

Roman Ingarden, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*

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Introduction

The starting point for our reflections upon the musical work will be the unsystematized convictions that we encounter in daily life in our communion with musical works before we succumb to one particular theory or another. Naturally, I do not intend in advance to accept these convictions as true. On the contrary, I shall submit them to critical investigations at specific points. But, for the moment at least, they must indicate the direction of further investigations. For how else could this direction be indicated? These convictions, although naively acquired and perhaps burdened with various mistakes, do after all stem from an immediate aesthetic communion with musical works, a communion that furnishes us, or at least may furnish us, with an ultimate experience of those works, thus endowing with truth the views that match the given of the experience. However fully developed, every theory of musical works that is not mere speculation but seeks a base in concrete facts must refer to the presystematic convictions that initially gave direction to the search. It seems that there is another reason why we must refer to the given of the immediate musical experience. It is that various theories in the realm of so-called aesthetics or the psychology of music are conditioned too powerfully by the general state of philosophy and of sciences particular to a given epoch and therefore too heavily burdened with theoretical prejudices that make it difficult to reach the experientially given facts. In addition I intend to discuss various problems which have not been raised within the existing literature on musical theory.

The convictions I wish to refer to are the following:

The composer fashions his work in a creative effort, over a certain period of time. This labour fashions something – the musical work in fact – that previously did not exist but from the moment of its coming into being does somehow exist quite independently of whether anyone performs it, listens to it, or takes any interest in it whatever. The musical work does not form any part of mental existence, and, in particular, no part of the conscious experiences of its creator: after all, it continues to exist even when the composer is dead. Nor does it form any part of the listeners' conscious experiences while listening, for the work of music continues to exist after these experiences have ceased.

Moreover, so it is said, the musical work is not identified with its various performances. Despite this difference, the performances resemble the particular work, and the more they resemble it the "better" they are. The performance of a musical work reveals it to us in its characteristics and in the whole sequence of its parts. Finally, the work is totally different from its score. It is mainly or wholly a sounding work, while the notation of the score is simply a defined arrangement, usually of graphic signs.

These views may appear to us trivial and obvious; nevertheless, we have to examine them critically, especially since they lead to considerable difficulties.

Let us take as example a certain work we all know, say, Chopin's B Minor Sonata. What is the situation? According to earlier assertions the sonata is different both from the experiences of its composer (Chopin) and from the experiences of innumerable listeners who have heard it. At the same time it appears that the sonata is not material (physical). And yet how can a thing exist if it is not mental (pertaining to consciousness) or physical and can exist even when no one takes any conscious interest in it? Or take another problem: it is said that each time we hear that sonata in a particular performance we hear the *same* sonata even though it is in every case a new and somewhat different performance, since the performer and the conditions are different. How can it possibly be that in different performances one can hear the same – that on each occasion the one and the same work should, if I may so state it, appear as its original self? With several experiences of the same tree, the matter seems to us easy to understand; perceptions of the tree differ one from the other because they are subjective and therefore in each of their phases differently constituted, but these perceptions give us access to the *same* material object that exists by itself in space and is not concerned with our experiences. Having its own characteristics, the tree can, as it were, wait quietly in space until someone notices it and learns something about it. Even if no one is learning anything about it, that in no way interferes with the tree's existence or affects the cluster of its properties. This conclusion appears obvious even though it has frequently caused philosophers many theoretical headaches. As for the musical work that is neither physical nor mental (surely not a conscious experience or any part of it) as the above naive view proclaims, how can it "await" our perceptions and manifest itself to us as exactly the same? Where is that B Minor Sonata "lying in wait"? In the space of the real world there are certainly no musical works when there is no one to perform or hear them. And the specific performances of the sonata are not in any sense "objective" in contrast to the listening that is a conscious activity by certain people. What then ensures us that despite differences in performance – assuming only that these performances are not *very* inadequate – we hear the same sonata? The *same* and not just one *like* it. Some philosophers accept the existence of ideal objects, immutable and atemporal, having no origin and never ceasing to exist. The objects of mathematical investigations supposedly belong to this class. Are Chopin's B Minor Sonata and other musical works such "ideal" objects? We cannot agree to this, for who would deny that the sonata in question was created at a particular time by Chopin? Historians of music may even try to fix a reasonably accurate time when Chopin worked on the sonata and finished it. They say that Chopin's „legacy“ included certain works, the sonata in question among them. So they must think it true that the B Minor Sonata has continued to exist and that Chopin's death has not in any way affected it. But how long it will continue to exist, whether eternally or for only a few years more, no one can predict. But the very fact that it came to be in the

particular time is enough to reject the hypothesis that it is one among ideal objects, even assuming that we accept the existence of such objects.

