works is directly explicable by the ontological category to which they belong;[9] and, second, that assigning such works to the category of types is the most natural way of effecting such an explanation. On this view, the relation obtaining between Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto and its occurrences is just one more quotidian instance of the relation obtaining between a word and its various inscriptions, or between The Union Jack and its numerous tokens: a phenomenon with which we are quite familiar.

Furthermore, the strength of the type/token theory's explanation of musical works' repeatability is further emphasised once it is compared with rival such explanations. To be sure, it would seem to be a mistake to regard the one-many relation holding between a work and its occurrences to be either that obtaining between a property and its instances, or that holding between a set and its members. Whilst a property is repeatable inasmuch as it is an entity capable of multiple instantiation by particulars, Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto looks categorially unsuited to be identified with a property of its performances and playings. Rather than being a mere respect in which performances or playings can be alike or differ, the work itself is the *blueprint* for such performances and playings: a thing in its own right.[10] This being so, works of music look more akin

to entities such as The Red Flag, The Daffodil, and the word 'refrigerator' – that is, types – than they do to properties.

But neither, so it seems, could works of music be sets of their occurrences. For, given that sets have their members (or lack of them) essentially,[11] no set can differ in its membership. Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto, by contrast, does not have its occurrences essentially: it might have had more, fewer, or different performances than it has had actually. So, since there are possible worlds in which this work has more, fewer, or different occurrences than it has actually, and since there would seem to be no possible world in which the set Σ of the work's actual occurrences has more or fewer members, the work cannot be Σ.

Happily, the type/token theory neatly sidesteps this modal objection, and seeing how it does so nicely foregrounds an important distinction between sets and types. The crucial difference between types and sets is this: whilst the identity of a set is determined by its actual membership, the identity of a type is determined, not by which tokens actually exist, but by the condition that something must meet to be one of its tokens. What makes the type K *that* type is that it lays down a certain condition for something to be one of its tokens; and it would still lay down this condition, and so would remain that type, even if fewer, more, or different tokens satisfied it. Consequently, the type/token theory, unlike the set-theoretical approach, can straightforwardly allow for the fact that works of music need not have had the occurrences they have had actually.

3. Indicated Structures Introduced and Criticised

As I mentioned in section 2, it is acknowledged by all participants in the debate that if Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is a pure type of sound-event – a sound structure, in other words – then it exists eternally. So if the work is a sound structure, Vaughan Williams's composition of it could not have been the bringing of an entity into existence; it could only have been a process of (creative) discovery. Many philosophers look askance at such a Platonist consequence, treating it as a *reductio* of the conception of musical works as sound structures (e.g. Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is' 65–8; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again' 216–21, 227–31; S. Davies 38): in their view, such Platonism, as well as misrepresenting the creative and imaginative nature of the compositional process itself, inevitably fails to do justice to the esteem with which we regard both composers and their works. Card-carrying Platonists, as one would expect, deny this (Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 5; Kivy, 'Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense'). However, those convinced by the way in which the type/token theory explains the nature of musical works' repeatability may follow an alternative strategy which, they hope, enables them to adopt a version of this theory that avoids Platonism.

The strategy in question is Levinson's, and it consists in identifying musical works with more complex, structured types: the indicated structures briefly

introduced in section 1. Motivated by a felt need to avoid Platonism (as well as to individuate works both contextually and in terms of specific means of sound production), Levinson makes a substantial amendment to the view of musical works as sound structures. According to Levinson, the work that a naïve philosopher identifies with the eternally existent sound structure, φ, is, in fact, a more complex entity in two respects. First, the work is not φ, but an entity that has the following as constituents: an eternally existent structure, the work's composer, and the time at which the composer composed the work by indicating (i.e. picking out) the said structure ('What a Musical Work Is' 82). Second, the structure that the work contains is not, strictly speaking, a sound structure at all: rather than being identified with φ, the structure indicated in the composer's compositional act is a *performed*-sound structure ψ, where ψ is sonically equivalent to φ but differs from φ by virtue of having specific means of sound production (e.g. the oboe) integral to it. So, to sum up these two amendments to the simple sound structure account, Levinson has it that a work of music is not a sound structure φ, but ψ (i.e. a performed–sound structure)-as–indicated-by-A-at-t (79). On this view, Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is the performed–sound structure λ-as-indicated-by-Vaughan Williams-in-1944.

