

DEFENDING MUSICAL STAGE THEORY

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By ANDREW DE JONG. B.A., M.A.

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AUTHOR: Andrew de Jong, B.A. (University of Waterloo), M.A. (University of
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SUPERVISOR: Sandra Lapointe

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Abstract:

Musical works pose interesting ontological problems. They are connected to performances, but appear to have a normative effect on performances. This means they must be a separate entity existing separately from, but interacting with, audiences and performances. In 2018, Caterina Moruzzi presented musical stage theory (MST) as a performance-centric ontology of musical works that reflects all musical practices (Moruzzi, 2018). This four-dimensionalist approach to musical works is based on Theodore Sider's exdurantism. MST proposes that Musical works are constructed by linking performances together to create an aggregate time-worm called a work-as-construct. In subsequent years, MST was criticized by Philip Letts for several reasons. The most important point being, performances are too long to constitute the stages required to create a musical work in the way Moruzzi proposes, meaning MST is not a viable ontology of musical works. Due to this, there has been little discourse about MST since.

I argue that the criticisms levelled at MST by Letts can be addressed and that MST is not only viable, but also incorporates the strengths of other prominent ontologies of musical works. In this project, I give a brief overview of the current scholarship on the ontology of musical works to show what is required of a good ontology. I then introduce the strengths and weaknesses of MST in the form Moruzzi originally presented it. This is followed by Letts' criticisms as well as my own. My primary issue with MST is that, despite MST's goal to reflect all musical practices, it is biased towards Western classical music traditions. I address these criticisms and show how MST can incorporate the strengths of some other ontologies and reintroduce MST as a viable performance-centric, practice-focused ontology of musical work.

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As a musician, musicologist and philosopher of music, I spent a massive amount of time listening to music during this project. I would like to acknowledge and share some of that music.

Special thanks go to **Nora Jones**, **Jessie Harris** and **Pat Metheny**. As the primary musical examples, this thesis would not be possible without them performing “Don’t Know Why.”

The rest of these artists are those that I listened to during the process of producing this thesis, in no particular order.

Nobue Uematsu - *Final Fantasy 7 Remake OST*. **Akira Senju** – *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood OST*. **Austin Wintory** – *Journey OST*. **Kan Gao** – *To the Moon OST*. **Go Shiina** – *Tales of Legendia OST*. **Koji Kondo** – *Ocarina of Time OST, Twilight Princess OST*. **Manaka Kataoka and Company** – *Breath of the Wild OST, Tears of the Kingdom OST*.

Devin Townsend – *Ghost, Ki, Casualties of Cool, Ziltoid the Omniscient*. **David Maxim Micic** – *Who Bit the Moon, Bilo 4*. **Mark Prusha** – *Alternate Resonance*. **Disperse** – *Forward*. **Anoushka Shankar** - *Breathing Underwater, Anoushka*. **Dream Theater** – *Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence, Metropolis Part II: Scenes from a Memory*. **Transatlantic** – *The Whirlwind*. **Spectra** – *Places We Only Dream Of*. **Mastodon** – *Crack the Sky*

The entire discographies of **Pat Metheny**, **Spyro Gyra**, **Cloud Kicker**, **Hammock**, **This Will Destroy You**, **Tycho**, **Craig d’Andrea**, **Plini**, **Clipping**, **DreamPeace.**, **Four Seconds Ago**,

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Declaration of Academic Achievement

This research project is the product of my research and the development and presentation of my ideas.

Introduction

It is early evening as you and your friend line up outside the venue. You can hear the laughter and conversation from others in line. Even though they are all strangers, you feel a sense of camaraderie with the others in line. Some will have travelled great distances for the chance to see their favourite artist(s) perform. For others, this will be their first exposure to a new artist or genre. Somewhere in the crowd tonight, someone is about to have their first concert experience.

The camaraderie you feel stems from the fact that you have all gathered to participate in the musical experience known as performance. Perhaps this is not your first time hearing this artist. This may even be your favourite artist. You have listened to their music on repeat. You have every lyric burned into your brain and every note memorized in preparation. You're wearing all the correct paraphernalia that marks you as a member of the event's 'in crowd.' There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that you and your friend came ready to belt out every song, note for note, in a futile effort to compete with a sound system that is cranked to eleven.

The excitement of the crowd builds as the line advances, and you get closer to the venue's entrance. The conversation turns to speculation as former strangers postulate on possible songs on the evening's setlist. Your friend turns to you, mirroring your enthusiasm and anticipation and says, "I hope they play _____ tonight. That's my favourite!" You nod in agreement. That song is a fan favourite.

Finally, you make it inside, the house lights dim, and the crowd cheers. Without a word of acknowledgement, the performers launch immediately into the song you and

your friend were hoping for. The crowd goes wild. The performers know it is a crowd-pleaser. They build anticipation by drawing out the intro, adding a drum solo in the middle, and a violin player adds a harmony to the guitar solo. The vocalist showcases their skill with embellished melismatic phrasing, and the band doubles the final chorus with only minimal instrumentation, allowing the crowd to sing along. It is an extravagant and exhilarating performance that builds on everything you love about the song. However, the changes in the night's performance of the song are not on the recording. They may even be unique to that night's performance, never to be attempted that way again. Do the unique qualities of the performance, and the changes in instrumentation and orchestration, mean this performance was a completely different song?

Intuitively, the performance is considered to be the "same song" as the recorded one you memorized, but how is it that you can spend the whole trip home comparing the differences between tonight's performance and the recording if they are supposed to be the same? The recording follows a certain structure, with no doubled final chorus, no violin harmony, or drum solo. You also know that the band plays in a different tuning live to make singing easier for the vocalist. Yet, despite all the differences, the night's performance has some indiscernible connection to the recording and other live performances. This evening's performance is not the only time this occurs. Live performances and recordings are heard throughout our lives. Even though very drastic differences can be identified between performances and recordings, they are still considered the same song. It is the same, but somehow not the same.

Songs are an extremely important part of the way many individuals, cultures, and societies practice music, but the average person does not give much thought to what makes a song a song, and what features contribute to the specific ways songs exist.

The term ‘song,’ while understood in colloquial conversation, has other connotations. In historical Western classical traditions, a song refers to a piece of music that was sung, either in a choral or with accompaniment. Birdsong, a related term, refers to the melodic calls of bird vocalizations, but neither correctly captures the meaning of a repeatable and connected overarching musical entity that musicians and audiences engage in daily. Instead, philosophers use the term ‘musical work’ to denote this repeatable and demarcated musical entity without confusing it with other meanings (Goehr, 1992).

Having a proper resource to refer to complex musical entities helps communicate problems about musical works, but it does not solve the problem of what a musical work is and how it relates to performances, but is not the same as the performance. Musicologists and philosophers have attempted explanations for how musical works have existed for as long as the concept of a musical work has been around (Goehr, 1992). The result is an incredibly diverse range of theories, each with explanatory strengths (Goehr, 1992). In the last twenty-five years, philosophers have expanded beyond long-held theories of musical works due to little explanatory advancement (Mikalonytė & Sigutė, 2022). Philosophers have begun proposing new, and sometimes wild, ontologies of musical works to see which theories withstand the rigours of academic discourse.

One of these new ontological theories is Musical Stage Theory, or MST (Moruzzi, 2018). MST is a theory that attempts to explain musical works as aggregate entities made up of performance stages. After MST was proposed, it was supported and defended through a series of papers by its author, Caterina Moruzzi (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022), and critiqued by Philip Letts (2020, 2022). The primary goal of MST is to be a performance-centric theory that reflects the musical practices of many different genres and cultures rather than only the Western classical tradition (Moruzzi 2020). This is in contrast to traditional ontologies of musical works, which have been primarily prescriptive. Authors of these traditional theories present an ontology and then attempt to fit musical practice into that theory. MST aims to build a theory around practice. This is an admirable goal, but since 2022, no new material about MST has emerged (Moruzzi, 2022). Despite the valid criticisms and lack of published defence, the basic goal and mechanics of MST are plausible and offer a descriptive ontology of musical works that is compatible with other ontological approaches to musical works. By addressing the criticisms levelled at MST by myself and Philip Letts, I propose that MST is a defensible performance and practice-centric ontology of musical works that is compatible with, or encompasses, the strengths of other prominent theories of musical works, and is therefore worthy of revival.

I will support my argument in five parts. To start, Chapter I will outline the musical work “Don’t Know Why” and several different performances of that work to highlight the problems inherent in musical works. Chapter II outlines the landscape of the ontology of musical works, how MST fits into that landscape, and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of ontologies that are opposed to, and those that are compatible with, MST.

Chapter **III** presents a full overview of MST's features and framework as a performance-focused, stage-based, four-dimensional theory of musical works. Chapter **IV** presents the criticisms of MST from Philip Letts and me. Finally, Chapter **V** is where I will address criticisms, showcase how MST is compatible with artifactualism and idealism, and prove that MST is a strong performance-centric ontology that reflects all musical practices.

Before diving into the musical example, it is important to define the terms I will use and their associated connotations. First, I define 'music'. The definition of music is famously problematic (Levitin, 2006; Sacks, 2007). Broadly speaking, music is a sound or a group of sounds that have pitch, rhythm, tempo,¹ contour,² timbre,³ loudness and reverberation⁴ (Levitin, 2006, p. 15-16). Based on these elements, an airplane engine and human speech could both be considered music; this, however, is not reflective of what most people would call music. Moreover, it is not a particularly useful definition for analyzing musical works, as it could include human linguistic phrases. For this project, I understand music to be a group of sounds that include the above elements, but crucially include sounds that maintain a degree of harmonicity and are intentionally organized. Harmonicity refers to the way the sounds in question must maintain a certain degree of discernibility between pitches. White noise contains a multitude of pitches, but pinpointing one pitch out of the mass is impossible. Thus, a degree of harmonicity is

¹ Tempo is the relative speed at which sounds occur. Rhythm is the pattern of sounds, and tempo is the speed at which they occur.

² Contour is the relative shape a sound or sounds make. The rise and/or fall of a singular or many pitches over time.

³ Pronounced 'tamber', timbre refers to the quality of a sound source. The difference between two individuals' voices or the quality of a guitar versus a trumpet is called timbre.

⁴ Reverberation is the relative proximity of the listener to the sound source and the effect the listener's location has on the sound. Echo is a particular kind of reverberation, and the elements of space have a drastic effect on our understanding of sound and music.

required. Intentional organization is the degree of intention behind the sounds. This can include the sounds created by wind chimes, as there is intention in the creation of the instrument to produce sound, but not in how the sounds will play out. This definition of music might still be very vague, but this is because I am attempting to include experimental performances while excluding human speech as a part of music.

Next, I move on to the meaning of a 'musical work.' Lydia Goehr claims that the notion of musical works is a construction of the Western classical music tradition, rooted in commodification and only came into being around 1800 CE (Goehr, 1992). Before this, music was far more rooted in the event at which it was played (Goehr, 1992). The advantages of demarcating a musical work for copyright, ownership and dissemination became apparent when composers attempted to remove themselves from the need for patrons (Goehr, 1992). The popularity of the musical work concept allowed performers to demarcate a particular combination of melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration, duration and other musical parameters and to claim that combination as a self-standing and separate 'piece' of music that could be owned. As such, the 'piece' of music, or musical work, could be treated the same as a painting or sculpture and protected under copyright laws (Goehr, 1992).

With the historical origins of the work concept in place, philosophers of music are left with the question of how musical works exist. This is the realm of the ontology of musical works, to explain what musical works are. Presently, there is no consensus on how musical works exist. However, there are some agreed-upon qualities reflected in philosophical theory and practice. Musical works are an allographic art object (Fenner, 2024). These are artworks that are not physically extended the way sculptures or

paintings are. Instead, these artworks can only be viewed as brief and often imperfect recreations (Fenner, 2024). I call these recreations performances. Importantly, performances are not the artwork itself, but rather reference the artwork.

This leads to the need for a definition of performance. 'Performance' is a musical event where an artist plays music for an audience. For those familiar with Western music traditions, classical or otherwise, this will bring to mind recitals. Recitals are one kind of performance where the performers have a privileged position separate from the audience, who are expected to listen in appreciation, usually quietly in Western classical traditions, and enthusiastically in non-classical traditions (Small, 2007).

Performance, however, includes far more than just recitals. Anytime music is produced constitutes a musical performance (Small, 2005). There need not be an attentive audience, as musicians are often hired to provide ambience for events. There need not be a dedicated audience, as many musical events encourage participation over observation, such as drum circles. During practice, the musician plays, listens and critiques their own music, making themselves the audience and the event a performance. Therefore, a performance is any event where music is produced (Small, 2007).

Recordings are also performances as they capture a musical performance for playback. Aron Edidin proposes three ways in which recordings take place, and how the context of the recording changes the intention of the track (Edidin, 1999). These ways are what he calls 'recordings of performance,' or the recording of a live concert or recital to preserve that specific event's musical proceedings. This is a performance, as the recording process is secondary to the recital and serves to capture the musician's

performance as it happened. The other two kinds of recording are 'recordings as compositions' and 'recordings as artifacts' (Edidin, 1999). These are both recordings of musical works made through compiling the various recordings or 'takes' of the instrument and of each section individually (Edidin, 1999). These are edited with software or by tape editing to create the idealized performance. Importantly, this is still not the musical work itself despite the pristine and edited nature of studio recording: despite the use of editing technology, each of the takes that make up the recording are still played by a musician. Therefore, a recording of this type is a performance.

I use the term 'version' to refer to different performances of the same musical work. Versions may be incredibly similar or drastically different, but there seem to be features of any version that link it back to previous versions and to the musical work itself. The term "version" here is also not associated with any particular ontology and is meant as a general term of differentiation between performances. Whether or not versions of musical works even exist, or if every performance is a new musical work, is worth consideration.

When an artist chooses to perform a musical work that they are not the author of, they are performing a version known as a "cover". Some covers are meant as an attempt at recreating a previous artist's version to capture some emotional or sonic feature. Other times, an artist may choose to cover a musical work and adapt it into something new. I will call this kind of cover a reimagining. The reimagining is a cover where the artist attempts to transform the musical work into something novel by putting their own artistic or performative spin on the work. There is a subspecies of reimaginings called parody. Parody often includes features of a reimagining, but the

purpose of a parody is to be comedic or subversive (McCarthy, 2019). Musical parody scholarship proposes ways parodies reference, undercut or subvert artists and art (McCarthy, 2019). I will not be engaging much with that scholarship, as I am concerned with parody only as a performance related to the musical work and not the purpose or theory behind what makes parody funny or subversive.

The second chapter will address three primary problems with how musical works seem to exist.

(1) The problem of audibility, which is concerned with the discrepancy between the properties of a performance and how they differ from the properties of the musical work. For example, when a performance of a musical work is played in a different key from the musical work. If performances are meant to be a musical work in its audible form, how can they have different properties from the work itself?

(2) The problem of repeatability, which is concerned with how multiple performances of the same work can nonetheless differ from each other. Performances can be compared to one another, but are somehow performances of the same musical work. Is exact duplication possible or even worth attempting? If not, then how are performances derived from the same work?

(3) The problem of reference is concerned with what people are referring to when using a musical work's name outside of performance or playback. The work's name is a reference to something that goes beyond performances. During conversation, audiences reference musical works without referencing specific performances, meaning the work must exist outside of the performance. If musicians and audiences are not referencing a musical work that exists, they are at risk of something called error theory.

