

# (Per)Forming Art



# (Per)Forming Art:

## *Performance as Research in Contemporary Artworks*

Edited by

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(Per)Forming Art: Performance as Research in Contemporary Artworks

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the *(Per)Forming Art* Symposium, see: <https://performingartsymposium.org/>



# INTRODUCTION

## (PER)FORMING ART

ALANNAH MARIE HALAY

This book is influenced by the proceedings of the *(Per)Forming Art* Symposium, which I founded in 2015 at the University of Leeds. The first event welcomed delegates from Belgium, Denmark, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland, and Thailand.<sup>1</sup> The symposium and this subsequent publication make a strong case for the importance of practice-led research in academia today: the 2015 *(Per)Forming Art* symposium hosted a series of lecture-recitals by composers who demonstrated their research through performance. Likewise, this book demonstrates a number of ways in which practice-based creative acts (such as musical composition and performance) are effective forms of academic research.

Primarily engaging with music of the twentieth– and twenty–first centuries, this book focuses on performance as a type of compositional technique and as a mode of practice–based research for the act of composing a work. Much existing literature tends to focus on either composition or performance as separate disciplines. As such, not only does this book supplement existing writings, it also addresses how the two acts are reciprocally entwined and what role this hermeneutic relationship plays in creative practice today. This publication is the work of multiple authors from academic institutions around the world. Each approaches the topic “(Per)Forming Art” from their own perspective, and as such, the contents of this book should appeal to a variety of academic interests (pertaining to various “styles,” traditions and cultures), all of which are unified by the relationship between performance and composition.

The acts of composing and performing are central processes to the formation of a musical work. Performance is a medium through which music is formed. It is a significant part of a work’s compositional process and, as such, forms a symbiotic relationship with the act of composing. An

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://performingartsymposium.org/>

iterative cycle between performance and composition comes about when the composer performs their own work and/or composes through performance. Performance in this manner can be seen as a form of practice-based research that can guide the compositional process. This subject yields a range of sub-topics that explore theoretical frameworks, practice, and instrumental mediums behind the formation of sonic artworks. Topics include the ontology of music, in particular its spatial and temporal properties and whether its form exists through performance or composition; the influence of performance in sound poetry; performance as a compositional technique; the symbiotic relationship between improvisation and composition; the relationship between the composer and the performer and the senses employed during the acts of performing and composing; “super-instruments” (exploring acoustic instrumental timbres and novel sonic conglomerations via performance); the employment of Renaissance improvisatory techniques and tablature systems in contemporary composition and how this can provide a perspective on the lute and historically informed performance practice.

Part I of this book (titled “Theory”) presents a theoretical framework supporting the notion that artworks are formed through performance. It explores the issues concerning the ontology of a musical work and how the separate components of performance and composition are part of its autonomy. It also highlights how these issues are not restricted to the art form of music, but relevant to any art form that relies on a temporal domain in order to manifest. This includes dance and forms of spoken literature as well as music. It discusses, amongst other things, how, in sound poetry (an art form which “straddles the perceived gulf between poetry and music”), the act of performance can be used to engage with Adorno’s notion of naïveté and so go beyond an otherwise overused “conveyance of information” that has rendered some poetry absurd. As such, Part I draws attention to a significant difference in multiple forms of art: those which rely on a spatial domain such as visual art, and those which rely on a temporal domain as already mentioned. There are, of course, those art forms that are based on an equal mixture of spatial and temporal domains such as opera, theatre (including any theatrical performance of music and literature), and film.

Part II of this book (titled “Practice”) explores how performance can be used as methodology for practice-led research in musical composition. It demonstrates how the act of performance presents a viable and practical compositional technique that generates musical artworks of varying stylistic and cultural frameworks. Chapter Three looks at how a composer’s pre-existing knowledge about the act of composing presents a