Clearly, if this proposal is on the right lines, then both existential and individuative theses follow (or, in the existential case, would seem to follow[12]). First, it is tempting to suppose that indicated structures – of which cultural artefacts such as The Ford Thunderbird and The Lincoln Penny are also said to be examples (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is' 79) – only come into existence from the time of the relevant act of indication. For if (as is the case) λ-as-indicated-by-Vaughan Williams-in-1944 could only have had tokens from the time of λ's indication in 1944, and if (as Levinson suggests (65)) a type K exists at t just in case it is possible for K to be tokened at t, then λ-as-indicated-by-Vaughan Williams-in-1944 only came into existence with Vaughan Williams's compositional act of indication. Furthermore, when it comes to musical works' individuation, Levinson's indicated structure theory embodies the two ways of repudiating sonicism introduced in section 1: sonically indistinguishable works will be distinct if they involve different means of sound production; and works composed by distinct composers, or at different times, will count as numerically distinct even if they sound exactly alike. Consequently, if one holds that works of music are literally created by their composers, and if one is convinced by the two kinds of anti-sonicist thought-experiment mentioned in section 1 (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is'; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again'; 'Authentic Performance'), then Levinson's answer to the categorial question will seem attractive. Presuming that indicated structures are a species of type, Levinson promises to couple the type/ token theory' explanation of musical works' repeatability with an account that appears to do less violence to our intuitions concerning works' identity and persistence conditions than does the sound structures view.

There are, though, three worries with this ontological proposal. First, it is not clear that merely tethering a (performed-) sound structure to a time is sufficient to ensure that the indicated structure only exists from that time. Levinson assumes that the machinery of indicated structures renders works of music creatable because he holds (correctly) that an indicated type can only have tokens from the time t to which it is tethered, and (more controversially) that any type K (indicated or not) exists at t just in case it is possible for K to have tokens at t (Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is' 65). But this second assumption has been disputed. Indeed, it has been argued that works of music, *even if* indicated types, exist at all times. If types correspond one-to-one with properties, if the existence of a property at a time guarantees the existence of its associated type at that time, and if all properties (including those associated with indicated types) exist at all times, then all types (including indicated types) exist eternally. There are a lot of 'ifs' here, but each of them has its defenders (Dodd, 'Musical Works'; *Works of Music* 100–6; Caplan and Matheson, 'Can a Musical Work be Created?').

The second and third objections to Levinson's introduction of indicated structures both allege that such entities fail to pass muster ontologically. The first variation of this charge − that of ontological extravagance − is nicely made by Stefano Predelli:

> [I]t does not appear to be true *in general* that, whenever an agent a enters into a relationship R with an object o at a time t, a novel entity comes into existence, one which may be denoted by an expression of the form 'o-as-R'd-by-a-at-t'. For instance, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it does not appear to be the case that, if you show me the tallest building on campus you thereby bring into existence a new object, that is, the building-as-shown-by-you.[13] (289)

Given that we are unwilling to accept that there are entities such as showings-of-buildings-by-people-to-other-people, the onus is on Levinson to explain why the locution 'o-as-R'd-by-a-at-t' is ontologically committal when 'R' stands for the relation of indication, but not thus committal when it stands for the relation of showing. It is difficult to see how a reply to this challenge could be anything other than *ad hoc*: that is, simply state that we must posit such structures in the one case but not the other because they are needed in the one case but not the other in order to solve a philosophical problem.

The final complaint − namely, that Levinson's indicated types are ontologically mysterious − has as its target Levinson's suggestion that his contextualised types have times, individuals or contexts as constituents. For Levinson, indicated structures are 'things *in which* a particular person and time figure ineliminably' ('What a Musical Work Is' 82; my italics) and this has led some commentators to doubt whether such structures are *bona fide* types at all: if an entity has a time as a *constituent* − that is, as one of

its *elements* – it must surely be an *event* rather than a type, at least, if Kim is right about events (Dodd, 'Musical Works' 439–40; D. Davies 64); and what this means is that it is quite unclear how such things can be repeatable. To such critics, Levinson's indicated types look like queer, cross-categorial entities: ontologically suspect things that have been gerrymandered into existence for the express purpose of sweeping away an ontological difficulty.

One way of replying to this latter charge would be to argue that indicated structures are *neither* types, *nor* events, but *sui generis* repeatable entities.[14] On this view, the critic's mistake consists in supposing that works of music, *qua* indicated structures, must belong to one or other of our familiar, established ontological categories: once we have freed ourselves from this assumption, we can, it is claimed, treat musical works' apparently cross-categorial character as, in fact, a sign that a new ontological category is needed within our conceptual scheme. According to this way of thinking, indicated structures form a genuine ontological category, and not a phoney hybrid, but seeing this requires us to treat the ontology of music as a catalyst for a rethinking of our inventory of types of being.[15] The problem with taking this line, however, is that our second objection – namely, that of *ad hoc*ism – returns with avengeance. Before we introduce a new ontological category into our conceptual scheme, we need to be sure that there really are good for reasons for doing so: reasons beyond the fact that we have a wish-list of features we would like repeatable artworks to have (i.e. repeatability and creatability), and which our familiar categories seemingly cannot deliver. Furthermore, the denial that indicated structures are a species of type comes at a considerable cost. As we have seen, the type/token theory nicely explains musical works' repeatability; once indicated structures are *distinguished* from types, the umbilical cord to this *explanans* is severed, and any light shed on the phenomenon of repeatability is dimmed.