Error theory in this context refers to the way philosophers think certain utterances about the truth of an entity do not necessarily mean the speaker is committed to that entity existing (Eklund, 2024). While this is a possible explanation for how audiences speak about musical works, I do not think error theory reflects the way musical works continue to affect and change individual and communal behaviours across musical practices and history.

The goal of any ontology of musical works should be to explain these three problems in a way that reflects the musical practices used by listeners and musicians. To assist in explaining how ontologies function, the next chapter will present "Don't Know Why" as a musical example.

Chapter I: “Don’t Know Why”: A Musical Example

Rather than relying on multiple examples throughout this project, I have decided to select one example. This is to ensure consistency in the illustration of how theories function and their explanatory strengths and weaknesses. It also alleviates pressure on the reader. Extensive harmonic and historical knowledge of several works to make an example useful is a lot to ask. To avoid this, I will ensure that readers have the relevant historical and musicological information of a singular work. The work I have selected is “Don’t Know Why”. The history of the work will help showcase how each version differs and how performances are causally connected. The harmonic dissection will show how MST allows for different social contexts, like genre, to dictate how strong the link between performances is for versions to be considered the same musical work. Throughout this chapter, questions related to why or how different versions can be the same work. In Chapter II, I will present how different ontologies of musical works attempt to answer these questions.

I have three reasons for selecting this piece: the first is that it is a popular enough musical work that I hope most readers will have at least heard of it. However, I realize that not everyone can be expected to know a piece of Western popular music. This leads me to my second point. Nora Jones’ version is popular enough that it should be easy enough for readers to find and listen to if they have not previously done so.

Readers can easily listen to the piece and follow the content of the chapter. Here is the list of performances that I will be referencing.

- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why” *Come Away with Me*, 2002.
YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tO4dxvguQDk>
Spotify. (<https://open.spotify.com/album/4xt2QHvLWVEFuJTgQHxzl2>)
- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why”, *First Sessions*, 2001.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZY7F59xiEcY>
- Jessie Harris and the Ferdinandos, “Don’t Know Why”, *Jessie Harris and the Ferdinandos*, 1999.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUex1J5KGBk>
- Pat Metheny, “Don’t Know Why”, *One Quiet Night*, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8Rk4NDVvdM>
- Jones, Norah. “Don’t Know Y”, *Sesame Street*, 2004.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEzschU4RUY>
- Jones, Norah, “Don’t Know Why”, **45th Grammy Awards Performance**, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMM4nwDz6ZQ>
- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why” **20th Anniversary Live Stream**. Originally streamed April 28, 2022,
<https://youtu.be/Sx1RgCjmvfg?t=4314>

Finally, “Don’t Know Why” does not sit nicely within the jazz, rock, or pop musical traditions (Ouellette, 2004, 38). Some scholars have argued that genres like jazz do not have musical works, or at least not in the same way that the Western classical music tradition does (Kania, 2006). This is because of the way jazz musical works do not adhere to a musical work’s normativity in the same way as other traditions do. The flexibility of musical works in jazz highlights the need for a better theory of musical works. Most musical works do not sit nicely in a specific genre, and genre-blending is a common practice in reimagining or covering a musical work.

Historical Context

- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why” *Come Away with Me*, 2002.
YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tO4dxvguQDk>
Spotify. (<https://open.spotify.com/album/4xt2QHvLWVEFuJTgQHxzl2>)

While most people are familiar with “Don’t Know Why” from Norah Jones’s 2002 album *Come Away with Me*, an earlier version of the song exists. In 2000, immediately after signing with Blue Note Records, Jones recorded and released a selection of songs as a limited release called *First Sessions* (2001). These demos served to prove to the Blue Note label executives that, despite her newcomer status, Jones had the musical and lyrical skills to break into the music industry (Brodsky, 2022).

- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why”, *First Sessions*, 2001.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZY7F59xiEcY>

First Sessions featured an earlier version of what would become Jones’s most famous piece, “Don’t Know Why” (Jones 2001). It was not until a year after this release that a wider audience would hear “Don’t Know Why.” The *First Sessions* and *Come Away With Me* versions are so similar that most listeners would miss the differences (Jones, 2001, 2002). It would not be surprising if, after the success of *First Sessions*, the Demo Version of “Don’t Know Why” was mixed⁵ and mastered⁶ for proper release on *Come Away With Me*. It is impossible to say if this is the case without insider knowledge, but releasing a polished demo is a frequent occurrence, particularly in jazz. I have provided a link to both versions for comparison. Since there are small changes to

⁵ Mixing refers to the way all the instruments’ volumes are adjusted relative to each other in a given recording or stage setting.

⁶ Mastering refers to the way a song is prepared for distribution and playback on different kinds of physical or digital media.

the mix and slight additions to the orchestration, these are two different versions. The comparison between these two versions points to potential problems with the way minute changes between versions might constitute an entirely new musical work.

- Ferdinandos, "Don't Know Why", *Jessie Harris and the Ferdinandos*, 1999.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUex1J5KGBk>

While these two Jones recordings are very similar, neither of them is the first version to be released. "Don't Know Why" was written by singer-songwriter Jesse Harris. Harris also played guitar on both Jones's versions (Jones 2001, 2002). Harris originally wrote "Don't Know Why" for his band and released it on their self-titled 1999 record *Jesse Harris and the Ferdinandos* (1999). Most people are unfamiliar with this version. If authorship has any bearing on the creation or normativity of a musical work, then Harris's version should be the most important over successive works. This raises questions about whether public knowledge or authorial intention has any bearing on a musical work.

- Pat Metheny, "Don't Know Why", *One Quiet Night*, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8Rk4NDVvdM>

I would like to consider covers of "Don't Know Why" as well. First, a reimagining by a different artist (Metheny, 2003) and then a parody (Jones, 2004) to see if orchestral changes or authorship affect how versions are considered the same work. In 2003, jazz guitarist Pat Metheny released the album *One Quiet Night*. Featuring only Metheny on baritone guitar,⁷ it included a cover of "Don't Know Why" (Metheny, 2003). Metheny's

⁷ A Baritone guitar is a six-stringed instrument that is tuned down a fourth or a fifth from a regular guitar. It is also common to tune the middle two strings up an octave.

cover is a reimagining. He changes the genre and tone of the piece to fit his unique musical style. The result is a version that is new and exciting while still recognizable. Covers are a source of interesting problems for the ontology of musical works, which makes Metheny's version an excellent addition to the list of versions.

- Jones, Norah. "Don't Know Y", *Sesame Street*, 2004.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEzxcU4RUY>

Parody is an altogether very different kind of cover. It is a reimagining that is done with the intent to point out the pretense of a particular group and often pokes fun at the musical work the version purports to be a part of (McCarthy, 2019). In this case, the parody comes from Jones herself and for educational reasons. "Don't Know Y" is a parody of her famous song played on the famous children's television show *Sesame Street*. Jones is not the author of "Don't Know Why," but her 2002 version is the most famous. Parodies seem to require a certain connection with the musical work they are spoofing. Does this connection mean the parody is a version of the musical work, or a new musical work still somehow linked to the original?

Another source of problems for the Ontology of musical works is live versions. Jones has performed countless times in the 20 or so years since her meteoric rise, and she continues to play "Don't Know Why." Live versions do not have the same compositional, instrumental or harmonic features as each other and the purportedly related musical work. I will consider two live performances. The first is Jones's 45th Grammy Award performance of "Don't Know Why" from 2003 (Jones, 2003).

- Jones, Norah, "Don't Know Why", **45th Grammy Awards Performance**, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMM4nwDz6ZQ>

This is Jones attempting to recreate the version most people are familiar with, but in a live setting. There are some noticeable differences between this and the 2002 recorded version. Does this version constitute the closest a performance can come to the musical work? Is it even possible to recreate or perform a musical work perfectly?

- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why” **20th Anniversary Live Stream**. Originally streamed April 28, 2022, <https://youtu.be/Sx1RgCjmvfg?t=4314>

The second live performance is the 2022 *Come Away with Me 20th Anniversary Live Stream* from Jones’s YouTube channel (2022). This is a different version in which the original artists, including Harris, reimagine the work to celebrate 20 years since *Come Away With Me* (Jones, 2022). This version has more in common with a reimagining, but because the original author(s) are the ones responsible for the reimagining, are variations more acceptable? Authorship holds a lot of weight in the broader art world. If this is true for musical works, then does Harris’s and Jones’s status combined give them the freedom to make many and drastic changes in the performance of a musical work?

Musical Context

Now that the relevant aspects of a brief history of “Don’t Know Why” have revealed questions about authorship, genre, live performance and variations, I will shift focus to the harmonic analysis to show the specific differences between the versions of “Don’t Know Why.” I will do this using the language of Western classical harmony

because it is a useful way to speak about the specifics of music. While I attempt to be thorough, I have tried to keep the complexities to a minimum and offer definitions where helpful.

There are two parts to my musical analysis: the harmonic components and the structural components. The harmonic components are what make a version's parts sound a certain way. Which chords are used, how they interact, and how they inform and shape the melody.⁸ The structural components of a song are how sections are arranged. Where verses are placed in contrast to other sections, like the chorus.

- Norah Jones, "Don't Know Why" *Come Away with Me*, 2002.
YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tO4dxvguQDk>
Spotify. (<https://open.spotify.com/album/4xt2QHvLWVEFuJTgQHxzI2>)

Jones's *Come Away with Me* version of "Don't Know Why" features a prominent piano, playing chords and small phrases⁹. The other prominent sound is a descending guitar line.¹⁰ The piano and guitar are accompanied by a slightly syncopated¹¹ upright bass and a very reserved backbeat.¹² The chorus also features some accompanying backing vocals. The majority of the song's melodic features are based on Jones's breathy and smooth vocal timbre.¹³ (Jones 2002).

⁸ The 'shape' of a melody refers to how it ascends and/or descends.

⁹ A phrase is a short series of notes played sequentially. A melody is a musical line made up of a series of phrases.

¹⁰ A line is a kind of musical sentence made up of phrases. The melody is the most prominent musical line of a song.

¹¹ Syncopation is when the rhythm does not always land on a prominent beat.

¹² A backbeat is a ubiquitous drum groove where the kick drum is on the first and third beat, and the snare is hit on the second and fourth beat.

¹³ Timbre is the quality of a singer or instrument that makes it unique from any other voice or instrument.

This version is in the key¹⁴ of B^b (B Flat) major and maintains a tempo¹⁵ of about 88 beats per minute, or bpm. The introduction, verses, and instrumental interludes of this version all feature the root, or tonic, chord of the key, B^b major. This is most commonly heard as the chord played throughout the verses after Jones sings the line, '*I don't know why I didn't come*' (2002, 0:20). Ending on the root chord helps listeners understand that this is the end of a line, as this chord or note in the key is the tonal center. Returning to the root will always carry the strongest harmonic resolution for Western listeners (Lerdahl, 2005).

In contrast, the chorus of this version centres on the fifth note of the key, which is F (2002, 1:00). The fifth is a very stable-sounding note or chord in the key (Lerdahl, 2005). It sounds very pleasant, but it adds a bit of variation to the harmonic progression¹⁶ of the performance. The chorus melody is the vocal line '*My heart is drenched in wine*' where Jones begins on B^b, but up an octave¹⁷ from the verse and descends the scale to the fifth note, F (2002, 1:00-1:06). The vocal melody repeats for '*You'll be on my mind*' and the rest of the scale going down from the fifth note is completed on each of the syllables of 'forever' (2002: 1:10-1:20). This leaves us on the second note of the scale which resolves¹⁸ to the root note at the beginning of the verse

¹⁴ The key to a song is the relative hierarchy of pitches of a particular piece of music. The key dictates what pitches will sound consonant or dissonant to the Western listener based on the relative relation to the tonal center of the key. The tonal center of a key is called the 'tonic' or 'root note' and is the note the key is named after.

¹⁵ Tempo is the relative speed of a performance. This is measured in beats per minute (bpm).

¹⁶ The harmonic progression is the way chords build tension and excitement before returning to harmonic ease.

¹⁷ The octave is the root note of the scale, either higher or lower. Scales repeat as they progress, and the octave is an indication that the scale has begun again.

¹⁸ Resolution occurs when players shift from notes that are harmonically tense in the key to notes that are closer to the tonal center. Notes like the second or sixth note in a key are more harmonically tense than the root or

(2002, 1:21). After the second chorus, Jones takes a piano solo, but this is over the same chord progression as the verse, and serves as an instrumental verse (2002, 2:05).

The only variation to the basic structure comes at the end of the final verse, where the final few chords are repeated twice as Jones repeats ‘*don’t know why I didn’t come*’ (2002, 2:48). Finally, Jones ends the performance by resolving the melody down to the root note. With this, the performance comes to a harmonic resolution and end. (2002, 2:58).

- Norah Jones, “Don’t Know Why”, *First Sessions*, 2001.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZY7F59xiEcY>

The demo version of “Don’t Know Why” from *First Sessions* is harmonically and structurally identical. The only difference is that this earlier version does not feature backing vocals over the chorus (2001, 1:00). The difference in how the versions are mixed is more noticeable. The mix is the way instruments are set against each other. This can be the relative volume of instruments or even the perceived location of the instrument to the listener (Dockwray & Moore, 2010). The 2002 *Come Away With Me* version has far more depth to the mix. This separates the guitar and piano lines from each other, making them easier to focus on individually. Jones’s voice also sounds like she is singing in a larger space, which adds depth and reverberation. (Jones, 2001, 2002).

- Jessie Harris and the Ferdinandos, “Don’t Know Why”, *Jessie Harris and the Ferdinandos*, 1999.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUex1J5KGBk>

dominant note.

By contrast, Jesse Harris' version from 1999 is in the key of E major to match his vocal register¹⁹. This version features only a single guitar playing a descending line, but is paired with a mournful violin which comes in on the second verse (1999, 0:37). The melody is sung by a solo male voice. In Harris' version, the violin line takes the solo after the second chorus (2:04). Harris' version has the same relative harmony as Jones' famous *Come Away with Me* version (Harris 1999). This means that although it is in a different key, the chords and melody follow the same structure in parallel. Both choruses centre on their key's relative fifth chord, and resolve to the tonic when returning to the verse. The songs are so similar in structure, and their tempo is roughly the same, 88 bpm, so sections change at roughly the same time stamps (Harris, 1999; Jones, 2002).

- Pat Metheny, "Don't Know Why", *One Quiet Night*, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8Rk4NDVvdM>

Metheny's cover version is played in the key of G major and features only a solo baritone guitar. Metheny keeps to the basic structure of Jones's version of the song, but he adds variation to the melody of the later verses (1:23-2:00). Metheny varies the tempo of his piece, slowing tempo to add emotional weight at the end of the second chorus (2:14-2:20), and again at the end of the song (2:50-2:55). Apart from these moments, the song maintains a tempo close to the same 88 bpm. Metheny keeps the same basic song structure and the relative harmonic progression, but the melody is

¹⁹ A vocal register is the range of pitches that a person's voice sits in. The higher or lower a song's key is away from a singer's register, the harder it can be for them to perform.

more malleable. It is also worth remembering that Metheny's version does not have any lyrical content (Metheny 2003).