To avoid such difficulties some perhaps will try to abandon presystematic convictions and once again seek refuge in a radically psychologistic view of the musical work. This view finds support in Husserl's critique of psychologism in logic wherein it was taken in many areas to be untenable to treat certain objects as mental facts or as a conscious experience or part of one. But it may be that in the realm of musical works things are different. Someone might say: is it not only a kind of illusion when it seems to us that we commune with the same work, with the same Chopin sonata? And is it not just an illusion that in listening to a certain performance of a given sonata we do not have the sense that the sonata was just coming into being and was ceasing to be at the end of its last chord? Or maybe this is not an illusion but only a certain false, theoretical idea to which we succumb under the influence of historical suggestions. For we know surely that Chopin has "written" that sonata, that it was published, and that this knowledge may lead us to the false conclusion that the sonata "exists." Yet perhaps no sonata by Chopin or any other musical work actually exists, but only particular performances. Perhaps we are also wrong in assuming, as we normally do, that all listeners at the same concert hear the same performance of a certain sonata. Is it not the case that when we exchange views at the end of the concert, we often reach the conclusion that there are considerable differences as to what each one of us has heard? Frequently we are unable to agree with regard to many details of performance, one of us valuing them highly, the other responding indifferently or even very critically. Should we then perhaps agree that there are simply specific subjective phenomena that are the performance of a certain sonata, differing partially or wholly from one listener to another, while both performances and that B Minor Sonata are just conventional linguistic fictions, useful in practical life but in reality devoid of existence? Subjective experience, subjective phenomena, are mental, but their acceptance causes no difficulties, for even materialists are inclined to accept the existence of mental phenomena and they deny only that this existence is separate from physical processes. The ultimate answer here does not concern us, for surely all we need to know is how to classify musical works. As such, they do not exist, while what does exist are certain processes of mental facts. Is this not the simplest solution and the most persuasive?

But if this solution were correct, there would be no sense in distinguishing the performances of a musical work from the work itself. Similarly there would be no justification for distinguishing a single performance from many other specific subjective phenomena experienced by this or that listener at the concert. We would then have no reason to talk about the identity of the musical work (that unique B Minor Sonata) or inquire into the conditions for the retention of that identity. This would not bother us: we should merely get rid of one theoretical headache. Unfortunately, however, we would have to abandon a range of judgments that – in the process of learning about music – we often proclaim as true. This would apply to

our judgment that the B Minor Sonata consists of a specific number of movements, composed in particular keys, that for instance in the first movement there are particular subjects with a distinct harmonic framework that modulates in a particular way as the work progresses. These would all be false judgments since they would refer to a nonexistent object. It would be false also to claim, for instance, that the execution of the B Minor Sonata by a pianist at one concert was better than that by another performer at another concert, that one of them was faithful while the other departed from the original in many ways. These judgments would be not merely foolish but downright stupid. For what is the point of saying that one performance rather than another gives a more nearly accurate account of the B Minor Sonata when the sonata does not in fact exist and when there is nothing real with which these performances may be compared? Are we really going to agree that such judgments concerning the sonata itself and its performances are all false and stupid? If that which is to be “performed” does not exist, it would be senseless to invent the concept of “performance”. Are we going to agree to this, too? As for the consequences of a psychologistic notion of a musical work, these go even further, leading to various grotesque assertions not worth citing here.

In the light of the difficulties outlined here, musical works now become puzzling objects – their essence and existence unclear – even though we have communed with them regularly as with good friends, and they have constituted a completely mundane and natural segment of our cultural world. Are not those commonsense presystematic convictions to be blamed for leading us this way? Should we not, therefore, critically examine these convictions and try to improve them or reject them altogether? Let us try.