4. *Musical Works as Compositional Actions*

Largely inspired, or provoked, by the work of Levinson, recent years have seen a huge growth in competitors to the type/token theory. One such competitor – largely motivated by the thought that our appreciation of works of music consists in an evaluation of the composer's achievement, and that an account of the ontology of musical works should reflect this fact – has it that such a work is not the composer's end product (or, for the Platonist, the item discovered), but the artist's *action* of composing it. Reflecting the fact that 'action' exhibits a type/token ambiguity, there are two versions of this view to be considered. According to the first version, proposed by Gregory Currie, a musical work is an action-*type*: a type of which the composer's datable, locatable compositional action (or series of actions) was a token. According to the second version of the view, defended by David Davies, the work is the composer's unrepeatable compositional action itself.

Both versions of this view of musical works as compositional actions are defended with skill and ingenuity. But to my mind, neither can effectively answer the exam paper's compulsory question: that is, explain what the repeatability of such works consists in. According to Currie, the action-type that is Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is a structured entity that has as constituents the work's sound-structure (*S*), the 'heuristic path' (*H*) by which Vaughan Williams came to discover this sound-structure, and the three-place relation *x discovers y by heuristic path z* (*D*), along with two open places for a composer and a time, which we can represent as '*x*' and 'δ' respectively.[16] Consequently, the work, Currie claims (70), may be represented as [*x*,*S*,*H*,*D*,δ]. But the problem here is that treating a work's tokens, not as its performances, but as a set of compositional events, seems to leave the one-many relation between the work and its performances mysterious. Indeed, once Currie's ontological proposal is in place, it becomes unclear how a work of music *could* be performed. Whilst the type/token theory can unproblematically explain what the performability of a work of music consists in – i.e. the tokening of a type of sound-event – the action-type hypothesis cannot so much as allow for a work's performability (Wolterstorff, 'Review' 80). A group of musicians, however talented, could not play something which has a heuristic path and the relation *x discovers y by heuristic path z* as constituents. It is senseless to say that such entities as heuristic paths and relations can be played on musical instruments, and so it is equally senseless to suggest that an entity that has such things as parts can be performed. For Currie, the thing performed can only be the work's *sound structure*: an entity that Currie takes to be one of the work's constituents, not the work itself.

A further problem facing Currie's action-type hypothesis is this: how, if works were the kind of compositional action-types proposed by Currie, could works be the sorts of things that audiences could hear (Levinson, 'Critical Review' 216–17)? The type/token theorist can say that one listens to a work – *qua* performance-type – *by* listening to one of its tokens (Wolterstorff, *Works and Worlds of Art* 40–1): the work is simply a type of performance (or playing), so a heard performance is a presentation of the type of which it is a token. No such explanation is available to Currie. For if Currie is right, the type presented by a performance of a work is not the work itself but one of its parts: its sound-structure. Consequently, it is only a work's sound-structure, and not the work in its entirety, that one hears by hearing a performance; and, given that the action-type's other constituents – a heuristic path and *x discovers y by heuristic path z* – are not the sorts of thing that can heard by listening to a performance, it follows that the action-type hypothesis rules out the possibility of listening to a complete work (i.e. listening to all of its parts). The problem is a clear product of two theses definitive of Currie's position: that a work's tokens are composings, rather than performances; and that the type of which performances are tokens is a mere part of the work.

According to D. Davies's version of the view of musical works as compositional actions, the 'performance theory', a musical work is an event: namely, the composer's unrepeatable compositional action. The work is not the item it is usually assumed to be – what Davies calls the 'focus of appreciation' (26), 'work-focus' (179) or 'work-product' (97) – but the composer's unrepeatable 'generative performance' (152) by which this focus of appreciation was produced. But, however imaginatively argued this position may be, it is troubled by more severe versions of the objections that plagued Currie's proposal. First, if Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is the unrepeatable process by which the work-focus was composed, then, as with Currie's action-type hypothesis, the performability of the work is immediately problematised: Vaughan–Williams's compositional action cannot be played on musical instruments. And neither is this action-token – an extended event or process that took place in 1944 – available in time to be heard by a contemporary audience. Such an audience hears the sounds made by the performers, not the long-gone event that was the composer's creative process.