- Jones, Norah. "Don't Know Y", *Sesame Street*, 2004.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEzxxchU4RUY>

Jones's 2004 parody "Don't Know Y" conforms very closely to her *Come Away with Me* version. The parody features Jones' voice, the same descending guitar line, a bass line and a backbeat on a drum kit. Structurally, this version has the same layout, but there is no solo. Instead, the band (including Jones on piano) play the verse, and Elmo attempts to convince Jones that the character letter 'Y', who is in the background, has arrived. Jones then moves through the rest of the performance in accordance with the recorded version (2:30). Harmonically, the song is in B^b (B flat) major and maintains 88 bpm. This version's largest difference is its lyrical content. The premise of the song is that Jones is telling Elmo that she is sad her friend, the letter 'Y', did not meet her when he was supposed to. The lyrics have been changed to words that begin with the letter 'Y', such as 'yearn' and 'yesterday' (1:10-1:12). The music is familiar, but the lyrical content is entertaining and parodies the original song creatively and educationally (Jones, 2004).

- Jones, Norah, "Don't Know Why", **45th Grammy Awards Performance**, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMM4nwDz6ZQ>

Jones's 2003 Grammy performance starts with the guitar, piano, and vocals. The harmonic and compositional structure of the song remain the same, but there is an orchestral difference as the bass and drums do not enter until after the first chorus (1:15). The bass and drums are also notably more energetic in this version. The end of

the performance also features a slowing of the tempo for dramatic effect (2:53). Jones's piano solo is not a recreation of the recorded version. Solos are rarely performed the same way twice in jazz, and Jones incorporates that into her live performances (Ouellette 2004, 36). Her vocal line is based on the *Come Away with Me* recording, but she deviates to show off her vocal prowess. There is a noticeable mistimed vocal cue in the first verse. Jones begins to sing a syllable before self-correcting to another lyric (0:35). Mistakes are an obvious deviation from a musical work that are by definition unintentional. The unintentional quality of the work makes it difficult to explain why, or if, a single mistake should disqualify the performances as of the musical work it so clearly relates to.

- Norah Jones, "Don't Know Why" **20th Anniversary Live Stream**. Originally streamed April 28, 2022, <https://youtu.be/Sx1RgCjmvfg?t=4314>

The 2022 live stream is a very different kind of live performance. The version's structure remains the same as other versions, but the orchestration is very different. The familiar guitar line is not present. Instead, Harris lets Jones hold down the chords, and he plays a counter melody to her vocal line. The drums and bass are still present, but the fills are more bombastic. This version is also noticeably slower at around 60 bpm (Jones, 2022).

"Don't Know Why" provides an excellent example for exploring how musical works exist. The vast array of different versions brings about questions regarding how similar or authentic a performance ought to be. In showcasing the history of the work, I highlighted just a few questions about how performances relate to each other and problems that arise when trying to compare these to the musical work itself. These

versions of this work are diverse, offering an effective example to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the ontologies of musical works in Chapter II, and MST in Chapters III, IV and V.

A Comparison of Versions of “Don’t Know Why”

Version	<i>First Session Demo (2001)</i>	<i>Come Away With Me (2002)</i>	Jessie Harris (1999)	Pat Metheny (2003)	Parody “Don’t Know Y” (2004)	45th Grammy Performance (2003)	20th Anniversary Live Stream (2022)
Key	B ^b (B Flat) Major	B ^b (B Flat) Major	E Major	G Major	B ^b (B Flat) Major	B ^b (B Flat) Major	B ^b (B Flat) Major
Tempo	88 bpm	88 bpm	88 bpm	88 bpm (mostly)	88 bpm	88 bpm	60 bpm
Instruments	Piano, Guitar, Bass, Drum kit, Female Vocals	Piano, Guitar, Bass, Drum kit, female Vocals	Guitar, Violine, Male Vocals	Baritone guitar	Piano, Guitar, Bass, Drum kit, Female Vocals	Piano, Guitar, Bass, Drum kit, female Vocals	Piano, Guitar, Bass, Drum kit, female Vocals
lyrics	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Altered	Yes	Yes

Chapter II: An Overview of the Ontology of Musical Works

In this chapter, I will apply some theories in the ontology of musical works to the example of "Don't Know Why". I have two reasons for doing this. First, I will showcase what the current landscape of the ontology of musical works looks like and how MST fits in. Second, I will show some of the strengths of the ontologies that MST is compatible with.

Issues with ontologies of musical works can be broken down into helpful categories (Puy 2019 B). The first is issues of audibility, or how versions relate to the musical work when the work itself can not be heard. The second is repeatability, or how versions are related to past performances. Last are issues related to reference, or how audiences can speak about musical works and their properties as different from performances.

Another important consideration is musical practice. This is the way audiences and musicians speak about and play the music they engage with. Music is a human activity, and changes in context are bound to create changes in the way humans understand and engage with music across cultures and genres (Small, 1998; Goehr, 1992). MST claims to reflect musical practice (Moruzzi, 2018). Therefore, I will consider the importance of musical practice in how other theories attempt to solve issues of audibility, repeatability and reference.

This list features a wide variety and range of different approaches to the ontology of musical works, but is not exhaustive. The list I present does not aim to reflect all of the research contributions to any of the schools of thought, nor does it reflect the totality

of research done on the ontology of musical works. I am only showing the most prominent theories to show what MST is compatible with, such as endurantism, artifactualism and social constructionism (idealism), and which theories MST is set against. This is mostly Platonism, so I spend a significant amount of time on Platonism to properly evaluate what MST is competing against. The hope is that the theories presented will accurately represent the themes of the broader school of thought they belong to. Section **i** considers Platonism and universals. Section **ii** focuses on idealism and social constructionism. Section **iii** contends with artifactualism and art objects. Section **iv** contends with fictionalism. Section **v** deals with nominalism, including endurantism and perdurantism.

i: Platonism

Platonism is a category of theories that propose the existence of abstract entities called ‘universals’ (Kim & Sosa, 2000). Universals exist in a separate realm from the physical world but inform and connect to the concrete objects and events that instantiate their features. (Kim & Sosa, 2000). Universals are abstract, eternal, non-causal and objectively real entities that exist independently of human thought (Balaguer, 2025).

The biggest strength of musical Platonism is its ability to answer the problem of reference. If musical works are universals, they are constant and unchanging. There is no worry about empty references or naming something that is not real. The musical work will forever exist in the realm of universals; it and its properties can be referred to

at any time. Under Platonism, each version of "Don't Know Why" has attributes of the same universal; the musical work (Dodd, 2000, 2002)

Performances, unlike universals, are fleeting and finite. The strength of musical Platonism's answer to the problem of reference is now a puzzle. If musical works are non-causal abstract objects, how do performances relate to the musical work they are about?

Sound Structures

Jerrold Levinson answers this problem by proposing that musical works are 'eternal types' (Levinson, 1990). Types are universals that can be instantiated through 'tokens' or an instance of that type (universal) extended into the physical world. This is a common thread across Platonism, and these theories are called type-token theories.

By this theory, the musical work is an abstract object, or type, called "Don't Know Why". Metheny's version of "Don't Know Why" is a physically extended performance or token. Each performance of "Don't Know Why" is a different tokening of the same type. The tokens are not perfect recreations of the type.

Levinson and others, like Julian Dodd, argue for a 'simple' musical Platonism (Dodd, 2002; Levinson, 1990). Simple Platonism is still a type-token theory but proposes a structuralist view of musical works. Structuralists argue that universals can come together to create more complex universals (Kim & Sosa, 2000).

Dodd and Levinson propose that musical works are sound structures, or universals built from smaller constitutive universals (Dodd, 2002; Levinson, 1990). This sound structure is a specific sequence of notes made up by pitch, rhythm, duration and

timbre. Notes can then be combined in a specific order to become a new constitutive universal. This is how musical works are built of smaller universals like notes and chords. "...What makes [a musical work] **that** musical work is that it sounds like **that**. Period" (Dodd, 2000, p. 425, emphasis retained). Dodd is emphatically highlighting that a specific organization of universals are the core features of a musical work's identity. Any performance that properly tokens a work must reflect the unique sound structure that makes up that work.

The musical work "Don't Know Why" has a specific set of sounds in a particular order. Parts of the song can come apart. In the previous chapter, I outlined the structural components of "Don't Know Why." It has a chorus, verses and a bridge. These are parts of the song, but so too does the chorus come apart into chords and notes. The B^b major chord can be played on its own. It is only when it is played in the context of the sound structure that the B^b becomes the tonal center of the performance of "Don't Know Why". The notes make up the chords and rhythms, which in turn make up the melody and harmony of the musical work. Any difference in the way constitutive sound structures are put together would mean the performance no longer properly tokens the musical work, and is now tokening another musical work or does not token anything (Dodd, 2000, 2002).

This is a very clear definition of how performances ought to token musical works, but performances are imprecise. Artistic interpretation - or variation in play style - meaning that a performance may not perfectly instantiate a work the way Dodd demands. Any variation in performance does not properly instantiate the musical work, meaning it is a different musical work. This does not reflect musical practice. Compare

Harris', Jones', and Metheny's versions. They are in different keys, but all are considered to be performances of "Don't Know Why". Their melodies, chords, and harmony are sequenced very differently. If the sound structure must be perfectly replicated to properly instantiate the musical work, then only one of these versions is a proper instantiation, and the other two are tokens of two different works.

An alternative might be found in the tokening of what is referred to as the 'relative harmony' of a musical work (Goehr, 1992). When a listener hears a melody, they are able to recognize the pitches in the sequence and how these pitches relate to each other. When these pitches are sequenced to create a melody or played at the same time to create a chord, listeners are able to understand the individual pitches but can shift attention and hear the chord or melody as though it is a singular unit. Listeners understand that individual pitches of a melody are different, but the way pitches interact with each other creates a chord that has the same tonal quality as a different chord from another piece of music (Rollinger, Robin, & Lerna, 2022). The E major chord of Harris' version has no notes in common with the G major chord of Metheny's version, but both are the tonal center of their respective versions. This is called relative harmony, and it is why it is possible to understand the same melody across versions despite the difference in key (Rollinger, Robin, & Lerna, 2022).

Based on the way Dodd presents constitutive sound structures, specific notes and chords are necessary for the proper instantiation of a musical work. The relative harmony might be similar to a listener's ear, but if tokening a work necessitates specific notes, then only versions that use those notes are proper tokens. This makes Dodd's claim about sound structures less appealing. Dodd's definition of sound structures is

one that excludes the similarities of relative harmony and does not reflect the common practice of performance of relative harmony. Furthermore, Dodd's definition makes proper tokening an impossibility, as there are too many variables in a performance to perfectly token a sound structure. Rather than addressing issues of audibility and repeatability, Dodd's sound structures make audibility and repeatability impossible for type-token theories.

Scores and tokening

John Dyck argues that all type-token theories make performing a musical work an impossibility (Dyck, 2014). He claims tokens will always fail to meet what he calls the 'perfect compliance condition' (Dyck, 2014). The perfect compliance condition demands that performances must be perfect recreations of the work. Dyck comes from the Western classical musical tradition, where the score is a written encoding of the musical work that can be considered a set of representational instructions for performing a musical work. If the score is a written set of instructions on how to perfectly token the musical work, then following the score during a performance should yield a perfect tokening. Dyck thinks elements of interpretation are always present, resulting in variation, meaning perfect compliance is not met.

Lydia Goehr shows how aleatoric scores add more confusion (Goehr 1992). Aleatoric scores give instructions to improvise at certain parts of a performance. A common feature of Baroque²⁰ era scores is to leave certain sections of the melody up to the performer. In these cases, the instructions allow for interpretive variation. If the

²⁰ The Baroque era is an artistic period from roughly 1600 to 1750 CE.

score is the instructions for proper tokening and improvisation is part of the score, then strict token theories are not possible.

Dyck takes this a step further, claiming that certain variations in musical events are unavoidable and affect performances. Changes in tempo, performer idiosyncrasies, the size of a space, and the ambient temperature of a room are all factors that affect the performance (Dyck, 2022). Despite ongoing improvements in acoustic engineering to control spaces and reduce variables, it is impossible to remove them completely (Thompson, 2002). Variables are innumerable and uncontrollable; thus, perfect compliance is not only a problem of score interpretation and understanding the musical parameters of the universal, but a physical impossibility. Dyck claims any type-token theory that aims to explain how tokens perfectly instantiate a musical work must account for this impossibility in audibility and repeatability (Dyck, 2014).

Dyck suggests that type-token theories might still be tenable if performer intention was considered in conjunction with perfect compliance conditions (Dyck, 2014). Perfect compliance can still be important, but the performer's intention to perfectly comply despite all the uncontrollable variables should affect the tokening of the performance.

By this account, the lyrical mistake in Jones's Grammy performance would not disqualify the performance as a proper token of the musical work. Instead, a consideration for Jones's nerves could be made, as she intended to perform the song in perfect compliance. Jones was performing at one of the most prestigious popular music events in front of hundreds of people in person and thousands via broadcast. A noticeable but negligible lyrical mistake is understandable given the circumstances.

While this does seem to be a much less onerous approach to how musical works are tokened, it does raise questions about flexibility. Variation in solos and performer intention could be taken to be part of the properties of universals. Dyck is correct that universals must be able to account for the variables in performance, but I am not sure how this would be possible given the non-causal nature of universals. If universals cannot change, which would allow for variation, then tokening appears impossible. If they can change to allow for variation, why call them universals?

Perhaps universals are unchanging, and perfect compliance should be done away with altogether. This does not mean that improvisation and deviation are impossible. If universal types are not flexible, then perhaps a change in the approach to tokens could alleviate the problem.

Nested Types

Nemesio García-Carril Puy presents a type-token theory that could allow for variation in tokens called 'nested types' (Puy, 2019 A). Puy proposes that performances that vary are instantiations of different musical works (types), but that musical works that have the same 'point' are nested, or encapsulated, by larger, more prominent types (Puy, 2019 A). The 'point' of the work is what he describes as the character, mood, or emotion of the work (Puy, 2019 A). This is purposefully vague as Puy is attempting to define a character of the musical work that is not necessarily related to its musical attributes. Different performances need not share structure or even rhythm or melody. For Puy, this is fine because they can retain the point of the musical work.

Puy thinks this approach to the classification of types would solve any problems related to repeatability (Puy, 2019 A). Performances, like covers and especially parodies, can retain the point of the work, but still deviate from their musical parameters. Even if the point of a work is retained, if the melody or lyrical content varies too much, then the performance tokens a different musical work (Puy, 2019 A). Metheny's version of "Don't Know Why" makes too many changes to the melody, instrumentation, voicing, and rhythm. These variations mean Metheny's cover tokens a different musical work. This different work is still connected to "Don't Know Why" because it retains the point of the work, and so it is nested in a higher order type and still called "Don't Know Why" (Puy, 2019 A). Harris' original would be considered the higher-order type that encompasses lesser-order types, like Metheny's reimaging. Higher-order musical works may have many different lower-order musical works of different tiers nested within them, allowing for multiple works to be related (Puy, 2019 A). If one can concede that some performances do not relate to the same type, but token a different work that is related to the original type, then nested types allow for variation in type-token theories. Nested types negate the need for error theory in talking about musical works, but the question remains: is the point of a musical work or nested types reflected in musical practice?