1: The Musical Work and Its Performance

Which of the two possibilities then are we to accept: are we to agree that we need to distinguish the B Minor Sonata by Chopin from its many performances or alternatively that this distinction is not justified?

Looking more closely into the matter, we are led to the conviction that this distinction has to be regarded as proper, although at this stage we do not prejudge the question of whether we need to accept the *existence* of the musical work and its particular performances. For the moment we are suggesting only that a work and performances are not all one and the same, even should they all turn out to be merely a fiction.

The thesis that the musical work is not the same as its various performances is justified by the fact that certain valid judgments about specific performances turn out to be false with reference to the musical work itself (say, the B Minor Sonata by Chopin) and vice versa – that judgments seeming to be true of the sonata itself turn out to be false with reference to its specific performances. We can point to some features of performances of the sonata that do not belong to that sonata, and in turn to features of the sonata that do not belong to its performances. In asserting this, I am

not prejudging the issue of whether the sonata, or its performances exist. I am claiming only that if something like that sonata were to exist, it would not possess all of those properties associated with its specific performances – should they exist – and vice versa. Thus:

1. Each performance of a certain musical work is a certain individual occurrence (process)(1) developing in time and placed in it univocally. A performance begins at a specific moment, lasts for a given and measurable period of time, and ends at a specific moment. As a process, every specific performance of a musical work can take place only once. When completed, the performance can neither continue nor repeat itself. It may be followed by another completely new performance in a different time span – different even if remarkably like the first performance – for example, a second playing of the same record on the same gramophone. Such a “repetition” of “the same” performance with the aid of a gramophone creates certain theoretical difficulties. We will disregard them here and confine ourselves to “live” performances. These differ not only in being placed at different times but also in many purely musical details even when the performer tries very hard to perform a particular work in the same way. The realization that doing so verges on the impossible prevents the finest artists from performing any particular work twice at the same concert and this especially so when the performance has been close to perfection.
2. Each performance of a musical work is above all an acoustic process. It is made up of a certain cluster of succeeding sound products caused by an almost contemporaneous process activated by the performer. This process is made up of complex physical acts (for example, fingers striking piano keys, the vibration and resonance of strings, the vibration of the air) and mental acts by the performer (as, for example, his consciousness of the acts he is performing, his control over them, his listening to his own performance and being affected by the composition).
3. Each performance is univocally fixed in space, both objectively and phenomenally – objectively in the sense that the produced sound waves expand in space from a particular point, embracing a defined area; phenomenally, in the sense that the sound products constituting a particular performance and developing as it progresses are perceived by the listeners as reaching them “from over there”, “from the platform”. We may get closer to these sounds or move further away within the concert hall and consequently hear the performance more or less satisfactorily – that is, more or less clearly, with a fuller or a dampened sound. All this is possible only because the performance of the work is given to us in space at a determined point in the form of sound products developing in time.

Whether, during this phenomenally localized performance of a work, the experience is confined to auditory perception or whether visual perceptions are also included (for we can see the movements of the performers) may be a matter of dispute. But this has no great significance for us because in each case the phenomenon of the localization in space of sound products constitutes the performance of the musical work.

4. Every performance of a musical work is given us as auditory, that is, in a certain multitude of auditory perceptions passing continuously, one into the other. Musically sounding products and processes (chords, melodies, and the like[)] belonging to the whole of a particular performance are given us as particular auditory objects because we experience the appropriate auditory aspects or auditory phenomena. This fact is generally overlooked by psychologists, who tend to treat auditory perception as simply the possession of a certain multitude of so-called auditory experiences that they identify with "sounds". On the whole, the commonly accepted psychological doctrines do not distinguish between an auditory object and an auditory aspect (gestalt) whose base is constituted by certain auditory experiential data. But closer analysis demonstrates that this distinction is necessary. Every note or acoustic product that sounds for even a brief period, and especially the performance of a musical work as a whole, possesses a multiplicity of auditory aspects enabling the listener to apprehend the given auditory product or to perform that work. These auditory aspects will vary with each listener and in successive phases of listening to the same note, melody, or chord. They would also differ within the same phase of a performance, were the listener able to hear a musical work from two different points in space. Because a performance can occur only once, it is not possible, without artificial aid, to hear the very same performance twice from two different points in space. Nevertheless, it is possible to change one's position during a performance, for example, by walking around the concert hall. One would then become conscious of how auditory aspects change. With artificial aids – for example, microphones spaced throughout the hall – it would be possible to experience simultaneously two different formations of auditory aspects during the same performance, for instance by listening with one ear directly and with the other through an earphone connected to a microphone. In this manner we could become conscious of contrast between the one performance and the different formations of auditory perceptions.