type of restriction that influences the compositional process and subsequent manifestation of a piece. This chapter explores various means in which the restrictions of pre-existing knowledge can be overcome by employing performance as a compositional technique. Chapter Three concludes that a “composer sets up compositional ‘restrictions’ that are personal to their individual approach” and that an “iterative cycle between performance and composition comes about when the composer performs their own work and/or composes through performance.” Chapter Four discusses the nature of “improvisation,” its similarities, differences, and general relationship with “composition” and explains how the acts of improvisation and composition feed into one another in an iterative cycle so much so that “they appear to be the two sides of the same coin.” Not only does this chapter consider a contemporary approach to performance and composition, but it also draws on “metric modal improvisation of the Mediterranean.” Chapter Five explains how the act of performance can be used as a compositional technique in order to explore a particular type of musical “score,” one that removes the sense of sight and relies on the senses of touch, spatial awareness, sound, and smell. Due to the nature of the performance practice in question (one that is influenced by West African balafon performance practice), Chapter Five brings into question the roles of composer and performer, explaining how both contribute to the manifestation of a work equally in a collaborative partnership.

Part III of this book (titled “Organology”) shows how the act of performing can be used to rethink instruments from the past as well as influence the formation of new instruments. Whilst Chapter Six demonstrates how performance can be used to generate novel “super-instruments,” Chapter Seven uses historically-informed performance practice to revive the Renaissance lute within contemporary compositional practice. By focussing on instruments, Part III demonstrates how the act of performance can yield particular approaches to both avant-garde and historically-informed composition.

Overall, the range of topics in this book highlight how the manifestation of a musical work is reliant on an iterative cycle between the distinct creative acts of composition and performance. This book’s perspective is neither restricted to a contemporary Western Classical view of music nor is the research restricted to topics of the current epoch: it also discusses sound poetry, practices of the Mediterranean and the West African balafon tradition, and draws on Renaissance and Baroque approaches. Finally, because all authors of this book are also practitioners, *(Per)Forming Art: Performance as Research in Contemporary Artworks* fundamentally demonstrates the usefulness of practice-led research and

how it can effectively contribute to existing knowledge, the formation of theoretical frameworks, and to the generation of further creative practice.

**PART I:**

**THEORY**



# CHAPTER ONE

## PERFORMANCES AND ARTWORKS, PERFORMANCES AS ARTWORKS<sup>1</sup>

GABRIELE CAVALLO

### Introduction

Works of music are harder to grasp in ontological terms than other types of artworks. This depends on the clear distinction occurring between composition and performance in music, which is usually referred to as a “performing art.” In the case of visual art, both amateurs and professionals would have few doubts that the object the beholders stare at is an artwork: paintings, statues and architectural buildings stand in front of us, solidly rooted in their spatial dimension. This seems to grant them an identity less susceptible to changes in time than music, as visual works have a solid, material presence. Comparatively, we might be more dubious about the location of musical works. A number of philosophers have tried to solve the problem about what we should hold as such, often regarding them as abstract entities of which performances constitute different instantiations.

This chapter investigates the ontological issues rising from various viewpoints about this problem. It addresses the opposite perspectives of “performances *and* artworks,” i.e. performances being artistic in relation to another class of artworks (compositions), and of “performances *as* artworks,” i.e. performances as artworks themselves. Although the text focusses on music, similar problems may apply to the whole domain of practices that are inherently temporal, which present a clear distinction between composition and performance. As such, there is a dichotomy between arts of space and arts of time that dates back to the very origin of

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter originally took the form of a paper (written in Spring 2015) inspired by aesthetician Anthony Pryer, whom I had the pleasure to work with at Goldsmiths, University of London. Originally in reply to questions about the artistic status of performance, the text was further developed into its present form.

Western aesthetics.<sup>2</sup> Overall, difficulties in identifying the status of artworks concern all performing arts, which include, among others, such forms as theatre, dance and spoken literature.

## I. Perspective and Definitions

Performance is a constitutive part of most types of music and plays a pivotal role in the process of music-making all over the world. However, the relationship between performance and composition varies largely from genre to genre, and in many circumstances these two moments of music creation are indistinguishable (especially in free improvisation, which could be thought as an act of instant-composition through performance). Although the latter constitutes a critical case that could make one uncertain about the strictness of the opposition between compositional and performative roles, the present study will focus on Western Classical music. This domain presents a rigorous distinction between composers and performers, as their roles have been gradually diversified over time, creating an ideal platform for the consideration of performance, more than other music practices, such as rock music or jazz, where compositional and performing aspects more frequently intertwine.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Music* reports that “in the Western art tradition, musical performance is commonly understood, and not surprisingly, in something like the way that are the works of music that performance brings to life.”<sup>3</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines performance as a “step in the musical process during which musical ideas are realized and transmitted to a listener;”<sup>4</sup> and it continues: “in Western music, performance is most commonly viewed as an interpretive art, though it is not always merely that. Performers to some degree determine aspects of any music they play.”<sup>5</sup> These views are in line with the public opinion of performance, which is fairly contradictory. On one hand, rather than regarding performance as creating artworks, many people perceive it as a process of instantiating musical artworks existing in themselves. As such, they tend to conceive its own artistic value as secondary. On the