Elze Sigute Mikalonyte and Vilius Dranseika were interested in this question (Mikalonyte & Dranseika, 2022). They ran an experiment asking participants about the features of musical works and whether the point of the work mattered for a performance to token a musical work. The experiment showed that participants thought the point mattered less than a change to the score (Mikalonyte & Dranseika, 2022). Mikalonyte's

and Dranseika's conclusion was that musical practice did not support a nested type theory. Puy has criticized the experiments because they were performed in a formal setting, which does not reflect listening practice (Puy, 2022).

Andrew Kania argues that nested type theory does not sufficiently define when a nested or a non-nested musical work is created (Kania, 2022). His objection is that Puy has only shifted the question of thresholds away from how a musical work is tokened to when a musical work is no longer nested in a higher-order type (Kania, 2022).

For example, some performers engage in the musical act of 'quoting' or playing a small phrase of another work. If a performance successfully shares the point of a work but also musically quotes one or more other musical works, is it then nested in every type quoted? Kania is right to push back against nested type theory if it cannot account for common performance practices like quoting (Kania, 2022). Kania thinks that if a distinction between musical works were to be clearly defined, a nested theory could still be viable (Kania, 2022). Puy has yet to give any indication as to what it would take to alter the point of a musical work enough to force a new, non-nested musical work to be created.

As it stands, nested type theory does give answers to how musical works appear to be repeatable, how they can be referenced, and even does away with the need for error theory. What nested type theory does not do is explain how audiences understand what universals sound like, especially higher-order types, as they are further muddled by nesting. It is also unclear how nested type theory supports musical practice. Currently, a theory of nested types does appear to have viability, but as the theory is new, additional scholarship is necessary and not the focus of my current project.

Creation

Here, I look at how Platonists attempt to explain how composing relates to universals. Platonists like Jarrold Levinson think universals are eternal (Levinson, 1990). On this account, musical works cannot be created or destroyed. Instead, musical works have always existed, and composers are engaging in an act of ascription or discovery.

Levinson thinks composers still deserve artistic credibility for their endeavour, but composing does not create a universal, it indicates a universal (Levinson, 1990). A composer discovers an already existing sound structure by properly sequencing its musical parameters and then naming it (Levinson, 1990, p.79). This process does not reflect the language, practice, or experience of composing. Musicians do not say Harris discovered and then named a sequence "Don't Know Why". Even if they did speak this way, every time a work is tokened, variations would mean this performance was the discovery of a new musical work.

Nurbay Irmak attempts another explanation of how composing relates to universals. He claims that sound structures can be created (Irmak, 2021). Basing his idea on Amie Thomasson's metaphysics of art (Thomasson, 1999), Irmak thinks that manipulating physically extended entities, pitch, duration, timbre, time, and so forth, is tantamount to manipulating the musical work. If musical works are sound structures, then the related tokens for chords and notes are somehow connected to the universals they instantiate. If the tokens are put together in a novel sequence, then the types they reflect are also sequenced in the same way, creating a larger constitutive type called a

musical work (Irmak, 2021). Dodd, on the other hand, maintains that universals cannot be created (Dodd, 2000). Even if works are constitutive, they are eternal and non-causal; manipulating chords and notes cannot affect sound structures. Universals are, by definition, non-causal (Dodd, 2000).

Saam Trivedi argues that artists from non-musical disciplines create their artworks so reducing composing to discovery, because music is a non-tangible medium, reduces a composer's creative endeavour (Trivedi, 2002). Dodd's rebuttal maintains that the artistic practice of non-musical art doesn't have any bearing on music. Sculpting and other visual arts are concerned with the creation of concrete objects. Musical works and composers do not deal with concrete art and therefore are not tied to the same rules of creation (Dodd, 2002).

While Dodd's point is well made, treating musical works as universals does not reflect the way musicians speak about composing. While the role of the composer may be given too much prominence in Western classical music traditions (Goehr, 1992; Small, 1998), the notion that composing is not an act of creation is dubious. The clear-cut way Platonism answers the problem of reference may be enticing to some, but the eternal status of universals and the suspect nature of composing places Platonism at odds with musical practice.

ii: Idealism

Musical idealism considers how entities, like musical works, could be partially or wholly located within the mind, meaning they could be a mental construct, representation or idea.

Pure, or 'simple,' idealism claims that everything is in the mind. Levinson thinks this is not possible. Musical works are culturally shared, and if they are ideas, they would be contained within individual minds and therefore, unshareable and non-audible (Levinson, 1980, 5). Levinson is correct, as musical works are debated, shared, and hold a lot of cultural significance. Due to these constraints, Musical idealism has not been popular (Cray & Matheson, 2017).

Wesley Cray and Carl Matheson propose a return to idealism that circumvents the problems of pure idealism. Appropriately called 'sophisticated idealism,' Cray & Matheson propose treating the performance as a physically instantiated event, but the listener's experience of the event and the memory of the performance as an important part of the musical work. When another performance or playback event occurs, these new experiences are related to similar performances, creating a more robust mental representation of the musical work (Cray & Matheson, 2017). The robustness of the representation is why an individual may hear a performance with different musical parameters, such as relative harmony, and recognize it as related to other performances. This explains how musical works are repeatable to an individual. The work can also be referenced because there is a mental representation. At this point, these solutions are only at an individual level. Cray and Matheson think this is a crucial step, but an individual's mental representation is not the musical work; it is a crucial component (Cray & Matheson, 2017). As the individual listens to performances, she then communicates and compares her experiences with others, who do the same in return. This causes the representation to conform to a larger cultural understanding of the musical work. This cultural understanding is an aggregate public belief or concept

(Cray & Matheson, 2017). These concepts are how communities understand and negotiate sophisticated mental entities such as musical works. Under this theory, “Don’t Know Why” is a shared representation; the performance of Metheny’s version is different from Jones’ version, but both are encompassed by a cultural or communal aggregate representation (Cray & Matheson, 2017).

Musical works as mental representations and can be referred to outside of performance, and they are flexible, as individual mental representations can be compared to the aggregate musical work. This solves the problem of reference and the problem of repeatability. Individual performances and experiences will differ from the aggregate, as every experience is unique. A shared representation explains normative features of repeatability and reference, as the mental representation is an ever-present, accessible entity. Individual performances are related to, and make up the aggregate public concept, meaning there is flexibility built into the aggregate representation, allowing performances to be incredibly varied but still related. It also means that the individual has knowledge of the aggregate concept's properties and can compare them with a performance. As a result, this theory allows musical works to be audible.

Under sophisticated idealism, composing can be an act of creation rather than discovery (Cray & Matheson, 2017). A concept need not already be in place for a musical work to exist. The musical work must first start as a single person's idea that will aggregate into a concept when presented to a wider audience. The composer undergoes the creative act of considering different musical melodies, harmonies, rhythms, chords and other musical parameters. Once satisfied, they present the idea.

Audiences experience performances of the idea individually and then communally, creating a musical work (Cray & Matheson, 2017).

Cray and Matheson's sophisticated idealism gives clear answers to the problems of musical works. It reflects musical practice presently and historically. The bulk of Goehr's *"The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works"* deals with the historical creation of the musical work concept, including how Western listeners began differentiating musical works from each other historically (Goehr, 1992). Cray and Matheson's idealism sits nicely with Goehr's historical approach. It explains how musical works became prevalent in the 1800s. As the musical public grew, the aggregate idea of a musical work became more robust, creating a stronger sense of the concept of musical works. Under sophisticated idealism, musical works are aggregate shared representations that were born out of the dissemination of the work concept.

I agree with historical and social claims about musical works, but I am skeptical of the notion of shared mental representation. Here is an example to outline my skepticism. I had no idea Jones' version of "Don't Know Why" existed the first time I heard it. I was only familiar with Metheny's version. When I heard Jones' version, I recognized aspects of it like the relative harmony and melody, but it does not follow that I had any kind of aggregate shared concept about the musical work.

My experience of hearing Jones's version for the first time highlights how sophisticated idealism's shared representation may not reflect how humans understand musical works. If shared representation is in doubt then so too is sophisticated idealism. Ruth Garret Millikan posits an alternative explanation for mental representation that does not rely on shared mental representation called 'unicepts' (Millikan, 2017).

Unicepts are unique to each individual and can be misinformed. My unicepts are unique to me and my experience of the world. Unicepts can be corrected by absorbing and sharing information. By comparing my experience, my unicept becomes more robust and words used to describe features of the unicept take on a culturally agreed upon meaning (Millikan, 2017). My unicept of “Don’t Know Why” only represented my experience of Metheny’s version. Once I heard a different version, I could recognize the same qualities and that information was added to my unicept. This transfer of information through language could be the mechanics of Cray and Matheson’s sophisticated idealism that circumnavigates issues of how representations are shared.

There is another kind of idealism worth considering called social constructionism. Social constructionism posits that entities or concepts, such as the musical work concept, are mental entities that are constructed and reinforced by social interaction (Hacking, 1999). Social constructionism’s primary strength is in the way it explains how musical works appear to change depending on the location, era and people involved. Unlike sophisticated idealism, which relies on all people having shared representation, social constructionism does not expect individuals to know an entity. Instead, definitions and behaviours around musical works are heavily based on the various contexts of the people that inform the socially constructed entity (Hacking, 1999). This appears to undermine idealism’s solution to problems of reference, as it is unclear how different groups would refer to the same musical work or if the same musical works exist across different groups.

iii: Artifactualism

Artifactualists think that certain concrete objects called artifacts have a mental and social dimension that goes beyond utility (Fenner, 2024). Utility is an object's intended use. Artifacts have additional social or cultural meaning. In Western classical traditions, the score is the artifact. Interaction with score results in a culturally important entity called the musical work (Mikalonytė, 2024). It is not the case that the musical work is the score all by itself. It is the relationship between human interactants and the artifact that creates the musical work. As the score changes or interactions with it change, musical works can be altered. The status of the musical work can change depending on the relation to the artifact; this means the 'correct' way to perform a work can also change. As long as a similar enough relationship to the artifact is maintained over time, then the musical work will continue to exist, meaning musical works exist outside of performance. Musical works are cultural artifacts, so the whole community's engagement with the artifact at a cultural level is important. An individual would not be capable of maintaining an artifact's relevance at the level required for a musical work to exist. The cultural context of the work is how musical artifactualism solves the problem of audibility. Musical works can be referenced through the cultural understanding of the artifact outside of a performance (Goodman, 1969). This is how a performance can be compared to the musical work. The understanding of the work is related to the social and mental features of how a musical work ought to sound.

If a musical score is the artifact of choice, then it follows that artifactualists will suffer some of the same issues as Platonists in terms of score compliance (Goehr, 1992). Perfect, or rule compliance, may still be necessary for Western classical

traditions because of the way that tradition interacts with the score as an artifact, but other genres may not be so stringent about their artifacts. Kania (2006) suggests that genre and social practices feature heavily in the creation and selection of different kinds of musical work artifacts. Consider how rock music does not require a score but still has musical works. This is because rock musicians and audiences have different relationships with their music and therefore, have different kinds of musical artifacts in place of the Western classical score (Kania, 2006). Rock and pop music rely on the recording, or track, as their artifact (Kania, 2006; Gracyk, 1996). However, it is not clear if the artifact is the recording itself or the physical media, such as a CD or vinyl pressing.

Kania thinks that jazz is not a work-based art form because of its focus on performance, and there does not appear to be an artifact like a score or recording in jazz (Kania, 2011). John Andrew Fisher (2018) is opposed to this view. Describing jazz as a tradition without musical works neglects the long history of artists iterating on others' works as a form of historical and cultural appreciation.

It is not clear what the musical work artifact would be for something that shares features from other genres. All the recordings and performances of "Don't Know Why" I selected have features of jazz, rock, pop, and folk. Any musical work that crosses over to another genre would need to explain what its musical work artifact is. By Kania's account, "Don't Know Why" would be considered a pop or rock song because it has a musical work artifact, and according to him, jazz does not have musical works. This does not reflect the aesthetic or cultural practices that "Don't Know Why" is rooted in. The reason Kania suggests jazz is a workless art form is that it is not clear what the musical work artifact would be in jazz. The lack of a clear musical work artifact appears

to make Kania correct, and jazz musicians are engaged in error theory about their musical works. But more likely, the lack of a clear jazz musical work artifact suggests that artifactualism is likely not how musical works exist at all.

Artifactualism has some other benefits worth exploring. If musical works can be created by engaging with an artifact, then they could also be destroyed (Luzio, 2019). Musical works that are lost over time due to a missing artifact or a shift in relation to the artifact could be forgotten as the memory of that work fades away. This supports the notion that musical works are publicly understood, culturally relevant entities. Like idealism, there is a heavy emphasis on representations that bind a community's understanding or collective memory of the work. This connection between the mental and physical is important as it gives credence to the interaction between concrete particulars and mental events. If connections deteriorate, then a musical work ceases to exist. Consider how the restoration of a recording once thought lost impacts how a community interacts with a musical work. The restoration could supplant an existing musical work artifact with drastic effects on the work's performances. Purists might push for a restored work to be the only way a musical work should be performed, but under artifactualism, this need not be the only way, as relationships with artifacts are contextual and can be understood to have a multiplicity of meanings by in-groups and out-groups. They should also be understood to have multiple meanings within a singular group. Most of the musical community is unaware of Harris's version of "Don't Know Why." This isn't an issue for artifactualism, because Harris' version does not make up a large part of the social dimension of the musical work. If more people were to discover

that his version exists, it may have a profound effect on how audiences interact with Jones's version and future performances of the work as a whole.

Solving issues of audibility and repeatability is much more dependent on the expectations of the audience toward the treatment of the musical work artifact. This might feel less rigid, but it reflects musical practices across genres and cultures. Reference is easily understood because of the social dimension that the artifact has within the community. It can be referenced easily, and its normative power is rooted in the prominence the artifact has in that community.

iv: Fictionalism

Fictionalism posits that musical works do not exist in the strictest sense, but we make-believe they exist. Levinson makes an important distinction between imagining and pretending (Levinson, 2025). The act of imagining a musical work is how we engage with art. This is the fictional part. Pretending has a different meaning. One does not pretend to create or hear a musical work, but imagines the musical work. In this way, the work is not an act of pretense, but an imaginary entity (Levinson, 2025).

Suppose we treat musical works, like "Don't Know Why," the same way that we would Santa Claus. Santa is not real, but we talk about him as though he is a real living entity. We even ascribe attributes to him, such as jolly, bearded, fat, wears red, drives a sleigh, lives at the North Pole, etc. If Santa does not exist, then things attributed to him, such as properties, are all false. This does not reflect the way we understand or talk about Santa. Fictionalists explain this by arguing that Santa is imaginary and so are the

features that we imagine are true about him. This is the same for Musical works, and it forms the basis of issues of audibility. There are properties that a work possesses that performers must agree are true to perform the work.

Anton Killin gives a fictionalist account of how to solve this issue of audibility. Killin proposes a difference between 'internal' and 'external' sentences. Internal sentences describe an entity from within the world of the fiction. "Santa lives at the North Pole" is true as an internal statement. Within the fiction, Santa lives at the North Pole. This would be the same for musical works. "Don't Know Why" can be called 'mellow' because, within the fiction of the work, that attribute holds. External sentences are those that pertain to the real world outside of the fiction. "Santa lives at the North Pole" is not true as an external statement because no person by that name lives at the North Pole. By determining if an internal or external sentence is being used, it is possible to compare a musical work to a performance.