Other changes besides those of position are significant. Every change in the intensity and concentration of our auditory attention, every change in our emotional attitude, and many other kinds of changes have a profound influence upon the auditory aspects we are experiencing, while the properties of performance are not on the whole sensitive to such changes in the experienced aspects. On the other hand, such changes as take place in the

content of the experienced auditory aspects, themselves dependent upon changes taking place in the base of the auditory experiential data and on the mode of the listeners' reaction to them, are all reflected in the concrete aspect of the performance objectively given us. This aspect we shall call a "concretion" of the work's performance. On the whole, we identify a concretion of a performance with the given performance. But hearing the same performance only twice (for example, on a gramophone record) can make us conscious of the difference between the concretion of a performance and the performance as such. As for changes taking place in experiencing aspects, which are manifested in the concretion of a performance, we may doubt whether the movements appearing consequentially as properties of the performance effectively do belong to it, or whether they are the direct consequence of the mode of listening, that is *inter alia* of the mode of experiencing auditory aspects – whether therefore they are characteristic of a given concretion. A performance may present itself to us as "blurred" or "sharp", but in discovering those characteristics, we may wonder whether they really existed or are to be attributed to our mode of listening at the moment. We need some controlling factor to decide this issue.

5. Specific performance of the same musical work by several interpreters, or even by the same interpreter, normally differ not only in their individuality, their position in space and time, but also their various qualitative properties such as tonal colourings, tempi, dynamic detail, the perspicuity of specific subjects, and so on. So long as the performer is a live human being, it is impossible to eradicate these differences completely, however he or she might try. Moreover, a direct perception of a work and a purely mechanical reproduction of a particular performance would always differ in that the experience would afford concrete temporal colouring of the performance heard in the specific time, and there might be other immediately perceived differences as well. How a particular performance is given us in direct perception depends not only on objective conditions but also on subjective conditions which change from occasion to occasion. The influence of these upon the concrete manifestations of the heard performance can never be fully eliminated. This applies to the purely auditory properties of a performance but also in a much stronger sense to a variety of non-acoustic elements structuring themselves over the acoustic material, and, for the performance of the musical work, as significant as the purely acoustic properties – for instance, a more or less clearly defined melodic line, emotional colouring, and the like. Such factors determine the specificity of particular concretions of the same performance of a musical work.
6. Every specific performance of a musical work is an individual object, in every respect univocally, positively determined in the long run by the qualities of

the smallest possible variation – these being incapable of any further differentiation.

So much for certain properties of performance of a musical work. If we attempt now to apply these assertions to the musical work itself, as manifested to us concretely in specific performances, then (although our knowledge of the work of music is not yet clarified and grounded in detailed analysis) we are soon convinced that these assertions are not true of the musical work and that in their place we have to accept other assertions that in turn are not true of the performances. But we need to remember that we are discussing the completed work of music and that all problems relating to the processes of its coming into being in the creative acts of the composer are beyond the confines of this discussion. Our analyses of the musical work will confirm the assertions which I list as follows:

1. Every musical work is an object persisting in time. (I shall return to the question of whether in some sense one may ascribe to it the structure of a process.) Having come into existence at a certain moment, it exists as the same product even though the processes through which it came into being have passed. Thus, as I have already remarked, one cannot, as W. Conrad once claimed, regard the musical work as an ideal object.⁽²⁾ Such a possibility is ruled out by the fact that the work arises in time, a fact surely beyond dispute. On a contrary view, one would need to regard a composer's creative processes in principle as the same as those taking place in the listener when he becomes acquainted with a finished work.