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<sup>2</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon: Oder, Über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie* (Berlin: Voss, 1766).

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Dunsby, "Performance," *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43819>.

<sup>4</sup> “Musical Performance,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 18, 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/art/musical-performance>.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

other hand, most people regard performers as artists. While questioning the artistic status of performance one should therefore acknowledge that we are *already* inclined to view performers as though they are artists (although we might not be able to explain why). Accordingly, philosopher Peter Kivy notices that

performers are customarily referred to as ‘performing artists’. And if performers are indeed artists, then it seems to follow directly that what they create qua artists – namely, performances – must be artworks.<sup>6</sup>

Western art tradition grants various roles to performance in the process of music-making, defining different degrees of “artisticness.” There is a first level, which we can define as “execution.” Here, performance can be understood as the bare reproduction of the notes and the indications provided by the composer in the score. This consists of nothing more than a scholastic fidelity to the letter of the text which, even at its finest, would not differ much from a MIDI reproduction by a computer program. The next level up is that of “elaboration,” a term by which we may label performances that feature some degree of human agency, aiming to realise the musicality of the notated work by acknowledging it as an intentional text. The highest degree of performing “artisticness,” however, is commonly regarded as “interpretation.” This is where players freely engage personally with the formal materials, understanding their own practice as an intentional act over an intentional text. Here, a performer’s individuality should be recognisable as their artistic intentions dialogically intertwine with the composer’s.

Many theories argue that “artisticness” in performance resides in interpretation. Philosopher Paul Thom asserts that performance’s subservient role to composition

does not exclude the practice of performative interpretation whereby performers bring to their realization of the work their own individual ways of executing what the work prescribes, or their own ways of supplementing what the work prescribes, without coming into conflict with the work’s requirements.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Thom, “Authentic Performance Practice,” in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, ed. Theodor Gracyk and Andrew Kania (New York: Routledge, 2011), 93.

Those views attempt to justify the artistic status of performance whilst maintaining their ontological subordinacy to the composed work. Implying that, if performers are artists, they are by virtue of the artisticness of the score they instantiate, and their artistic skills are articulated through the possibilities allowed them by composers. In the following pages, I will examine this perspective and try to counter it with a participatory model for music ontology. This requires a change in the theoretical understanding of the relationships between performances and scores, and, subsequently, a different perspective on the musical work.

## II. Performances *and* Artworks

This section considers performances *themselves* as artworks. In doing so, it distinguishes between performances and scored works. Theorists have proposed more than one model for discussing whether performers can be viewed as artists qua performers, or qua creators of a different kind. Such queries are not reducible to the “art-question” (which concerns the artistic status of performance), but also depend on the “work-question” (the possibility of considering performances as works of some kind).

In *For An Audience*, Paul Thom rejects the hypothesis that performances are eligible for the status of artworks on the simple assumption that they could not aim for—he says—the status of being a work. He asserts:

performances themselves are not works of art. They are distinguished from works of art in that to perform is to engage in activity, and to that extent a performance is an event or process, whereas a work of art is a thing.<sup>8</sup>

Surprisingly, besides musical performances, Thom seems to dismiss some of the most relevant art streams along the 20th century, from Fluxus happenings to instant theatre. A few paragraphs later, he makes clear that his notion of work requires a non-temporal character: “because it is an event or process, the parts of a performance are spread out over a stretch of time, at no substretch of which the whole is fully present.”<sup>9</sup>

An event, therefore, would not be a work, since it by no means comes to be wholly present at a certain moment. However, Thom’s understanding of works and so-considered “things” is questionable because it is not evident that the term “thing” can apply only to solid, permanent entities. Such a semantic limitation is arbitrary, as Kivy points out as he objects:

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Thom, *For an Audience: A Philosophy of the Performing Arts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*



“that they [things] do not endure seems to me no reason to deny ‘thinghood’ to them.”<sup>10</sup> In fact, as the author continues, “‘work of art’, in spite of whatever suggestion of permanence ‘work’ might convey, is commonly used to refer to ephemeral as well as permanent instances of what ordinary people call ‘art’. I myself think it would be counterproductive to cease to call such art ‘artworks’ and have no intention of doing so.”<sup>11</sup> This response adheres to the definition of “work” provided by the *Oxford Dictionary of English*: “activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a result.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, after accepting that performances are eligible for “workhood,” it can be investigated whether (and how) performances can be held as *artworks* themselves. As long as they are thought of as instantiations, theorists can face a set of issues rising from the obligation to relate them to another class of works (that is the scores they instantiate, with which a performance’s artisticness cannot be conflated). A tentative solution comes from scholar Thomas Mark, who construes artworks as conscious statements produced by an artist. He draws an analogy with the linguistic acts of quotation and assertion, which—he states—should be genuinely held as statements.

Mark claims that those linguistic acts “have exact analogues in performance.”<sup>13</sup> He provides an elucidative example: “suppose that in some sort of contest I am getting the worst of it. My opponent asks me ‘Give up?’ I reply ‘I have not yet begun to fight.’ I am obviously quoting. But, surely, I am also asserting something.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, a pianist performing a Mozart piano sonata would be quoting the work and asserting it at the same time which would provide the conditions for the statement-like character of performances. However, Mark’s standpoint hinges on the equation of musical and verbal meanings, which is by no means universally accepted. Among others, Pryer advocates for the “non-propositionality”<sup>15</sup> of musical sounds and Kivy objects that there is no

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<sup>10</sup> Kivy, *Authenticities*, 126.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 126-127.

<sup>12</sup> “Work,” Oxford Dictionaries, accessed April 20, 2015.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/work>.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas C. Mark, “The Philosophy of Piano Playing: Reflections on the Concept of Performance,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 (1981): 306.

<sup>14</sup> Mark, “Philosophy of Piano Playing,” 309.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Pryer, “The Ontology of Music and the Challenge of Performance: Identity versus Variety, and the Persistence of the Text,” in *The Embodiment of Authority: Perspectives on Performance*, ed. Tomi Makela and Tobias Klein (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013), 201.

evidence for artworks to be equated to any sort of statements. Comparison between music and language would be at most a beautiful metaphor.

Kivy frees the notion of art from a linguistic paradigm, and tries to elude—quite pragmatically—the metaphysical problems emerging once it has been accepted that a performance constitutes *another* work vis-à-vis the composer’s score. Not to fall prey to a nebulous proliferation of work-like entities, he refers to the concept of “versions of a work” (from the musical jargon) by which he labels the new renditions of a piece that remains recognisable and identifiable in itself. He refers specifically to a Baroque figured-bass style where performers are granted freedom to realise ornamentations over a fixed line. Those interventions challenge the fixity of the work and produce changes in the original piece, which in turn constitutes a rendition, a new *version* of it. The tension between the unity of the work and the possibility of its polymorphic instantiations is resolved through the recourse to the concept of *arrangement*—another term borrowed from the musical lexicon: “the kinds of artworks that performances of Baroque music are [...] seem clearly to be arrangements: *versions* of the work.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, Kivy claims that performances are artworks as long as they introduce variety and novelty in the composer’s score. Fine interpretations would represent new *versions* of a piece that can be connoted by originality and creativity. Excellent performers would thus be those who manage to express their personality by generating some modifications. As such, they do not damage but rather enrich the encoded text. By equating performances to acts of instant-arrangements, he affirms:

it is being very like musical arrangements in which performances have their character as works of art. And in that character, they gain the qualities of style and originality – when, that is, they emanate from performers of genius; when they are, in a word, personally authentic.<sup>17</sup>

Kivy’s views, however, are not exempt from flaws. He tries to derive the “artisticness” of performance from a score-centred perspective on music that, rather than acknowledging performances as artworks in themselves, reduces them to another type of composition. In his words, “the artistic skill of performers [...] is more like the compositional skill of arranging.”<sup>18</sup> To dig out the premise his views hinge on, I will recall Mark’s linguistic model. In spite of their differences, both authors rely on

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<sup>16</sup> Kivy, *Authenticities*, 131.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 135.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

the assumption that performances can be artworks without challenging the ontological supremacy of compositions. These perspectives, regardless of their claims, come to undermine the very base for performances to be considered as artworks of any sort.