Through internal sentences, we can discern properties that are true to the work and compare them to external sentences about the performance (Killin, 2018).

For example, Metheny's version has more improvisation than "Don't Know Why" normally does. This sentence has two parts, and they are both true, but one is external and one is internal. The first half of the sentence is a true external sentence and could be broken down to "Metheny's version has more improvisation." The second part is a claim about the musical work, which claims that "Don't Know Why" has some improvisation. This is a true internal statement. This is how musical works are audible under fictionalism. There are agreed-upon properties that are internal truths to the musical work. This is also how repeatability is solved under Killin's fictionalism. Internal

and external sentences allow for a significant amount of flexibility in performance variation. The only issue is how audiences become aware of true internal properties.

Kania has an account of fictionalism that could solve how audiences learn of internal properties of musical works (Kania, 2008). He thinks musicians and listeners should be free to create and modify the properties and truths of musical works freely (Kania, 2008, 2012). Anything could become true about works if musicians and audiences find it acceptable in the fiction. Philip Letts warns against this kind of freeform fictionalism (Letts, 2015). If talk about musical works is based on personal preference, everything is subjective and works lose all normativity. Letts thinks Kania's fictionalism does not reveal anything about the nature or existence of musical works and, therefore, has no explanatory power as a theory (Letts, 2015).

v: Nominalism

Nominalism outright rejects the existence of universals in any capacity. This does not mean that nominalism is the same as physicalism (Kim & Sosa, 2000). Physicalism suggests that the only thing that exists are concrete entities. For musical works, physicalism is a non-starter, as there is no way to solve the problem of reference. A performance of "Don't Know Why", once over, is in the past, but we do not say that the work itself is also in the past. Thus, musical works cannot be explained by physicalism. Nominalism is not as restrictive as physicalism when it comes to concrete entities.

A common thread in nominalist theory is the use of 'kinds'. Nominalists, like Millikan, conceive of entities as a collective grouping of all the things in the physical world that share certain properties (2017). These groups of similar entities are called

kinds (Kim & Sosa, 2000). Consider the difference between '**the** song', an individually instantiated musical work, and '**a** song', the abstraction encompassing all the things that have songlike properties. Relying on the works of Nicholas Wolterstorff, Charles Nussbaum suggests that musical works are norm-kinds (Nussbaum, 2003). Norm-kinds are groups of like things that are linked together by shared features. Performances make a group of things based on shared properties. This grouping of like performances creates a kind, and the shared properties are the normative features of that kind. If musical works can be thought of as norm-kinds, then performances could be thought of as a species (Nussbaum, 2003). Like in biology, species are reproduced based on a kind of historical precedent, or what Millikan calls "Reproducible Established Families" (Millikan, 2017). It is not that the performances are breeding, but that the history of the work establishes certain traits which are then passed on to other performances.

Every version of "Don't Know Why" would be considered a copy, or reproduction, of another performance. This group, known as a kind, is then referred to by the name "Don't Know Why." This is how each performance of "Don't Know Why" is called that name and shares properties with performances that come before and after it. Like animal species, performances do not completely conform to the kind. Variations exist and are allowed because of the evolutionary nature of adaptation and traits (Nussbaum, 2003). "Don't Know Why", the musical work, is a causally and historically linked set of performances starting with Harris's version and continuing with Jones' reproduction of Harris', then Metheny's reproduction of Jones' and so on. This includes the live performances. Because kinds are clusters of similar things that fall under an umbrella term, the problem of reference is answered, as it is clear that the reference is to the

causal and historical grouping, or kind. Past performances belong to the kind because that is how kinds are formed. Future performances will also belong to the kind because kind does not have a tense. This also answers the problem of repeatability and audibility, as kinds are normative by nature and have rules for what performances ought to adhere to. All past performances make the cluster more robust and offer more versions of the kind. Kinds may also deviate. As performances with particular properties gain uptake, the kind itself may shift.

Other theories of nominalism exist that are more focused on the temporal nature of entities. Endurantism and perdurantism are two opposing views that attempt to solve how entities maintain identity over time (Lewis, 1983; Sider, 2001). In recent years, these theories have been applied to musical works as well (Letts, 2022). Endurantism proposes that entities are three-dimensional and endure through time. Imagine time as a river with a log floating in it. The log hits rocks and is affected by changes in the river, but the log endures throughout its existence. That is the intuitive way of considering physical objects in time, but it is difficult to consider a musical work in this way, as it is not a physical object (Sider, 2001). "Don't Know Why" is only physical in a particular performance, such as Jones' Grammy performance. The soundwaves take up space and are causally affected by the space, but performances only last for a brief period. The work exists historically, but is not something that can be touched or heard, and so it is not physically extended. "Don't Know Why" is only physical when it is performed, meaning there is no physical connection between instantiations (Letts, 2022). Musical works cannot be the enduring entity that endurantists posit. While an appealing

explanation for concrete objects, endurantism cannot answer the problem of reference, repeatability or audibility.

Perdurantism instead proposes that entities are four-dimensional. Instead of being physically extended and enduring through time, entities are both physically and temporally extended. To explain temporal extension, I will return to the log example. It is not the case that the log flows through the river of time, but that the log is stretched out along the course of the river of time. This temporally elongated log-shaped entity is called a 'time-worm'. This is why perdurantism is called 'worm theory'. It is a strange notion, but it accounts for changes in objects such as growth. The entity is the same as its past because it is causally connected to its past, but may have different attributes from its past states (Lewis, 1983).

If musical works are perduring four-dimensional entities, then they are temporally extended by performances. It is clear that performances extend through time, but it is not clear how they are linked when the performance has ended. Caplan and Matheson offer a solution by claiming that the performances, as well as any encoding of the performance, such as a recording or score, make up the musical work time-worm (Caplan & Matheson, 2006). This theory was criticized for being messy, and it is unclear how scores, which are not audible, connect to performances (Letts, 2020). In response, Caplan and Matheson revised their original expansive perdurantist theory in favour of an austere perdurantism. Austere perdurantism claims that only performances are considered part of the time worm (Caplan & Matheson, 2008). In this version, scores are not part of the musical work but are written representations of the work (Caplan & Matheson, 2008). While this is much more manageable, austere perdurantism now

suffers from an inability to answer the problem of reference when there is no current performance. The musical work time-worm has gaps where no performances occur (Letts, 2022). Exdurantism is an offshoot of perdurantism that offers a solution to this problem by treating performances as a part or 'stage' (Sider, 2001). Musical Stage Theory is an exdurantist theory applied to musical works meant to solve perdurantism's problem of reference and bolster its answers to audibility and repeatability.

These are a few of the prominent ontologies of musical works and how they aim to deal with the issues of audibility, repeatability and reference. Musical Platonism's commitment to universals makes reference easy, but the non-causal nature of universals makes solving issues around ability and repeatability difficult. Idealism is capable of offering an answer to issues of repeatability and audibility through the allowance of variation in individual experience, which is aggregated into a shared mental representation. However, when called into question, shared representation does not answer issues surrounding reference. Artifactualism offers a solution to all three problems by positing social and mental interaction with artifacts. Unfortunately, this falls apart when applied to works that appear to have no art object. Fictionalism offers interesting answers to audibility but is rooted in error theory, which remains unsatisfactory. I explored three forms of nominalism: Kind theory is great for repeatability and audibility, although some issues around the threshold between species might persist; endurantism is a non-starter for musical works, leaving perdurantism, which fails to answer the problem of reference due to holes in the proposed time-worm. Like many of the theories here, MST has its strengths and weaknesses, as I will show in

the next chapter. But what makes MST a viable alternative to these theories is its capacity to adopt some of the strengths of some of these theories, which I will show in chapter **V**. First, I will need to present how MST works, which I do in chapter **III**.

Chapter III: Musical Stage Theory

In this chapter, I cover MST in the state that Caterina Moruzzi originally presented it. While it is a unique theory, it has some shortcomings which will be covered in the following chapter. In Chapter V, I propose solutions to make MST a defensible and viable ontology of musical works.

MST is a four-dimensional theory of musical works, meaning musical works are physically and temporally extended (see previous chapter). MST is based on the works of Theodore Sider, who proposed Stage Theory, or exdurantism, as an alternative to David Lewis's perdurantism (Moruzzi, 2018; Sider, 2001; Lewis, 1983). Stage theory suggests that time-worms are made up of contiguous segments called stages. 'Stage' here is not meant to refer to the raised platform, dais, or designated performance area that separates spectacle from audience. Here, the term 'stage' means a spatiotemporal part, or demarcated segment of the time-worm (Sider, 2001). Returning to the log-in-the-river metaphor, imagine a Polaroid photo is taken of the log every day for the entirety of the log's existence. These photos could then be stretched out in a worm along the length of the river of time. This would create a temporally extended time-worm, as we saw in perdurantism. Unlike perdurantism, any of the photos could be selected and scrutinized individually as a spatio-temporal stage of the log. The log's life span is made up of these stages that are linked together.

Moruzzi thinks that this model provides a novel and viable alternative to current ontologies of musical works (Moruzzi, 2018). By her account, performances are the

stages which are linked together to create a time-worm entity we call a musical work (Moruzzi, 2018). She outlines her theory with four claims:

1. Musical works are made up of spatio-temporal stages.
2. Stages are connected by a privileged relationship to each other.
3. There is a tacit but understood semantic shift that occurs when talking about musical works versus talking about performances.
4. This semantic shift is contextually modulated.

(Moruzzi, 2018, p. 343)

The goal of these claims is to show how MST can explain how musical works are made up of connected stages (Moruzzi, 2018). The stages are performances that are independent and unconnected works in their own right. These are called work-as-performances (Moruzzi, 2018). If the work-as-performance has enough in common with previous works-as-performance, they are said to be repeated or repeatable, which links them to past performances. When all of these linked work-as-performances are examined together, they make up a time-worm. This is called the work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018). Audiences and musicians are able to make a distinction between the work-as-performance and the work-as-construct, despite the use of the same name. Which work is being referred to is based on a linguistic shift in temporal scope (Moruzzi, 2018). The work-as-performance can be identified by the location and time it was played. It is a singular one-time event. The work-as-construct work can be identified by when it was first performed. The two have different temporal contexts that are easily discerned and semantically conveyed (Moruzzi, 2018). This is the basic frame explaining how MST functions. I will examine each claim more thoroughly in an effort to clarify the mechanics of MST.

Claim 1: Musical works are made up of Spatio-Temporal stages.

The first claim is that musical works are physically and temporally extended time-worms made up of stages, where stages are performances. *Prima facie*, this first claim has a glaring issue. Sider presents stages as instantaneous temporal parts (Sider, 2001). Performances are not instantaneous and often consist of different parts, like choruses and verses. A performance cannot be a stage if it is not instantaneous and consists of more than one part. Moruzzi appeals to Katherine Hawley's (2001, 59) interpretation of stages to state "A performance-stage... can thus be described as the sum of all the instantaneous stages that constitute a sound event, the salience of which is determined by the complete performance, from the first to the last note prescribed by the composer's instructions" (Moruzzi, 2018, 343). By Moruzzi's account, this means all of the instantaneous stages of the performance are combined as a singular stage. Moruzzi takes this to be the stage of the musical work (Moruzzi, 2018). The spatial part comes from the way performances take up and are necessarily situated in space. Thus, a performance is spatio-temporal and a stage.

Claim 2: Stages are connected by a privileged relationship to each other.

The second claim aims to clarify how stages are related to each other, as performances are not contiguous. The gaps between performances would create a hole in the musical work time-worm. A good illustration of this problem is how individuals use the word 'I'. This word is used to talk about oneself and one's self and their Identity. It is

inaccurate to say that the current state of a temporal individual was once a child, as childhood is a separate set of past stages. We take the sentence, “I was once a child,” to be true because the childhood stages are causally related to the present stage of the individual. The causal connection of all the stages between those in childhood up to the present gives the individual a causal identity that makes the statement true. Musical works do not function the same way because they are not physically extended the same way humans are. Even if Moruzzi is correct that musical works could be a collection of stages, it cannot be space or time that connects them. The log, or the individual who speaks the word 'I', has contiguous stages across its lifetime. I may choose to individuate certain parts of my existence into stages, but the fact remains that these stages temporally abut each other. The child stages directly inform and eventually temporally abut the teenager stages. Performances do not benefit from this temporal contiguity. Performances, even in the sound event context Moruzzi proposes, do not abut one another temporally or physically.

The 2003 Grammy Awards performance of "Don't Know Why" is not temporally adjacent to any other performance. Jones and her band likely performed earlier that very day for sound check.²¹ However, there was still time between sound check and the evening's recital. If Jones performs “Don't Know Why” back-to-back, the lack of a pause between performances creates ambiguity concerning the length of the performance, devolving into one of two interpretations. The first interpretation would look like a performance that is twice as long, with all parts repeated in the same order. This is

²¹ Sound check is the final rehearsal at a venue to make sure all of the instruments and electronics are properly set up, so performances go according to plan.

certainly a possible interpretation, but because there is little to no variation between the repeated parts, the performance is more likely to be understood by the second interpretation; the performance is fully completed before a second repeated performance immediately commences. This would mean audiences interpret the performances as having an indefinably minuscule pause between them - a single moment of demarcation that indicates one performance is complete before the next one begins. Neither of these two cases has the same causal contiguity as a physical entity's time-worm. In the first circumstance, the performance is interpreted as twice as long as it ought to be and may not conform to the musical work. In the second, the performance came to an end, even for just an instance, meaning it was not contiguous.

MST attempts to get around this problem by treating each performance as a musical work independent of any other performance or musical work. This means that every performance need not adhere to any score or previous performance. This musical work performance is called the work-as-performance. These work-as-performances are then linked together by what Moruzzi calls the 'R-relation' (Moruzzi, 2018). The R-relation stands for repeatability-relation, which is defined as the way performances are repeatable events and are causally related to future and past performances. The R-relation is made up of three mechanics called the :

- Causality-relation; the performance must take influence in some way from the composer or previous performance
- Intentionality-relation; the performers must attempt to adhere to the normative features of the work-as-construct or reinterpret the musical features in a creatively fulfilling way; and

- Similarity-relation; the performance must have enough musical quality in its sonic profiles to other performances in the work-as-construct

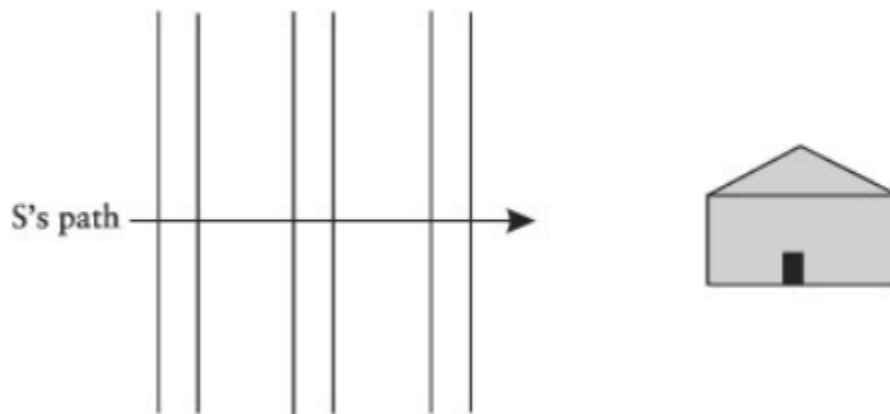
Thus, even when no playback event occurs, stages are linked together by repeating features of past performances (Moruzzi, 2018). It is the R-relation that determines if performances are similar enough to one another, which then links these similar performances together (Moruzzi, 2018). When linked together in their entirety, from past to present, these linked performances create a time-worm called the work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018).