From the assertion that a work of music is not an ideal object, it does not follow that it is a real object, since the domains of those two concepts do not cover all objects. Even the assertion that a work of music is an object enduring in time is not equivalent to the assertion that it is a real object. The question of existence, and in particular of the mode of existence of a musical work, must be left in abeyance until we obtain more precise results from analytical investigations of the musical work.

Although a musical work is an object enduring in time, it is not "temporal" in the same sense as its specific performances. As I have already asserted, while the performances are processes, the musical work as such is not a process. While the movements of a performed work of music succeed each other in specific, successive, temporal phases, all the movements of the musical work itself exist together in a completed whole. If, despite this, the parts of a completed work display a certain specific order of succession, and even if, as we shall see, a certain quasi-temporal structure is immanent in every musical work (this I shall fully clarify below), it does not follow at all that a musical work does not possess all its parts simultaneously or that some of its parts are temporally earlier than others. Similarly, from the fact that the values of a mathematical series (for instance the geometrical one) are ordered in a

particular way and may on account of this ordering be numbered, it does not follow that a geometric series in a mathematical sense is extended in time and is a process in the state of becoming.(3) These assertions, however, require a deeper justification that we shall only be able to provide later.

On the other hand, each individual performance of a musical work effectively spreads itself in time in such a way that its separate parts unfold in different time spans, and, in turn, parts of those parts gradually manifest themselves in constantly new time-phases inevitably receding into the past. Having receded, they cease to exist, they sink into the past, from which – if one may so put it – they never return, but rather sink into it more deeply, becoming more and more distant from the ever-renewing present. Furthermore, the particular performances differ in their duration: some faster, some slower, and in the framework of this process the tempo of their development varies (assuming we are not confronted with a precisely regulated mechanical reproduction, one which, precisely because of the monotony of its evolution in time, creates a negative aesthetic impression).

With reference to the work itself, none of this makes any sense. The work has the one and only order of succession of its parts, a unique quasi-temporal structure determined once and for all by its author. This structure includes the determined tempi that are quite independent of the phases of concretely experienced qualitative time, and especially the phases of time in which one or other of its performances takes place.(4) Specific performances constitute more or less clear deviations from the fixed quasi-temporal structure, as if “foreseen” in the work itself, even though the performer on the whole tries to recreate in his performance just this quasi-temporal structure that characterizes the work. It is for him a model and a measure.

2. No musical work is conditioned in its creation and continued existence by those real processes that produce its particular performances, say, the action of the fingers upon the keyboard. The causes of its coming to be are quite different psychophysical events, the artist’s creative processes, which in any case need not express themselves in an actual performance on a particular instrument. On the other hand, the processes that produce the specific performances of the work do not produce the work itself: their purpose is to enable one to hear *in concreto* the work through the performance. Given the appropriate expertise and musical imagination, one can become acquainted with a work without the aid of a performance by simply reading the score, although one cannot in this manner attain the fullness and concretion of acquaintance that are possible when attending a performance. Once the processes that bring the performance about come to an end, the performance itself ceases to exist. Should the processes be interrupted, the performance too is interrupted. It can be resumed after the interval, but this break will remain in it forever, thus making impossible an aesthetically satisfying perception of

the work. That is why whenever performers are forced to interrupt a performance they do not resume it but start again at the beginning. None of these assertions can be applied to the work of music itself, and any such attempt results in absurdity.