Both Kivy and Mark believe that performers' actions constitute interventions on pre-existing artworks. Besides the questionable analogies with language, the former's theory presents a deeper weakness concerning the conditions by which quotations are possible. In fact, one is legitimately enabled to quote a statement if, and only if, that statement has already been realised as an utterance, that is: in a form able to have its meaning performed out by an experiencer (such as a reader or a listener) via a direct experience. Of course, his example is legitimate: "I have not yet begun to fight."<sup>19</sup> But this is a quotation because, and only because, captain John Paul Jones had already pronounced that utterance in September 1779 on his *Bonhomme Richard*. Analogous would be the case of an oral quotation from a written text, since a literary work is an accomplished object capable of expressing a literary meaning on its own terms. The only requirement for a novel's meaning to be expressed is the reading of a reader, similar to a painting requiring a beholder. The claim that performing is quoting a composer's score relies on the assumption that scores are already objects artistically accomplished in themselves, capable of having their aesthetic meaning performed out directly. Kivy's view leads to a similar consideration: the fact that a performance constitutes an arrangement implies that scores are autonomous works of which an arrangement is possible.

The struggle to justify performances as artworks *in relation* to the "artisticness" of scores reveals that the latter are seen not only as another class of artworks, but as musical works in themselves. It follows that performances are not just the "other" to compositions, but also the "other" to musical works. That is to say music can be conceived without performance. Those views account to a widely diffused model of music ontology, which goes by the name of "type theory." Carl Matheson and Ben Caplam identify it as the idea that a musical work "is a type whose tokens are sound events that sound exactly like the note-perfect performances of [that piece]."<sup>20</sup> However, in this framework, musical works cannot be regarded as being of an aural nature, or they would collapse on their turn into the realm of performance. Were musical entities

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<sup>19</sup> Mark, "Philosophy of Piano Playing," 309.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Matheson and Ben Caplam, "Ontology," in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, ed. Theodor Gracyk and Andrew Kania (New York: Routledge, 2011), 38-39.

actualised in sounds, they would instantly turn into versions of themselves. Also, to see performances as arrangements triggers a further problem: if the changes provided by a performer were notated on paper, the outcome would be a novel score. What would the status of a possible performance of this new work be? Similar views are doomed to unnecessary confusion due to a plethora of musical entities whose status appears to be increasingly more obscure.

In general, models of instantiation and “type theories” seem unable to find any degree of “artisticness” outside composition. Whilst attributing artistic qualities to performers, Kivy denies them to performing practices because the sole artistic role of performances would be ascribed to compositional acts disguised in a hidden form. Musical works would still be located in an abstract space of disembodied entities and performers would not be artists *qua* performers, but *qua* producers of a class of things that could, at least hypothetically, be notated. That is, *qua* second-rank composers. What this prism presents as artistic in performance is nothing but, at most, a potential score.

### III. Performances *as* Artworks

The previously examined perspectives aim to defend the stability of formal compositional attributes against the materiality and the temporality of actual sounds. This vein of thought can be held as a “musical Platonism,”<sup>21</sup> resonating with a millennial prejudice on performance that dates back to the Greek philosopher and constitutes Plato’s legacy into Western culture, as professed by Kivy himself in his *Antithetical Arts*.<sup>22</sup> From these viewpoints, the location of musical works is atemporal and independent from their actualisation in sounds; which leads to the envisioning, elegantly described by Lydia Goehr, of an “imaginary museum of musical works”<sup>23</sup> as the locus of musical entities as pure forms. Scholar Nicholas Cook, in his account on performance, describes this theoretical tendency as “Plato’s curse,”<sup>24</sup> a certain mistrust towards performers and, at large, the supremacy of intellectual activities over

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<sup>21</sup> Julian Dodd, *Works of Music: An Essay in Ontology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 99.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Kivy, *Antithetical Arts: On the Ancient Quarrel Between Literature and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), VII.