Claim 3: There is a tacit but understood semantic shift that occurs when talking about musical works versus talking about performances.

The third claim argues that audiences and musicians understand the difference between work-as-performance and work-as-construct despite using the same name. A single performance of "Don't Know Why" can be referred to as a work-as-performance. "Norah Jones made a mistake in 'Don't Know Why'" is true only for the 45th Grammy performance. In this instance, the speaker is talking about the work-as-performance. In contrast, "'Don't Know Why' is my favourite song" is a phrase about the work-as-construct. This is a sentence about the totality of all the performances and is therefore about the work-as-construct. The work-as-construct is what most people would refer to as **the** musical work. The distinction between the two works is important because it is the basis for how work-as-performance can be compared to the work-as-construct. Comparisons are done by shifting temporal scope when referencing a work. I will illustrate this through a parallel example in Sider's work.

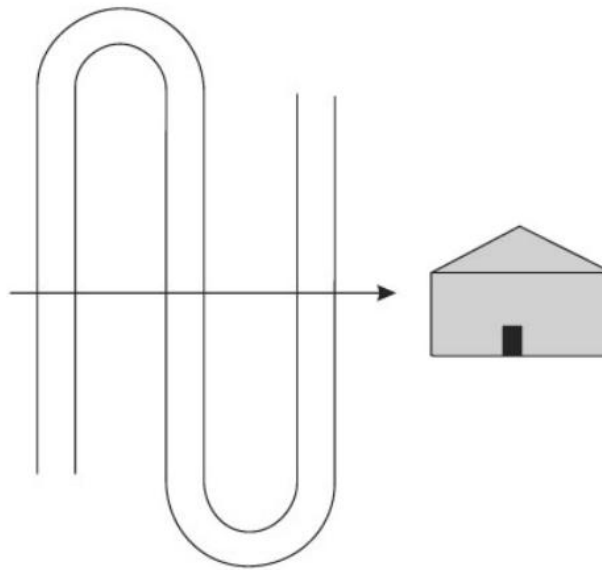
Sider describes an occasion where an individual is giving directions to person **S**, who is attempting to reach a house. Person **S** is told they must travel straight in a certain direction and cross three roads before reaching their destination (Sider 2001).

(Sider, 2001, p. 190)



S follows these directions and successfully reaches their destination. However, when the map of the area is referenced, it becomes apparent that the three roads **S** crossed were the same winding road (Sider, 2001). This does not make the directions given inaccurate. The directions were given that way because the winding nature of the road was not relevant for **S** to reach their destination. From **S**'s perspective, they need only cross three roads to get to the house. It is only when looking at the area travelled in a wider scope that **S** realizes they crossed the same road three times in different sections (Sider, 2001). While it is true that there is only one road when travelling, **S** would not care that the road sections are the same road.

(Sider, 2001, p. 191)



This is the same for work-as-performance. Every performance is viewed the same as the road section from the perceiver's point of view (Moruzzi, 2018, p. 343). In most circumstances, observers will experience performances through time and will not need to consider the work-as-construct. The performance can be compared to the work-as-construct based on an individual's direct perspective, which is compared to the out-of-time perspective of the whole time-worm. This out-of-the-time perspective is the same shift **S** makes when viewing the whole road by looking at a map. The different stages have slightly different properties, but with the benefit of a wider perspective, what they have in common becomes clear. The stages and the time-worm have the same name, but a shift occurs, allowing listeners to understand whether the speaker is referring to the work-as-performance or the work-as-construct.

Claim 4: This semantic shift is contextually modulated.

The fourth and final claim has to do with when and how the shift in perspective takes place. Imagine someone says the phrase, "'Don't Know Why' is a brilliant piece of music, and Jones' mistake at the Grammy performance doesn't change that.' The first part of the sentence is a timeless view. Here, the speaker is referring to the work-as-construct. In the second part, they are comparing a specific work-as-performance to the work-as-construct. The claim is Jones' vocal mistake in the 45th Grammy award show (the work-as-performance) does not take away from their appreciation of the musical work (work-as-construct). Additionally, this speaker claims that despite this mistake, the performance still adheres to the normative features of the R-relation (Moruzzi, 2018).

This should immediately raise questions about threshold limitations for how much change can be tolerated by the R-relation. MST's answer to this is performer intention (Moruzzi, 2018). If the performer intends to create a repeat performance to the best of their ability, then the performance will fulfill the similarity condition of the R-relation for that work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018). There is an added caveat that Moruzzi includes. The performance's contextual setting drastically influences the stringency of how variable the performance can be (Moruzzi, 2018). A professional orchestra is a contextual setting with the expectation of achieving a high level of repeatability (similarity) in their work-as-performance. The contextual setting of a middle school music class has a much lower expectation. Both would be considered part of the work-as-construct because of the performers' intent to repeat the work, but they are held to different standards because the R-relation's similarity condition is contextually sensitive (Moruzzi, 2018).

Moruzzi's defences

Thus far, MST can answer the problem of repeatability and audibility by way of the R-relation. Shifting from the perspective of an individual's view to a timeless view answers how musical works are present in performance, but also how the work-as-construct can be referenced outside of playback. All of this appears to be done in a way that reflects musical practice to some degree. However, there are a few objections to MST. The first, Moruzzi pre-emptively takes up in her paper "Every Performance Is a Stage" (Moruzzi, 2018).

The objection concerns cases of compositions that have not been performed. According to MST, these would not be considered musical works because there are no performance stages to make up a work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018). This would place audiences and musicians into error theory, as speaking about unperformed works is common practice. Moruzzi claims that MST reflects musical practice more than other, current ontologies of musical works (Moruzzi, 2018, p. 349) and so accounts for unperformed works, or compositions, by calling them *works in potentia* (Moruzzi, 2018). Essentially, the act of composition does not create a musical work but creates the possibility of a musical work. The author composes music and releases it to the public through performance, where it becomes a musical work (Moruzzi, 2018). This unperformed composition is not yet a musical work, but upon performance will become a work-as-performance. If the work-as-performance is linked to other performances, then it becomes a work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018). Moruzzi argues that it is the potential to become a work that allows audiences to speak about unperformed musical works with such certainty. When speaking about an unperformed composition,

musicians are tacitly adding *in potentia* to the musical work statement. The composition may, one day, become a work, so it is given work-like status (Moruzzi, 2018). Moruzzi uses the work *in potentia* as a way to explain how the score of a musical work is written before the work is performed. Scores are an important part of disseminating music in Western classical music practice, but as technology has shifted, recordings have become a more accessible and ubiquitous way of accessing music. However, Moruzzi does not take up recordings in this, nor in any other paper about MST.

Moruzzi gives an additional important note in this paper. MST has less bias towards Western classical music traditions, which is an advantage over other ontologies (Moruzzi, 2018). Differences between performances of the musical work are explained by the fact that they are stages that make up the whole work (Moruzzi, 2018). This means musical practices such as jazz, which do not adhere to rigid repetition, can also be explained by MST. As long as the performances adhere to the R-relation, it will be a stage of the work-as-construct. Moruzzi argues that other ontologies tend to use the Western classical tradition as the norm, create ontologies based on these practices, and then attempt to force non-Western musical practices into the theory's framework (Moruzzi, 2018). She claims that MST is performance-centric and therefore reflects all musical practices rather than just Western classical music.

An Ontological Justification for Contextual Authenticity

Moruzzi continues to elaborate on MST in two additional papers. The first is "An Ontological Justification for Contextual Authenticity" (Moruzzi, 2019). This paper sets out to explain what the R-relation is and how it allows for variation between

performances, while also explaining how these disparate performances are part of the same work-as-construct. Traditionally, to be part of a musical work, a performance must be authentically related to the musical work. Traditional claims about authenticity do not apply to MST. Because each performance is a work-as-performance, there is no account for what the performance ought to sound like with regard to any other performance. For MST, Authenticity is related to how a work-as-performance connects to a work-as-construct. The performance needs to authentically recreate performances of the past in order to be part of the work-as-construct. In other words, the performance must repeat qualities of past performances in a way that adheres to the work-as-construct's R-relation.

Immediately, Moruzzi posits a multiplicity approach, suggesting, "...that we should abandon this [narrow] quest and acknowledge that there is no single way to define authenticity" (Moruzzi, 2019, p. 413). Instead, Moruzzi adopts Peter Kivy's four ways of interpreting authenticity (Moruzzi, 2019; Kivy, 1995). These are: authenticity-as-intention, or the adherence to the author or composer's intention; authenticity-as-sound, or a level of respect given to the composer's instructions; authenticity-as-practice, or respect to the historical sounds and the practices needed to achieve them; and 'other authenticity', which Moruzzi calls 'personal-authenticity' as it is about the performers' interpretative choices in a performance (Moruzzi, 2019; Kivy, 1995). The purpose of allowing these four methods to coexist is to let the context of the performance dictate the authenticity of the work-as-construct's R-relation.

Historical and contextual settings of the performance have more influence because they dictate the repeatability aspects of the R-relation. Moruzzi argues that

while authenticity-as-intention, sound, and practice can be important - because they are all rooted in the music of the past - they have less bearing than the personal-authenticity of the current performer for the work-as-performance (Moruzzi, 2019). When considering the work-as-construct, a performer's personal-authenticity is given respect, contrary to other ontologies, such as musical Platonism. MST offers a much more flexible kind of authenticity, which Moruzzi argues, matches musical practice and musical discourse (Moruzzi, 2019). This allows performers to deviate extensively from a score or past performance for creative reasons. By this kind of authenticity, it is possible to see how a cover, like Metheny's version of "Don't Know Why", is authentic to the work-as-construct. There is a level of respect in his creative interpretation of "Don't Know Why". He is also given respect for his personal-authenticity in the performance. The respect given to the artist is a normative factor that can link performance stages together and allow for a wide range of performances to make up the work-as-construct. Moruzzi does not think there is a strict metric of normativity in MST, but she views this as a benefit to the theory rather than a drawback. The flexibility allows for variance in performance stages that make up the work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2019).

The R-relation acts as a link but also as the normative guide for performer authenticity (Moruzzi, 2019). This is where authenticity-as-intention, authenticity-as-sound and authenticity-as-practice come into play. The performer is given creative leeway but must be aware that they are attempting to recreate, at least on some level, a performance of the past, meaning a deeper authenticity than Personal-Authenticity must be considered (Moruzzi, 2019). This is a personal-authenticity that is about the artist's

ability to respect, understand, and deepen the relationship of the performance with the work they seek to recreate.

The results of these kinds of authenticity in MST are distilled into the primary mechanics that make up the R-relation. There are the causality-relation, the intentionality-relation, and the similarity-relation (Moruzzi, 2019)..:

The relational mechanics explain the normativity the work-as-construct has over the causality, intentionality, and similarity needed for a performance to be considered part of the linked work-as-construct. Simply put, a performance that possesses no causal or intentional connection, or lacks enough similarity, to the performances that make up the work-as-construct will not be considered part of that work-as-construct.

Importantly, the relational parts are contextual; the genre, setting, culture and other relevant contexts all heavily affect how the causality-relation, intentionality-relation and similarity-relation affect the normative features of the work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2022). As an example, the 20th anniversary livestream of “Don’t Know Why” is a creative reimagining of the musical work. Due to the personal-authenticity of the performer’s interpretation, this performance would still be considered a constitutive stage of the “Don’t Know Why” work-as-construct, because it satisfies the causality, intentionality, and similarity conditions that make up the normative threshold of the work-as-construct based on the contextual demands of culture, genre, history, community, Etc.

Everyone Can Change a Musical Work

In the second paper, "Everyone Can Change a Musical Work," Moruzzi outlines the criteria for musical works to be changed (Moruzzi, 2022). While similar to the previous paper, here Moruzzi reminds us that every performance or stage is a work itself, the work-as-performance. This means that the act of performance is a new musical work and is therefore permitted to be different from all previous work-as-performance or work-as-constructs (Moruzzi, 2022). However, once the shift is made to viewing the performance as a constitutive stage of the work-as-construct, it is no longer the case that change may be tolerated (Moruzzi, 2022). While the causality, intention and similarity conditions must be satisfied, there are other normative factors when dealing with change. Importantly, it is not just the similarity of the sound profile (relative harmony) or song structure that needs to adhere to the R-relation, but also other non-musical factors such as audience demographic, expectations, funding, social, geographical, historical, political and economic contexts, and many more (Moruzzi, 2022).

The R-relation makes it possible for linked work-as-performances to span different contexts and still be linked because properties are stage-based. Some properties are so integral to a performance that changing them would constitute changing the entity itself. David Lewis calls these intrinsic properties (Lewis, 1983). If intrinsic properties change, then that entity cannot be said to be the same as it was. This is the problem of identity over time, and it is precisely the reason that Theodore Sider proposed stage theory. Stages allow intrinsic properties to remain unchanged

because the stage never changes (Sider, 2001). Stages of a perduring time-worm are separate temporal entities and therefore have their own intrinsic properties. Stages can be compared and connected, but do not share intrinsic properties (Sider, 2000). This is how an exduring entity, like a musical work, can have very disparate stages, each with its own properties. When these stages are understood to be connected by the 3 relational factors of the R-relation, it is possible to see how the properties of a stage can be different but still adhere to the normative features of the work-as-construct. Moruzzi argues that the normative features of the work-as-construct are musical, but the social implications are what determine the authenticity conditions (Moruzzi, 2022). A jazz standard may be a totally different interpretation of the piece with different improvisations, but the authenticity conditions are such that this is an acceptable and even expected deviation under the R-relation for that work, under that genre. Under Western Classical traditions, audiences are taught to treat the composer's authorial intention with reverence (Goehr, 1992), meaning a change the author makes to the score is tantamount to a change to the authenticity conditions of any subsequent performance (Moruzzi, 2022). Two very different genres with different expectations for performances can both be explained by MST.

This makes up the totality of MST as Moruzzi has presented to date. There is a fourth paper that replies to criticisms of MST, which I will present in Chapter **IV**. Now that I have presented the mechanics of MST, I will move on to criticisms of the current state of MST before addressing these issues and reintroducing MST in Chapter **V**.

Chapter IV: Criticisms of Musical Stage

Theory

In the previous chapter, I presented the mechanics of MST. In Chapter **IV**, I aim to showcase the problems of MST so that I may address them in Chapter **V** and prove that MST is a viable and flexible ontology of musical works.

MST was first proposed in 2018, which means it offers new ground for discussion and possibilities in the ontology of musical works; it also means that it has not been thoroughly tested through academic rigour as much as other ontologies, like Platonism. Due to this, only two papers have been published that directly interact with Moruzzi on MST, and both are by Philip Letts. In this chapter, I will take up Letts's primary arguments from "Is Moruzzi's Musical Stage Theory Advantaged?" (2020) and "Musical Exdurantism" (2022). Letts highlights some primary problems of MST, arguing that MST is not advantaged and that perdurantism is a better four-dimensional theory of musical works. I will also take up Moruzzi's responses to Letts and then finish with my criticisms of MST, which stem from an unacknowledged bias towards Western classical music practice.

i: Letts' Criticism

Is Moruzzi's Musical Stage Theory Advantaged?