Needless to say, Davies does some ingenious work in trying to explain away what seem to be clear violations of our commonplace thought and talk about musical works. Specifically, he makes the kind of move that any holder of a process-like conception of musical works, including Currie, must make: that is, he claims that

> features of our discourse about artworks that, taken at face value, are incompatible with the idea that works are process-like rather than product-like entities are best reinterpreted, on reflection, as discourse . . . about the elements that make up the work-focus, rather than as discourse about works themselves. (179)

But the suspicion remains that such a project is an up-hill task; particularly so, once one compares his position with the type/token theory's elegant explanation of the repeatability of works of music.[17]

5. Works of Music as Historical Particulars

One further approach to the question of musical works' ontological nature deserves discussion. Taking their cue from some of David Kaplan's remarks about the metaphysical status of words, the past five years or so has seen certain philosophers claim works of music – and repeatable artworks quite generally – to be *historical particulars*: that is, particulars that come into and go out of existence, and are modally and temporally flexible (i.e. which are capable of having other intrinsic properties than they have actually, and which are susceptible to change in their intrinsic properties over time). The main motivations for this kind of theory are two-fold.

First, it is supposed that our everyday thought and talk about musical works embodies the commitments distinctive of the conception of such

works as historical particulars. It is pointed out – for example, by Rohr-baugh (181–93) – that our unreflective engagement with works of music sees us regard them as items brought into being by their composers, which are capable of change, and which could have been different. It is natural for us to think, for example, that Vaughan Williams's composition of the Oboe Concerto was an act of literal creation; and it is equally natural to think both that a revision of a score by a composer sees him change the work, and that any such work might have been different (if its composer had made different compositional choices). Second, it is argued that there is no version of the type/token theory that can do justice to these intuitions. When it comes to the supposed creatability of musical works, the situation is, it is claimed, like this: whilst the conception of musical works as sound structures straightforwardly commits its holder to musical Platonism, Levinson's attempt to rehabilitate the type/token theory – in the shape of his conception of such works as indicated structures – is too obscure to be convincing (Rohrbaugh 194). And when it comes to the supposed flexibility of works of music, Rohrbaugh explains that no type – pure *or* indicated – is temporally or modally flexible (183, 189). A situation in which a composer revises a work – indicating that well formed performances should have a different set of sonic properties from those indicated in the original score – is one in which the composer specifies a *different* type of sound-event from that which he indicated originally; and, likewise, a possible world in which Vaughan Williams composes a work which sounds in any way different from the way his Oboe Concerto sounds actually is a world in which the composer composes a numerically distinct type of sound-event. The only way out, so it seems, is to regard a work of music, not as an eternal, fixed and unchangeable entity, but as a species of particular: i.e. a kind of item that has a finite life-span, is subject to change, and might have been different (Rohrbaugh 199).

Having said this, the major task facing the historical particularist is that of explaining the nature of musical works' repeatability. For if Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is a historical particular, then its repeatability cannot be directly explained by the ontological category to which it belongs. According to the conception of works of music as historical particulars, such works – unlike properties, sets or types – are not *themselves* instantiables; the fact that they have occurrences must be explained in some other way. So what form will such an explanation of musical works' repeatability take? What, according to the historical particularist, does the repeatability of Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto consist in, if not the fact that it is a type that can be repeatedly tokened?

The answer, it seems, will make use of the notions of *ontological depend-ence* and *embodiment*. Vaughan Williams's work, it is claimed, is a particular that depends for its existence, in a generic sense,[18] upon the series of concrete particulars that are its embodiments: i.e. its performances and playings, as well as copies of the work's score and memory-traces of it

(Rohrbaugh 191–2). This being so, a plausible way for the historical particularist to proceed is to seek to explain a work of music's repeatability in terms of a suitably restricted version of this phenomenon of embodiment. The relation obtaining between a work and its occurrences will be construed as 'a more specific form of the embodiment relation' (198): one whose second kind of relatum is restricted to items that display the work's qualities and are relevant to appreciation and criticism: that is, performances and playings, rather than copies of the score or memories.

So far, so good. But with the making of this move, it swiftly becomes apparent that a conception of musical works as historical particulars may take one of two forms, depending on how this embodiment relation and the notion of ontological dependence are understood. Directly limning the contours of Kaplan's conception of words, the first version of historical particularism treats embodiment as *constitution*: the items upon which a work ontologically depend are said to literally constitute it. Kaplan has famously suggested that 'utterances and inscriptions are *stages* of words, which are the *continuants* [i.e. historical particulars] made up of these interpersonal stages' (98), and the first version of historical particularism thinks of a work of music in the same way: namely, as a persisting entity that is a fusion of the occurrences which are its temporal parts. On such an account, a work of music turns out to be a *perduring* entity: an entity whose persistence through time is a matter of the succession of its temporal parts, and for which change consists in the difference in those successive temporal parts. Equally clearly, such a conception will treat musical works as concrete (i.e. spatially located) entities, because a perduring entity cannot have *concreta* as its temporal parts without itself being concrete.[19]

So much for the perdurantist version of historical particularism. Although Rohrbaugh himself appeals to Kaplan's conception of words in his exposition (204 n. 22), he elaborates his version of particularism in a way that is crucially different. For, according to Rohrbaugh, such works are ' "higher level" objects, dependent on *but not constituted by* physical or spatial things' (198–9; my italics). The entities upon which a work (generically) ontologically depends – which include its occurrences – are not its (temporal) parts; the embodiment relation does not admit of mereological explication. On the contrary, Rohrbaugh's claim is simply that a work is embodied in its performances, playings, and other embodiments inasmuch as it depends on them, generically, for its existence.