3. In contrast to its specific performances the work of music possesses no defined spatial localization. No such localization is specified either by the creative acts of the composer or by the score. Thus the work may be performed anywhere, and any spatial location of the performance inevitably tied to it is each time different and has no significance for an aesthetic perception of the work. In listening to the performance we must ignore this aspect.
4. It is not true that any specific musical work, for instance Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, manifests itself immediately in the varying auditory aspects experienced by the listener, and that, as a consequence, the work itself assumes a variety of the successive properties and characteristics evidenced in specific performances. The work remains insensible to the processes occurring in the contents and in the manner of experiencing auditory aspects of particular performances: it does not change as a result of the performances, acquiring this or that characteristic for the reason described above. Assuredly it is true that when a specific performance – as a result of bad acoustics in the hall or undue distance from the performance – seems blurred or lacking in tone, this makes difficult an aesthetic perception of the work itself and may even, in borderline cases, make it impossible. But as a consequence, no one would assert that the work itself has become blurred or flat and empty in tone. These factors cannot make it change at all. No work is a *hic et nunc* developing acoustic phenomenon, as it would have to be to undergo change resulting from variations in the range of auditory aspects randomly developing in particular listeners. Were we to agree that the work is thus affected, at the same time we would have to agree that it possesses mutually exclusive properties: that it is both what it would have to be as a consequence of acquiring certain properties in one performance, and also what it would have to be with properties flowing from other performances given us through experience of other aspects. This too appears glaringly false with reference to the musical work itself, nor is it, so to speak, pure theory. The matter has consequences in musical practice.

So long as we are not completely naive listeners, we try, when listening to a particular performance of, say, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, to ignore all those objectively given details of the actual performance which appear in it as a consequence of the chance circumstances in which our listening occurs – circumstances which have their influence on the concrete content of the auditory aspects we are experiencing and which affect the concretion of the heard performance. We thus perform a certain selection. With regard to the concretely appearing properties of the performance, we ascribe some of them

to the work itself that we are attempting to hear and extrapolate from the concrete whole of the performance. We ignore others, ascribing them to the chance character either of the performance or of the listening – in other words, of the contents and mode of experiencing the auditory aspects. The process of listening to a musical work is, as it develops, much more complex than it first appears, while on the other hand just that complexity – was well as various concrete details which characterize it and which I cannot here discuss – constitutes one of the arguments for the differentiation between the work of music, its performance, and its concretion.

If between the musical work and the multiplicities of auditory aspects (by experiencing which the listener is able to hear the performance and through it to grasp the work itself) there is a connection, it is only that every musical work determines a certain ideal system of auditory aspects to be experienced by a listener if the work is to be given faithfully and fully in aesthetic experience. The work's own structure and qualitative properties will, for instance, indicate that it has to be heard – within feasible limits – from a certain distance, thereby designating also the types of ideally determined auditory aspects. If someone, for instance, wished to listen to Chopin's Prelude No. 6 from a distance of one kilometre, we would have to tell him that he is as little aware of the work's properties as the person who, in a snobbish desire to be seen, insists on the front row at a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

But the fact that there occurs this kind of congruence between the musical work and ideal systems of auditory aspects does not prove that the musical work manifests itself directly or immediately through the auditory aspects.

5. In contrast to the multiplicity of its possible performances, every specific musical work, like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, is absolutely unique. This at once rules out its identity with the performances. In consequence, it lies outside all those differences that necessarily occur between particular performances. Or to put it another way: just because these sorts of differences cannot appear in the musical work itself (and the very thought appears absurd) it is clear that the work is not identical with its performances and is an individual, while any number of performances of it are possible. What sense would it make to claim, for instance, that the Andante of Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata* has two different tempi simultaneously, that it has contrasting dynamics or contrasting tonal colourings? If a particular performance contains tempi, dynamics, and melodic lines differing from those proper to the work, this is simply a false performance. When we listen to it, either we cannot perceive the work aesthetically at all or we simply disregard the performance's faulty qualities and imagine in their place properties that do belong to the work. We then deplore the performance as false – too fast, lack-lustre, too loud, soulless and so on. As we have argued, the performance

has to be apart from the work, if the given work is to be faithfully represented, if it is to appear in all its glory. Should we say sometimes of the work itself that it is too colourless, too monotonous, or too loud, we are here not dealing with a relationship between the actual performance and something differing from it, to be recreated and in its own self revealed, but rather the relationship between certain characteristics or parts of the work itself and the aesthetic value that it claims as a work of art. The relationship here may also be between certain characteristics of the work and other properties it would have acquired but for certain of its shortcomings, and these – with the help of the above critical terms, we wish to single out – for example, if the work were not as monotonous as in fact it is. On the other hand, when we refer to a certain performance as being too fast or too monotonous, we cannot apply these terms to the work itself since they arise from a comparison between the performance and the work.