Letts's first paper on MST is a discussion of Moruzzi's claim that MST is a viable and advantaged alternative to other major ontologies of musical works, namely type-token musical Platonism championed by Dodd (Letts, 2020; Moruzzi, 2018) and traditional musical perdurantism, like that of Caplan and Matheson (Letts, 2020; Moruzzi, 2018). Letts takes a hard line on Moruzzi's claim that MST is advantaged over other theories. He refutes her claim in three areas:

- MST does not allow listeners epistemological access to the entirety of a musical work
- MST does not handle score departure in a superior manner, and
- MST does not handle improvisation in a superior manner.

(Letts, 2020)

MST does not allow listeners epistemological access to the entirety of a musical Work

Letts begins by refuting the epistemological claim that, like other ontologies of musical works, MST allows the listener to hear or cognize the entirety of the musical work. Moruzzi claims that because a work-as-performance is a musical work, then, "[A] listener hears the whole of a musical work by hearing a single performance of it" (Moruzzi, 2018, 348). Letts argues that under MST, a listener cannot cognize the whole work-as-construct. Other theories explain how listeners can cognize a whole work in a way that MST cannot; therefore, MST is at an explanatory disadvantage (Letts, 2020).

Moruzzi's claim about hearing a musical work through a single performance does not seem possible by her own rules. A work-as-performance is a work. Hearing that work would only give insight into that work-as-performance. In the case that the work-

as-performance has a high degree of similarity under the R-relation of a work-as-construct, it would only give partial insight into the work-as-construct. Moruzzi's claim that the R-relation links work-as-performances means that a listener could glean information about features of the R-relation of a work-as-construct, but would not have insight into the entirety of the work-as-construct (Letts, 2020).

Letts continues this line of argumentation by appealing to the spatial factors of sound. A listener is only capable of hearing a live performance once from a specific location. In the case of recorded performances, the listener is still limited to hearing the recording from the perspective that the track was mixed for. If one attended a performance, they would only be able to hear that performance from the singular spot they were in. Due to the spatial quality of music and how it is affected by three-dimensional space, it would not be accurate to say that a listener located in one part of a space could hear the entirety of the work in the spatial sense (Letts, 2020). Even if the individual found a recording of the performance, the recording would have been recorded from a single part of the performance space, or more likely, was recorded from several microphones and mixed to create an idealized presentation of the performance. This recording can be heard over and over, but it would still present the same artificially perfect spatial playback.

Letts thinks that here, musical perdurantism would be advantaged over MST as musical works are constructed of both spatially and temporally fused parts that could give a listener reasonable, or partial insight to make judgments about the work as a whole (Letts, 2020). Musical Platonism would also be advantaged, as performances are instantiations, meaning one performance should give insight into the universal. On

Letts's account, MST's epistemological claims about musical works is not possible and do not present MST as advantaged over musical perdurantism or Platonism.

MST does not handle score departure in a superior manner

Lett's next argues that while MST does an excellent job of dealing with variation, between performances and works, it does not provide a better explanation compared to other ontologies (Letts, 2020; Moruzzi, 2018). Moruzzi claims all overarching steadfast rules for how performances relate to works are bound to run into problems, especially when works are not score-based or require improvisation. Instead of attempting any kind of concrete rule for all works across all genres, Moruzzi proposes that MST can handle this better through the R-relation's context sensitivity (Moruzzi, 2018). If every work-as-construct has different rules for how work-as-performances are repeatable, then variation becomes a strength of MST rather than a nuisance - as it is seen in ontologies like musical Platonism (Moruzzi, 2018). Letts admits that MST does deal with score departure well, but that type-token theories could include a normative repeatability clause, like the R-relation (Letts, 2020). Similar to a nested-type theory, any performance of 'Don't Know Why' would token a new work, but because it contains features of other types, it is connected to the other types as a norm-kind. Letts thinks the R-relation need not be exclusive to MST. Normative relational type-token theories would be just as capable of handling problems of score deviation. The result is that while MST handles score deviation well, it is not advantaged on this account (Letts, 2020).

MST does not handle improvisation(s) in a superior manner

MST claims it can account for improvisational deviations in musical works because of the contextual nature of the R-relation (Moruzzi, 2018). This is the way different musical practices allow for more leniency in their respective R-relations for things like purposeful deviation from the work-as-construct (Moruzzi, 2018). Letts argues that because Moruzzi does not explicitly include or single out works that have multiple performances and improvisations, such as a jazz standard, she must not be addressing them and is only dealing with singular improvisations. Singular improvisations are entirely improvised works. Letts thinks that musical Platonism with a variation clause could easily have multiplicity included in any tokening. This would allow Platonism the same level of flexibility in improvisation as MST (Letts, 2020).

Letts shows that a norm-kind repeatability is not exclusive to MST, and so MST is not advantaged over musical Platonism or perdurantism, but this need not mean that it is at an explanatory disadvantage for the moment.

Musical Exdurantism

Letts continues his evaluation of MST in a second paper called "Musical Exdurantism," where he argues that Moruzzi has presented a flaw in the work-as-construct (Letts, 2022). In this paper, Letts examines the ways perdurantism and exdurantism diverge from each other. He is particularly interested in how MST deals

with issues of persistence and why perdurantism is a better four-dimensional theory of musical works (Letts, 2022). Letts begins by outlining the problem of intrinsic properties for continuant entities (Letts, 2022). 'Continuant entities' is the term Letts gives to an entity that extends through time - in this case, musical works. Enduring and persisting are both terms that mean the same thing, but are related to certain theories. Enduring is what endurantists call continuant entities, and perduring is the term perdurantists use. The use of 'continuant' allows one to speak about time-worms without favouring one theory over another.

Perdurantists and exdurantists agree that entities are continuant time worms. Where they split is in how to deal with intrinsic properties in identity over time. Exdurantists posit separate but related stages that have intrinsic properties. Fission problems are one kind of problem of identity over time. Recall that one of the primary problems for continuant entities is how to account for intrinsic properties. Intrinsic properties are properties that are unique to the entity itself, and nothing else is made up of these properties (Lewis, 1983). Fission problems occur when temporal parts of a four-dimensional entity are jumbled up temporally and spatially. For example, if Metheny performed "Don't Know Why" at a concert hall in London, Ontario, Canada, at the same moment that Jones performed "Don't Know Why" in London, England, then two temporal parts of the same continuant would exist simultaneously. This is what Letts calls occurrence multiplicity. Letts thinks that neither Caplan and Matheson's perdurantist theories (Caplan & Matheson, 2004, 2006, 2008), nor Moruzzi's exdurantist MST are capable of explaining occurrence multiplicity satisfactorily (Letts, 2022).

Caplan and Matheson have proposed two versions of perdurantism: expansive perdurantism (2004, 2006) and austere perdurantism (2008). Expansive musical perdurantism attempts to explain musical works as comprehensive time-worms where anything related to the musical work, including encodings of the work such as scores and recordings, makes up the time-worms' temporal parts (Caplan & Matheson, 2004). This proves to be unwieldy as it is unclear how the different non-performance pieces are connected without appealing to some kind of social construction (idealism) or artifactualism. To deal with this, Caplan and Matheson proposed a partial retreat, leading to their second attempt at perdurantism: austere perdurantism. Under this version, only performances are taken to be part of the time-worm (Caplan & Matheson, 2006, 2008). This theory is much more manageable, but it leaves the time-worm with holes, as performances of the same work are not occurring all the time, nor do they temporally abut. Additionally, neither of these versions can adequately address occurrence multiplicity. Under either type of perdurantism, the time-worm is meant to be in the order of performance. If two works are performed at the same time, does the work split into two parts? This would result in a fission of the work, as the two performances are no longer linked to each other, but have a shared past. This is an unintended consequence of occurrence multiplicity, which Letts argues Caplan and Matheson do not account for (Letts, 2020).

For MST, multiplicity is not a problem because of the R-relation, which links performances beyond just causality. Letts is skeptical of the R-relation as an answer to occurrence multiplicity. He thinks the way Moruzzi constructs the work-as-performance leaves it open four issues: the ambiguity of how the work-as-performance is R-related to

the work-as-construct; the work-as-construct might suffer from the same issues as perdurantism; a potential flaw in Moruzzi's understanding of stages; and a flaw in how the work-as-performance and work-as-construct are presented.

First, Letts points out, depending on the normative features of the R-relation, any performances involving any kind of sound at all could be considered the same musical work. All performances are not just different works, or what Moruzzi called the work-as-construct, but, depending on the mechanics of the R-relation, all work-as-performances could be part of the same work-as-construct called music.

Second, Letts thinks that Moruzzi misinterprets Hawley's explanation of stage events (Letts, 2022). In his account, Hawley explains that stages are infinitesimal changes "...as fine-grained as time" (Hawley, 2001, p. 48). Letts thinks that Moruzzi's appeal to Hawley does not stand; therefore, the length of a performance would be too long to be considered a stage (Letts, 2022). If performances are not stages, then MST's explanatory power as an ontology of musical works falls apart. This is far more problematic than any issues with occurrence multiplicity.

Third, Letts points out that the work-as-performance concept opens MST up to the possibility that every work-as-performance is a never-ending perduring entity (Letts, 2020). He claims that a performance ends when all of the parts of the related musical work have been performed or satisfied. This means that a work-as-performance, not related to any other work, cannot end because no ending was ever signified. The work-as-performance will go on forever after the music ends. Thus, the work-as-performance is an eternally perduring entity, a never-ending time-worm where the intentional music

was only the beginning. Not only are work-as-performances not stages, they are eternally enduring entities forcing MST to depend on some kind of perdurantism.

Last, Letts returns to occurrence multiplicity. I return to the problem of the two "Don't Know Why" performances occurring simultaneously in two different Londons; they are two different work-as-performances that are unrelated but have the same name. Meaning no occurrence multiplicity is taking place simultaneously. The two performances are also the same work-as-construct, meaning occurrence multiplicity is taking place. The R-relation aims to explain facts about the multiplicity of the stages of the work-as-construct. It cannot do this when the performances are and are not the same work (Letts, 2022). Letts argues this semantic shift between work-as-performance and work-as-construct is problematic for occurrence multiplicity as it creates apparent mismatches in logic and regular language (Letts, 2022). A phrase like "Jones's 'Don't Know Why' is a great work, but her Grammy performance was lacklustre," becomes confusing. Letts argues that shifting between meanings causes the phrase to become gibberish, akin to "the work is great but the work is also not great." This highlights that the two works are unintuitive and do not match language or practice. When speaking of works, the stage (work-as-performance) invariably loses out to the work (-as-construct) (Letts, 2022). This makes it difficult, and potentially impossible, to reconcile occurrence multiplicity as the performances both are and are not occurring simultaneously.

Leaving occurrence multiplicity behind, Letts has one more criticism of MST. This point is aimed at how works *in potentia*, or would-be works, are based on musical practice. Letts uses the example of a symphony composed in 1948 but not performed until the following year. In musical practice, the symphony is said to be a musical work

created in 1948. The act of adding '*in potentia*' to the understanding of a work does not reflect practice (Letts, 2022). Letts thinks the work *in potentia* is Moruzzi trying to treat the encoding of musical information as part of the creation of musical works, which does not otherwise fit with the performance-centric nature of MST. Letts argues that Moruzzi's attempt does not reflect her performance-focused ontology, and it does not reflect talk about works or reflect the importance of composition.

Letts commends Moruzzi on MST as a novel theory that offers new and interesting ontological paths of inquiry. However, He does not think that MST is advantaged or even a tenable alternative to perdurantism or type-token theories in its current stage (Letts, 2022, p. 491).

The Assumptions behind Musical Stage Theory

Moruzzi responds to some of Letts's criticism in "The Assumptions behind Musical Stage Theory: A Reply to Letts" (Moruzzi, 2020). She begins with a partial retreat from her original position, stating that MST is not advantaged over type-token and perdurantism but that it is still a viable ontology of musical works. She defends this position in three ways:

- MST is performance-centric
- MST is rooted in a context-focused R-relation
- MST accounts for all kinds of musical improvisation.

(Moruzzi, 2020)

The first defence is that MST is performance-centric, which is meant to show that, unlike the type-token theory of Dodd, MST is meant to be far more compatible with musical practice by focusing on performances. She states:

Where other theories on the ontology of musical works - such as the type-token theory - start by building an ontologically consistent theory and then try to fit the practice within it, MST adopts a reversed approach: it addresses empirical practices and shapes an ontological theory after them (Moruzzi, 2020, p. 363).

Moruzzi's intention with MST is to provide a more flexible theory of musical works that reflects the practices and the way people talk about works. This defence lays the groundwork for why MST seems less internally consistent than type-token theories, and therefore may appear less elegant. She follows this up by defending the idea that listeners gain access to the entirety of a musical work by listening to only a few performances (Moruzzi, 2020). She concedes to Letts that it is not possible to listen to all of the stages of a musical work (the work-as-construct), but that people do gain some amount of knowledge of the work-as-construct and the R-relation from a single performance (Moruzzi, 2020).

Moruzzi's second defence is how MST is rooted in a context-focused R-relation. This is aimed at strengthening the R-relation against Letts' attack that the R-relation could be taken to include all performances as part of a work-as-construct. Moruzzi argues that the R-relation is a more intuitive way of determining similar performances. The normative force of the R-relation is determined by context and evaluation of the performer's intention (Moruzzi, 2020). The R-relation relies on musical practice and context to provide normativity, but it is flexible in a way that type-token theories are not (Moruzzi, 2020). Rather than a weakness, this flexibility should be seen as a strength

because it reflects the arbitrary nature of musical work discourse and practice (Moruzzi, 2020).

The last defence Moruzzi presents is that MST accounts for all kinds of musical improvisation. This is based on Letts' interpretation of 'improvisation'. Moruzzi clarifies that she meant all kinds of improvisations, singular or multiple (Moruzzi, 2020). She also argues against his assumptions about improvisations. She thinks there are two issues with his argument. First, he is too committed to type-token interpretations of improvisation to see that performances like jazz standards are more normative than they are improvisational. There is improvisation in a performance of a jazz standard, but the work is still far more normative than not. The fact that jazz standards are repeated but also have improvised moments makes them hard to categorize, but MST can account for them by way of the R-relation. Jazz standards have improvisations, but the common features of performances link them as the work-as-construct. Type-token theories place multiplicity into the work itself, but this does not explain how or why parts can be improvised. MST better explains the improvisation of jazz standards. The second issue has to do with the fact that true improvisations, unlike jazz standards, are by definition not repeatable. Moruzzi claims that these performances should still be considered works despite their lack of repeatability. Type-token theories would struggle to explain what the abstract nature of a non-repeatable work is, whereas MST can call the performance a work-as-performance in which there is no apparent normative connection to another performance via the R-relation. This is hardly a worry for MST as it could be for type-token theories (Moruzzi, 2020). As such, Moruzzi is confident that,

while imperfect, MST's performance and practice-centric approach to the ontology of musical works is still viable (Moruzzi, 2020).

ii: MST is Overly Reliant on Western Classical Music

Practice

I agree with Moruzzi about MST's viability, but I have some criticisms of my own that were not addressed by Letts or Moruzzi. Most of my criticisms stem from a singular issue that I level at both MST and Letts. Despite Moruzzi's commendable desiderata to focus on an ontology of musical works that is rooted in musical practice, both she and Letts are still overly biased towards Western classical music traditions.