As a result of this difference, Rohrbaugh's development of historical particularism differs from the perdurantist's version in a further two respects. First of all, since he denies that musical works have their embodiments as temporal parts, Rohrbaugh is free to regard such works as *enduring* (rather than perduring) entities: items wholly present at all times at which they exist, and which change by means of gaining and losing properties through time.[20] Second, he is free to acknowledge the intuitive

pull of the thesis that works of music are abstract entities. If he denies that musical works have their physical occurrences as temporal parts, he can resist the idea that works, like their occurrences, must be located in space.[21] Crucially, though, by virtue of being ontologically dependent upon their concrete embodiments, musical works count as 'real', since their existence is rooted in the physical world (Rohrbaugh 199–200).

So what are we to make of the view of musical works as historical particulars? Much depends on how impressed one is by attempts to motivate it, attempts that present it as satisfying conditions of adequacy unsatisfiable by the type/token theory. In section 3 we noted that Platonists dispute that one such claimed condition of adequacy – namely, that any ontological proposal should recognise that musical works are created by their composers – is genuine. The Platonist argues that such a creatability requirement is by no means as well embedded in our concept of a work of music as many philosophers of music presume. And the Platonist will typically say the same sort of thing about temporal and modal flexibility. For talk of a work's being 'revised' need not commit us to the idea that *the work itself* has been changed by the composer: a 'revised' piece can be treated as an alternative *version* of it: a distinct work that, nonetheless, shares much of the original's tonal organization. Furthermore, the idea that a composer's 'revision' of a work sees him bring about a change in it is subject to a quick and decisive objection: if a work were to undergo genuine change once it has been 'revised', it would no longer exist in its earlier state, a corollary plainly contradicted by the fact that an earlier version of a work may still be performable (if, for example, the original score is recoverable, or if someone remembers it).

The kinds of cases taken to illustrate the modal flexibility of works of music, though they have *prima facie* appeal, can be explained away by essentially the same strategy. Famously, Bruckner never finished his Ninth Symphony, and one might suppose that there exists a possible world in which he lived long enough to complete it. But, according to a convinced type/token theorist, such a possible world is really a world in which Bruckner composes a distinct work that is substantially similar to his actual Ninth Symphony. To respond to this manoeuvre, the defender of historical particularism must explain why we should reject this explanation in favour of the thesis that musical works are genuinely modally flexible; and it is not yet clear whether anything of independent importance hangs on our doing so.

The situation is this: although historical particularists claim that their ontological proposal does a better job of cohering with our critical practice than does the type/token theory, their characterisation of our critical practice is moot. And besides this, the type/token theorist will insist that doing justice to our everyday thought and talk is just one *desideratum* of an ontological proposal – we must also consider whether historical particularism can satisfactorily explain the repeatability of works of music, and whether it can avoid objections of its own.

On the first question, neither version of historical particularism seems to fare well. This theory's key idea, remember, is that repeatability is not written in to the ontological category which musical works fall under, but is to be alternatively explained as a matter of the work's embodiment in its occurrences. The work is, supposedly, embodied in its occurrences in the sense that it depends for its continued existence upon them. At first blush, though, one might wonder why it follows from a thing's being in this sense ontologically dependent upon other entities that these other entities are its occurrences. What, exactly, has ontological dependence to do with repeatability?

The perdurantist version of historical particularism has difficulty answering this question. According to the perdurantist, the repeatability of a work consists in its having its embodiments (the concrete items upon which it depends for its existence) as *stages* or temporal parts. But the obvious response to this is to point out that entities may have temporal parts upon which they ontologically depend, and yet whole and part *not* stand in the relation of thing and occurrence. Events are one example of this: the fifth minute of the 1975 Cup Final is a temporal part of the match, but this temporal part is not an occurrence of the match and the match itself is not repeatable. Likewise, if we took people to be fusions of their temporal parts, it would not follow that people were repeatable entities or that their temporal parts were occurrences of them. The worry is this: since an entity can be composed of stages and yet not be repeatable, merely saying that a work's occurrences are stages of it does not thereby explain what its having occurrences consists in. If we are to accept that works, *qua* historical particulars, have occurrences, the explanation of this fact must, it seems, come from elsewhere.