6. One may legitimately doubt whether a musical work is in every respect univocally and ultimately determined by its “lowest” properties that cannot be further differentiated. Resolution of this problem depends on whether the work of music has to be identified with (1) the product exclusively determined by the score, or (2) the product that is equivalent to adequate aesthetic perception. We shall take up this issue later. For the moment we may observe that in the first instance we would have to accept that a musical work contains features such that it is not univocally determined by qualities incapable of further differentiation. This applies for example to the tonal colouring which forms part of the work. The score prescribes simply the kind of instrument on which the work is to be performed, therefore indirectly determining the type of tonal colouring, but not the lowest variant of that type, that absolutely individual colouring which is realized only in a certain performance. The same applies to the fullness of tones or sounds that is strictly connected with the tonal colouring. To a certain extent the same problem arises with reference to the absolute pitch of the notes. Although it would be possible by physical means to define with great precision the absolute pitches of sounds appearing in a certain work, as we soon realize, we are not particularly bothered by this. Small differences in the absolute pitch of notes are of no great consequence for the musical work. Undoubtedly if anyone wished to play the Funeral March in Chopin’s B-flat Minor Sonata in a high register, or to sing Elsa’s part in *Lohengrin* in a deep bass, he would frustrate the perception of these works through such performances. But tiny shifts by a fraction of a tone are not significant.

It appears that in this respect the musical work is not as rigorously defined as one would think. In his above-mentioned work, Conrad talks of the *Irrelevanzsphären* of a musical work in the realm of which differences between specific performances of the work are of no consequence. Indeed, he is right. There is a “sphere of irrelevance”

within musical works and perhaps in all works of art. But Conrad does not say why it is possible for such a sphere to exist and be different for every work. It appears that this is possible only when the work itself is not in every respect univocally determined by the lowest qualities. To this matter I shall return.

If, on the other hand, we were to take the musical work to be exactly as it appears in a concrete but adequate aesthetic perception (the difficulty here would be a proper definition of adequacy) then we would be justified in doubting whether it is in some respects undetermined. To this matter too I shall have to return but I mention it now to indicate that these sorts of problems do not arise with reference to a specific performance of a musical work, and also to signal that the term "musical work" is ambiguous and requires stricter definition.

All the facts I have cited above force us to admit that a musical work is indeed something radically different from all its possible performances, even though there are naturally many similarities between them. It is because these similarities occur that we can speak of performances of a certain, determined work. Later we shall see what this assertion means for the problem of the existence, the mode of existence, and the identity of a musical work. For the time being we have to consider the following two questions:

1. whether a musical work is identical with certain conscious experiences of the composer or of the listener;
2. whether the work of music is identical with its score. Only when we are able to discard both these possibilities, will the question of the essence of a musical work reveal itself to us in its proper form.

Notes

(1) There are three types of objects temporally determined: objects subsisting in time (things, people), processes (race, war, the development of an organism), and, finally, events (someone's death, the start of a specific performance of the B Minor Sonata). These three types of temporally determined objects differ among themselves both as to the mode of their existence and their form, and with regard to their possible properties. I have discussed this fully in my *Does the World Exist?*, chapter 6 of volume 1, chapter 5, section 59, volume 2.

(2) W. Conrad, „Der ästhetische Gegenstand“, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik*, volumes 3 and 4.

(3) I have here in mind mathematic series for which there exists a general formula of variables, for instance $K_n = aq^{(n-1)}$. My assertion in the text does not apply to the so-called *wahlfreie Folgen*, which were pointed out by the intuitionists (Brouwer and others).

(4) I stumbled on this „order of succession“ of the parts of the work and its quasi-temporal structure when I was analyzing the literary work in my *The Literary Work of*

Art (1931), of which this work originally constituted a section. What I had to say there, together with later analysis in my *Cognition of the Literary Work* (1937), may be extended to cover the musical work and also works of film. The first to notice this structure was not Lessing, as one would expect, but Herder. Later no one took much notice of this problem, and what we do find in Herder is no more than an initial intuition.