<sup>23</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 8.

<sup>24</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 8.

bodily practices. The performative realisation of scores in sounds would be simply abundant, useful only to make music intelligible for musically illiterate audiences. Otherwise, as summarised by Heinrich Schenker, “the reading of the score is sufficient.”<sup>25</sup>

Such disdain towards bodily practices have deep historical roots. In his account on creativity and knowledge, anthropologist Tim Ingold detects a dichotomy between “paradigms of the mind” and “paradigms of the hand” in Western culture. While arguing that human communication largely depends on gestures and on the ability of intentionally shaping and manipulating materials, the author highlights that mind-related practices have been traditionally regarded as “higher,” informing the realm of conceptual understanding. Instead, hand-driven actions have been confined to the “lower” domain of craftsmanship. In reference to the 19th century anatomist and scholar Charles Bell, Ingold recognises that, for most Western societies, “the essence of humanity lay not in the hand but in the mind.”<sup>26</sup> No wonder theorists tend to disregard the eligibility for performances to be artistic in themselves, denying (or rather not even considering) the possibility for the “intelligence of gestures”<sup>27</sup> performers would otherwise be entitled to. Nonetheless, these Platonist viewpoints can be tackled by rethinking the ontology of musical works, moving away from the idea of abstract compositions, and slackening the oppositions between mind and hands, form and material, art and craft, in creative practices.

It can be intended that musical works, and artworks at large, should be intimately bound to the aesthetic experience they generate. This experience cannot be isolated from its sensorial dimension and involves our intellectual faculties as well as our bodily responses. This suggests that artistic qualities cannot be held as solely deriving from the artist’s “mind.” They are equally dependent on their “hands” and their mastery of materials; otherwise, the aesthetic would collapse into the rational, and the experiential into the cognitive. Consistently, Anthony Pryer underlines the “human–agency function of performance,”<sup>28</sup> which makes the expressive elements of music not only audible, but also, by doing so, suitable for being experienced as “a meaningful narrative, or a dialogue, or a

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<sup>25</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *The Art of Performance*, trans. Irene Schreier Scott, ed. Heribert Hesser (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 113.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 114.

<sup>28</sup> Pryer, “The Ontology of Music,” 3.

developing argument, or an intensification of human emotions.”<sup>29</sup> Hence musical works should be conceived as entities from which an aesthetic meaning can be performed out by an audience—just as works of visual art should be able to be looked at by a beholder. If we maintain that music is an art of sounds (although, perhaps, not the only one),<sup>30</sup> works of music cannot be held independently from their sonic realisation, and their very dimension must be understood as aural.

Therefore, we should start to look at scores as indications towards the realisation of the work, rather than works themselves. In line with Leopold Stokowski’s statement: “we call it music, but that is not music: that is only paper.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, every musical reading of a score is not independent from our faculty of projecting it into the form of a performance, as Daniel Leech–Wilkinson highlights:

even if you sit at home and read an orchestral score [...], the sounds you imagine are those made by a modern orchestra playing as orchestras play today. So however you hear it, there’s no experiencing music except through the way it’s performed: when the performance changes, the music changes.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of ontology, this necessitates a moving away from Platonic conceptions of formal entities instantiated in sounds towards a more Aristotelian idea of *synolons*, consisting of the compresence of the abstract elements and their material (acoustic) realisation.

However, this does not mean that what performers do qua performers are artworks in themselves. In fact, the term “performance” can be intended in two fairly different ways: on the one hand, it may refer to the *set of actions* (a) fulfilled by a performer, (that is, what one does when they perform a composition); on the other hand, it may identify *the result* (b) of that series of actions, that is, *one* particular performance by *one* specific interpreter (what performers *have achieved*). In the following

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Some scholars have suggested a distinction to be drawn between music and other types of aural arts, such as sound art, or spoken poetry and literature. See: Andy Hamilton. *Aesthetics and Music* (London: Continuum IPG. 2007); or: Andrew Kania, “Definition,” in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, 3-13.

<sup>31</sup> Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Tim Page (London: Faber, 1987), 264.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, “Recordings and histories of performance style,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 246.