Similar considerations apply to the endurantist manifestation of historical particularism. The claim made by Rohrbaugh, to recall, is that a work's being repeatable consists in its being ontologically dependent upon those of its embodiments relevant to its appreciation and criticism. But the difficulty here lies in explaining why this amounts to anything other than a *non sequitur*, since an object may be ontologically dependent upon an entity or entities without these entities being occurrences of it. For example, in many cases of what may be termed *singular ontological dependence* – cases in which one object, α, is said to depend ontologically upon another object, β – β is *not* in any sense an *occurrence* of α. The ontological dependence of Socrates's life upon Socrates is one such example of this, as is the dependence of {Socrates} on Socrates: although the singleton is ontologically dependent upon its member, there is no sense to be made of the claim that Socrates is an *occurrence* of the set. Consequently, since relations of ontological dependence may obtain between things that are not related as thing and occurrence, one cannot simply hope to explain musical works' repeatability by pointing to (a restricted) variant of ontological dependence supposedly holding between a work and certain of its embodiments.

Additionally, both versions of historical particularism face troublesome objections. Perdurantism's problem is that it seems to entail the absurd thesis that works of music cannot be heard *in toto*. Since, according to the perdurantist, a given performance is but a temporal part of the piece, for an audience member to hear the whole work – that is, to hear *all* of it – she would have to audit the totality of its constituent temporal parts. But such a possibility is ruled out by the very nature of perdurantism: at any given moment in time it is impossible to hear the totality of a perduring entity's temporal parts because not all of these parts are present in time at that moment to be heard.[22]

Rohrbaugh's species of endurantist, meanwhile, faces a similar kind of objection to that encountered by Levinson at the end of section 3. Taking as his moral that the ontology of music – and the repeatable art-forms quite generally – 'should not be beholden to the metaphysics on offer, but should drive new work in metaphysics' (197), Rohrbaugh proposes an account of musical works as higher level, abstract entities somehow dependent for their existence on being embodied by *concreta*. But the challenge here is to produce an ontological proposal that is sufficiently worked out for the claimed improvements to the type/token theory – concerning works' existence conditions and modal properties – to be made good. At present, what is lacking is a precise account of the nature of the ontological dependence (itself, a notoriously obscure notion) that is taken to ground the notion of embodiment and, with it, repeatability. As long as such an account is missing, the suspicion will gain ground that what we have is not so much an account of the ontological nature of musical works, but a place-holder for one: that is, a wish-list of features possessed by such works stemming from a questionable interpretation of our thought and talk.

6. Conclusion: Meta-Ontological Matters

One thing has become clear in this survey of answers to the categorial question in the ontology of music: as yet, there is no ontological proposal that provides a convincing explanation of works' repeatability without departing to some extent from the folk conception of works of music embodied in our musical practice. For example, whilst the account offered by Rohrbaugh does well when it comes to doing justice to our thought and talk about works of music, it is, as yet, insufficiently elaborated to count as a proposal-*proper*: i.e. a detailed account of what works of music *are* that yields a genuine *explanation* of their repeatability. Levinson's notion of an indicated structure, meanwhile, perhaps fares less well than he supposes in doing justice to what he takes to be our folk conception (inasmuch as it is unclear whether it truly allows works to be creatable), whilst attracting the same charge of ontological *ad hoc*ism. By contrast, the simple type/token theory elaborated in section 2 nicely explains works' repeatability, but its acceptance requires us to treat certain elements of our everyday

conception of works of music (specifically, their claimed creatability, temporal flexibility and modal flexibility) with a pinch of salt. Clearly, in opting for one or other of the proposals on the table, some kind of trade-off must be achieved between an ontological proposal's explanatory virtue and its coherence with our artistic practice. The question of the nature of this trade-off, and what grounds it, is a central issue in the fascinating, and daunting, area of the meta-ontology of music: the study of how the ontology of music ought to be approached.[23]

So how *should* we proceed in prosecuting an account of the ontological status of works such as Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto? Hopefully, my answer to this question is evident in the discussion up to now. Of course, when trying to figure out what kind of thing Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto is, we should pay close attention to our musical practice: if our favoured account contradicts *too much* of our musical practice, we risk having simply changed the subject. But at the same time, there are a number of reasons why we cannot simply 'read off' our ontology of musical works from our practice. First, and as we noted in section 1, this practice does not speak to us unequivocally; *interpretation* is required, if we are to derive a conception of musical works from what we, the musical public, say, think and do. An ontological conception of works of music does not simply lie, ready-made, in our thought and talk. For example, although it might appear, from a cursory examination of our discourse about works of music, that we regard such works as created by their composers, we might subsequently *discover*, by means of a convincing interpretation of such talk, that this idea is less embedded in our pre-theoretical thinking than it appears at first (Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 5). Furthermore, some aspects of what we might be tempted to regard as our folk conception of musical works might, in fact, be *tainted by theory*: it is not always easy to distinguish a transparent description of what we do from an account that includes a (crude) piece of theorizing about it. Finally, it seems to me that an ontological proposal that did maximal justice to our musical practice, and yet failed to measure up to a rival account in explanatory strength, should not automatically command our acceptance.

By now, it should be clear where I am going. Whilst being properly sensitive to our folk conception of the nature of musical works, an ontologist of music should not seek merely to describe this conception (from 'the inside', as it were), but should aim for explanatory power. And what this means is that its answer to the categorial question, for example, should genuinely explain the nature of musical works' repeatability, and should do so whilst preserving qualitative ontological economy and avoiding an *ad hoc* ontology.[24] Prosecuting the ontology of musical works thus requires us to seek for a state of reflective equilibrium: we want an account that explains what the repeatability of musical works consists in, avoiding *ad hoc*ism and mystery-mongering, but which stays as close as possible to our folk conception of works of music. In my view – but this is only my view

– the theoretical virtues of the pure type/token theory (i.e. the sound structures view) should prompt us to assent to it, even though such assent requires us to reinterpret, or even revise, elements of our folk conception of works of music. Reflective equilibrium requires that we jettison some of our (arguably) dearly held views about musical works.

This conclusion is, however, controversial on two levels. First, it will be argued (for example, by Levinson, or by Rohrbaugh) that a concern for the kind of reflective equilibrium just outlined leads us to a different region of metaphysical space than that occupied by the pure type/token theory. Second, and perhaps even more interestingly, philosophers have expressed varieties of scepticism about the kind of meta-ontological approach I have recommended. Aaron Ridley, for one, claims that the very idea of musical ontology is misconceived: for Ridley, the ontology of music is 'absolutely worthless' (203), and 'we should have nothing further to do with it' (220). Somewhat less free-wheelingly, Amie Thomasson ('Ontology of Art'; 'Ontology of Art and Knowledge'; 'Debates about Ontology of Art'; *Ordinary Objects*) argues that the kinds of explanatory ideals for the practice of the ontology of music that I have been presupposing are, in fact, illusory. In Thomasson's view ('Ontology of Art and Knowledge' 223), considerations from the theory of reference entail that the proper role of the ontologist of art can only be that of teasing out the latent ontological conception held by those who competently ground (and reground) the reference of our art kind-terms (such as 'painting', 'novel' and 'musical work'), and, hence, that 'it can't turn out that . . . we are all terribly mistaken about what sorts of things works of art really are' ('Debates about Ontology of Art' 8). In other words, according to Thomasson, the kind of revisionism that I have been contemplating is ruled out from the off.

Well, this is not the place to analyse these sceptical arguments. It suffices to say that, whilst acknowledging their ingenuity, I remain unconvinced (Dodd, 'Defending Revisionism'). But even if my preferred approach to the ontology of musical works is untouched by such arguments, plenty of other meta-ontological avenues of enquiry are real enough. It is revealing, for example, that the example I have used throughout this piece has been a work from the Western classical tradition. But we are entitled to ask whether what we say about such examples is easily transferable to works from non-Western traditions (S. Davies) and to genres such as jazz and popular music (Young and Matheson; Grayck). Furthermore, we should bear in mind that an interest in the ontology of music may well extend beyond a focus on musical *works*. It is plausible to think that purely improvised musical events, such as Keith Jarrett's *Köln Concerts*, do not involve the performance of works, whilst it has also been argued that jazz generally is a workless artform (Kania). Finally, we should, perhaps, bear in mind Lydia Goehr's contention that the concept of a *work* of music only came into use in around 1800 and, hence, that much classical music

from the Western tradition can only, with violence, be assimilated to the work-performance model.

As in any area of philosophy, we should beware of the perils of unreflectively travelling along well-trodden paths. For example, we should not think that the ontology of musical works begins and ends with an answer to the categorial question: it should be noted how little I have had to say about works' individuation. Equally, we should not become fixated on the work-concept at the expense of considering other non-work-related forms of music-making. Finally, and perhaps more pressingly, we should take up the challenge set us by those who are sceptical about the very idea of pursuing an explanatory, and possibly revisionary, ontology of music.

Short Biography

Julian Dodd works primarily in metaphysics, the philosophy of music, the philosophy of Wittgenstein and the philosophy of language. He is the author of *An Identity Theory of Truth* (Palgrave, 2000) and *Works of Music: An Essay in Ontology* (Oxford University Press, 2007), and the co-editor (with Helen Beebee) of *Truthmakers* (Oxford University Press, 2005) and *Reading Metaphysics* (Blackwell, 2007). He has also published numerous articles in journals such as *Analysis*, *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, *The European Journal of Philosophy*, *Mind*, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* and *Synthese*.

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Notes

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[1] A playing of a work is an occurrence of it (i.e. a sound-event) brought about other than by means of the use of musical instruments. An example of a playing would be the sound-event produced when I place a CD of Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto in my CD play, and then press 'play'.

[2] See the discussion in section 2.

[3] For a defence of the first option see Dodd, *Works of Music* chs 8, 9; for a defence of the second, see S. Davies 72–86; for a defence of the third, see Levinson, 'What a Musical Work Is'; 'What a Musical Work Is, Again'.

[4] Although this has been denied by Kivy ('Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense'), by Wolterstorff (*Works and Worlds of Art*), and by Dodd ('Musical Works'; 'Defending Musical Platonism'; *Works of Music*).

[5] Levinson, for one, is unsure what to say on this question (*Music, Art and Metaphysics* 263).

[6] Guy Rohrbaugh defends such a thesis of ontological dependence; I reply to Rohrbaugh in Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 6.

[7] These views are held by Jaegwon Kim, Roderick Chisholm and Donald Davidson respectively.

[8] One argument for this thesis − Jerrold Levinson's ('What a Musical Work Is' 65) − goes as follows: a sound-event perfectly instantiating Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto could have

taken place at any time; and so, since the sound structure is capable of being instantiated at any time, it must be available, at any time, to be instantiated. (For discussion of this reasoning, and its eventual replacement with an argument that, nonetheless, has the same conclusion, see Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 3).

[9] Saying this amounts to the claim that musical works are *generic entities* (Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* 91): that is, members of an ontological category for which *being capable of having occurrences* is built in as standard.

[10] This is reflected in the fact that 'Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto' – like other type-names such as 'The Union Jack' and 'The Ford Thunderbird' – is neither itself a predicate, nor a singular term systematically related to such a predicate, as 'happiness' is to 'is happy'. On the contrary, 'Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto' only appears in predicates that are themselves explicitly relational, such as 'is a performance of Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto' (Rohrbaugh 197).

[11] This point about the identity conditions of sets is well made by, among others, Peter Simons (198), David Wiggins (113), and Nicholas Wolterstorff (*Works and Worlds of Art* 178–80).

[12] The reason for this caveat, when it comes to indicated structures satisfying what has become known as *the creatability requirement*, will emerge in a moment.

[13] This charge has also been made by Gregory Currie (58).

[14] Levinson has subsequently suggested such a response in conversation, notably at the 2007 session of the American Society for Aesthetics in Los Angeles.

[15] Similar sentiments have been expressed by Rohrbaugh (197), and by Amie Thomasson ('Ontology of Art'; 'Ontology of Art and Knowledge'; 'Debates about Ontology of Art'; *Ordinary Objects*).

[16] The presence of these open places reflects Currie's belief, *pace* Levinson ('What a Musical Work Is' 68–73), that neither a work's composer nor its time of composition is constitutive of it.

[17] This, of course, is by no means the end of the story. For a detailed discussion of Davies's defence of his proposal see S. Davies (chs 7, 8) and Dodd (*Works of Music* ch. 7).

[18] That the supposed ontological dependence of a musical work upon its embodiments is taken to be *generic* amounts to the following claim: a work of music depends for its existence upon there being at least one such embodiment; but there is no embodiment such that the work would go out of existence, were this particular embodiment not to exist. The existential dependence in question is not, in this sense, *de re*.

[19] As David Lewis has explained (76), a temporal stage of an object must be of the same ontological kind as the object itself.

[20] In correspondence Rohrbaugh has pointed out that he favours a conception of musical works as endurants.

[21] This is a consequence that Rohrbaugh embraces happily. As he himself puts it, 'if works of art are in time but not in space, then they are at least in good company' (200).

[22] The perdurantist version of historical individualism has been defended by Ben Caplan and Carl Matheson ('Defending Musical Perdurantism'). See Dodd, *Works of Music* ch. 6 for objections, and Caplan and Matheson, 'Defending "Defending Musical Perdurantism" ' for a reply.

[23] For a good discussion of some of the issues in the meta-ontology of art, see Thomasson, 'Ontology of Art'; 'Ontology of Art and Knowledge'; 'Debates about Ontology of Art'; *Ordinary Objects*.

[24] A theory T is more qualitatively ontologically economic than a theory $T^\star$ just in case T commits us to fewer *kinds* of entity than does $T^\star$. A theory T has an *ad hoc* ontology just in case the only/main reason to believe in the entities it posits is that, in the context of T, these entities play a certain theoretical role.

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