There are plenty of non-Western, non-classical traditions that rely on the musical work concept. Many musical traditions rely on performance to disseminate musical works, and this is the purpose behind emphasizing performance stages in MST (Moruzzi, 2018, 2020). However, Moruzzi places a large emphasis on scores. I am not suggesting that scores should be ignored. They are an important part of Western classical musical tradition, and an important part of preserving and encoding musical information for dissemination and repetition. Despite this, Moruzzi is more concerned with how a score acts as a compositional tool. Only in Western classical music is the score given such a privileged position. It is true that Western classical composers were, and are, capable of composing music without producing sound (Small, 1998), but this is not the norm. Most composers of any other genre, even in the West, compose through

an iterative process of playing, writing, replaying, and rewriting. Composing does not need to include encoding. Composing can be a series of decisions about parts to play and how to play them, which are committed to memory. Scores are only a tool of composition for very few privileged groups of educated musicians (Small, 1998).

Even if the score is not a compositional tool, Moruzzi overemphasizes the score's importance as a tool of dissemination in MST. That an encoding of musical information holds the author's intention is still Western-centric. In non-Western, non-classical traditions most written encoding is not done by the artist themselves, but by a third party who transcribes the piece into a score. Performers are now relying on a third party, hoping that their interpretation of musical information is accurate and encodes what the author intended. This is like any translation in that it can be done well or poorly, but it will never be completely accurate. Moruzzi has fallen into the trap of scores reflecting any kind of authorial intention.

Recordings are a far better way of disseminating music, and are a better guide for how performers can replicate musical works because more musical information can be encoded and decoded. Recordings are far more prevalent and accessible than scores in contemporary times, even in Western classical traditions. Yet, Moruzzi does not mention recordings at all in her presentation of MST. Recordings are significantly less Western classical-centric. While recording music is prominent in the West, Western classical music practice is still overly focused on the importance of the score. Additionally, recording technology originated in the West, but the technology has advanced enough that recording is done all over the world. Thus, recordings are not exclusively Western and are not Western Classical. Moruzzi claims that MST is better

suited to describing musical practice, but she seems to ignore the most prominent method of capturing artistic intention and dissemination in favour of the score. The lack of information from Moruzzi on how recordings might change the work-as-performance, and in turn, the work-as-construct, is a huge oversight. It, once again, highlights a bias towards Western classical music practice, which tends to devalue recordings in favour of live performances and scores. Moruzzi's disregard for a huge part of how audiences engage with musical works across domains is a massive misstep in presenting MST as a viable alternative to other ontologies of musical works. Not just because recordings are a type of performance that should be considered in a performance-based ontology, but also because they are integral to the practice of listening to music, and the primary desiderata of MST is to reflect practice by being performance-centric (Moruzzi, 2020).

Leaving recordings behind, I want to double down on a problem that Letts pointed out. There is a semantic problem that occurs when shifting between the two meanings of 'work' proposed in MST. The work-as-construct is what most of us refer to when we speak of a musical work. It seems to me that Moruzzi is playing a semantic trick by attempting to have performances stand as works. This is an interesting approach, but I do not think a performance constitutes a work itself. Moruzzi wants performances to be stand-alone, one-off events called a work(-as-performance), but at the same time wants that work to be related to another work (-as-construct). This results in sentences where performances both are and are not, related to other works. Having performances be independent entities is an important part of how MST functions. It allows MST to be a performance-centric ontology, where performances are stages that

make up the work-as-construct time-worm. But why these independent performances need to be a work themselves is unclear. I do not agree with Letts' criticism that performances need works to signify an ending. This is an inability to let go of work-centric ontologies, which have dominated Western classical musical thought (Small, 1998). I think it is possible to have a performance that is workless. This would make sentences comparing performances and works much more straightforward, alleviating confusion around the conflation between the different kinds of musical works.

Moruzzi does an excellent job of laying out the relational parts of the R-relation that dictate the normative properties of a work-as-construct. However, there is a discrepancy in the way she emphasizes the contextual nature of these relations. The way she describes how the relational parts are carried out, once again, belies a bias towards Western classical music practice. If the context is the most important consideration for the relational mechanics of the R-relation, then why is it that the way these mechanics are carried out seems to be far too focused on authenticity? Many musical practices do not care about authorial intention when attempting to replicate a performance. Parody is a great example of subverting authorial intention, and in many contexts, this would still be part of the work-as-construct. The relational mechanics of the R-relation require some rethinking in order to deemphasize non-Western classical practice and ensure that context is what matters.

Letts' criticisms about attributing the work to its composition date rather than performance date are an interesting attack on MST, but I think it is still too rooted in

Western classical music practice. However, his line of inquiry raises questions about how MST would explain unperformable works, such as Wesley Cray's "A&~A" (A and not A) (Cray, 2006). Cray argues that an ontology of musical works should be able to explain unperformable works. If MST is a performance-centric ontology of works, then it may not be capable of explaining how unperformable works exist.

My last criticism comes from the fact that Moruzzi seems to ignore one of the most obvious strengths of MST over other ontologies of musical works. This is once again based on the fact that MST is still too overly rooted in Western classical tradition. In traditional ontologies of musical works, such as musical Platonism, musical works cannot drift. Drift is when a musical work shifts over time. As technology, instruments, and cultures change, performances change. When these changes to performance become the new standard, the work has drifted from what it used to be. Musical Platonism's reliance on universal types means there is no way to account for drift without claiming a new work was created. MST, on the other hand, is rooted in performance, and since it can account for social contexts, so too could it easily account for drift. Moruzzi makes no move to account for drift in MST. While it is possible that this was due to project scope or time constraints, it is still an oversight. One that could be rooted in Western classical bias, which has traditionally claimed that works do not drift (Small, 1998).

Here, I have laid out several criticisms of MST from Letts and myself. MST has issues that need to be addressed to be a viable and strong alternative to current ontologies of musical works, namely that Moruzzi's account of stages does not hold and that the work-as-performance notion is semantically messy and might be a form of

perdurantism. In Chapter **V**, I offer solutions to these criticisms by adopting the strengths from some of the other ontologies of musical works outlined in Chapter **II**. By adopting a few key ideas and shifting some of the current mechanics, I will present MST as a strong performance-centric alternative in the ontology of musical works that reflects all practices.

Chapter V: Defending Musical Stage

Theory

In this final chapter, I will address the criticism of the previous chapter and make a few alterations to MST. I will show how MST incorporates exdurantism, artifactualism and social constructionism, proving it to be a viable performance-focused ontology of musical works that reflects all musical practice. The best way to address the criticisms Letts and I levelled at MST is to reintroduce MST while considering how it incorporates the strengths of other ontologies. I will start by showing how MST is still a four-dimensional, stage-based, theory of musical works (exdurantism), but that the work-as-performance notion is not needed. I will then show how MST incorporates artifactualism by showing how performances ought to be viewed as artifacts. Next, I will show how MST incorporates a kind of idealism called social constructionism, which explains how the R-relation functions. At the end of the chapter, I will address any remaining criticisms. By strengthening and extrapolating on the connections to these theories, I will show how MST can overcome the criticism Letts and I levelled at it, and how it answers problems of audibility, reference and repeatability in a way that does not favour Western classical music traditions, but reflects any and all musical practice.

MST as Exdurantist

Performances as Stages

There is a very real risk in treating musical works as artifacts. The artifact or art object may become fixed or understood as unchanging. This is not the case for musical works, which do drift over time. One of the strengths of MST is that it can account for drift. To avoid treating works as fixed, I start by reintroducing MST as a four-dimensional, exdurantist theory of musical works to emphasize the temporally flexible nature of musical works under MST.

As shown in Chapter III, MST is very clearly inspired by Sider's exdurantism. Moruzzi attempted to sidestep the gaps that occur in Caplan and Matheson's austere perdurantism (2008) by appealing to Sider's stage-based approach to four-dimensional continuants (Moruzzi, 2018; Letts, 2020, 2022). By viewing musical works as the totality of performances, which are not connected by physical or temporal means, but by the R-relation, MST successfully manages to avoid gaps in the work-as-construct time-worm. What is not clear is how performances can be stages of the work-as-construct. Letts highlights a problem with Moruzzi's interpretation of Hawley on what constitutes a stage (Letts, 2022). Moruzzi appeals to Hawley on how a series of small occurrences could make up a stage and interprets this to mean a performance could be a stage (Moruzzi, 2018). However, Letts points out that Hawley refers to stages as instantaneous, rendering performance far too long to be considered a stage (Letts, 2020). I think Letts has the correct interpretation of Hawley, meaning the foundation to Moruzzi's proposal;

that MST is a stage-based theory of musical works, is not possible. If performances are not stages, then musical works are not stage-based continuants.

The kind of stage that MST requires is more malleable and fluid than what Letts or Hawley allow for. Based on this need, I propose an alternate definition of stages by appealing to Donald Davidson's notion of events. (Davidson, 1980). Davidson's definition of events is based on three principles. The first is that physical and mental events can be understood as the same thing (Davidson, 1980, p. 108). Any information the mind gleans comes from the senses, which inform the experience of the event. A person cannot experience a physical event without their senses. The only way to experience events is through the senses; therefore, mental events and real events are indiscernible. The subjective nature of events does not pose a problem for MST, as performances are experienced individually anyway, and consensus is found in the R-relation based on how audiences agree on contextual similarity relations. In this way, viewing stages as mental events is beneficial to MST, as individually is the only way to experience a performance, and MST is a performance-centric ontology.

The second and most crucial principle is that events are infinitely divisible and infinitely long (Davidson 1980, p. 108). Events are not an exact amount of time. One can reference an event and leave other irrelevant temporal information out. "Don't Know Y" is an event, but I may choose to speak only about the chorus. When speaking of the chorus, I divide "Don't Know Y" into smaller events and select the relevant part I want to describe: the chorus. The chorus can then be broken down into phrases, and then further down to chords, notes, parts of notes, and so on. Events are as long or as short as the observer (listener) requires. The ability to demarcate stages to be as long or as

short as they need to be would help MST circumvent the problem of stages being too short to make up a performance. If an event can be part of a performance, it can also be the whole performance, if the observer views it that way. Therefore, treating the work-as-performance as an event would mean it could be a stage of the work-as-construct. Just as Sider proposed the example of giving directions to a farmhouse as three separate stages of the same road (2004), so too would the work-as-performance contain event stages. These make up the work-as-performance, which in turn make up a larger event called the work-as-construct.

One might ask how listeners know how to properly parse a performance. Christopher Small suggests that the location of the performance is as much a part of the event as the performer (Small, 1998), which could mean that the event began when audiences entered the building. The ending of a performance can be just as perplexing. Under MST, knowing when a performance begins or ends does not matter. Individual experience of when events start or end is irrelevant because the R-relation will create a normative template for listeners. This template will help listeners understand the relevant context clues for how they ought to parse out a performance event. Given that events are much more flexible, treating stages as parsed events based on the needs of the observers is an intuitive and flexible way to treat stages, and allows stages to be as short or long as needed. This would mean stages could be long enough to be performances, and musical works could once again be a stage-based time-worm.

The final principle of mental events is that events are non-repeatable (Davidson, 1980, p. 109). At first glance, this would seem to directly reinforce the problem of repeatability, that musical works need to be repeatable from performance to

performance. MST has a built-in solution to this problem: acknowledging that no event can ever be perfectly replicated. There are too many variables to keep track of, and many of them are so minute that attempting to replicate an event perfectly is impossible. Instead, MST treats each stage, or performance, as an event or the work-as-performance. It is not the case that the performance is a perfect replication of a previous performance or the work-as-construct, but that the performance captures enough similar elements to other performances. In other words, the R-relation makes it so events, which are not perfectly repeated but similar enough, can be thought of as connected, creating a work-as-construct. Davidson's events reinforce some of the strengths of MST, such as the context-based features of the R-relation. Treating stages as events on Davidson's account restores MST's ability to treat performances as stages, which make up the work-as-construct.

Performances as Works

Now that MST is once again able to explain what musical works are, there are two other criticisms that both Letts and I levelled at MST based on the work-as-performance. The first was Letts' argument that the work-as-performance winds up becoming an eternally perduring entity (Letts, 2022). The second was our shared skepticism over the way the work-as-performance both is and is not related to the work-as-construct, and the resulting linguistic ambiguity. In order to solve this problem, I propose removing the work-as-performance notion from MST. I do not mean that MST should not be a performance-based ontology, but that performances do not need to be a

work in themselves to make up a work-as-construct. Performances do not require any work of any kind. Moruzzi claims performances to be work-as-performances in order to argue that in hearing the performance, the listener cognizes the whole work (2018). She backed off this claim (2020) as it resulted in bad argumentation and obfuscates the term 'musical work'. In saying that a listener cognizes a whole work in the performance, Moruzzi either means the listener hears the whole work-as-performance when they hear a performance, which is circular; or she means the listener hears the whole work-as-construct when they hear a performance, which does not follow, as she admitted (2020). Hearing the work-as-performance would only give the listener partial insight into the work-as-construct, and only if the work-as-performance were R-related (Letts, 2020). I agree with Letts (2020) that the listener does not have epistemological access to the whole work in hearing only one performance. However, I do not think that knowledge of a work-as-construct upon listening to a performance is possible for humans to do under any ontology of musical works.

Instead of attempting to justify why a work-as-performance is needed, I suggest jettisoning the work-as-performance notion from MST. This means that hearing performances that are R-related will give the listener some insight into the R-relation and, therefore, some insight into the work-as-construct, but that performances need not be works in themselves, or related to works. Jettisoning the work-as-concept notion has the added benefit of alleviating linguistic issues when comparing performances to the work-as-construct. This process of gathering context-based knowledge over time through experiencing performances accurately reflects how audiences learn about

works rather than the assumption that a whole work is understood after hearing a single performance.

Treating performances as events under Davidson's view and not as work-as-concepts sidesteps Letts' argument about performances being eternally perduring entities. Performance events can be as long or as short as they need to be and are subjectively experienced as context-based events. When performances begin or end is precisely when the people involved, both audience and musicians, agree they begin or end. Beginning or ending does not require a musical work of any kind to indicate what to play, or when to start or finish. MST's focus on performance without needing the performance to be a work can be further explained by examining how MST incorporates artifactualism.

MST as Artifactualist

Contrary to our intuitions and type-token theories, musical works are not fixed. The idea of a musical work being a fixed art object gives the impression that the work is an unchanging and immutable entity that future generations can return to. This is not the case as works do change. There are fission cases and drift. Despite this, I propose that MST is, in part, an artifactualist theory. To avoid ascribing rigidity to musical works, artifactualism should follow the four-dimensionalism label and be understood to be rooted in the malleable nature of performance. One of the great strengths of MST is the way that it focuses, or perhaps refocuses, the importance of performance to musical

works. I argue that under MST, the performance is the artifact. Recall that artifacts are objects that have a mental and/or social dimension that goes beyond their utility (Fenner, 2024). For MST, performances take on these dimensions, which help create the musical work (work-as-construct).

Christopher Small argues that performance is just one aspect of a broader human artistic endeavour, which he refers to as 'ritual' (Small, 1998, p. 94). When we are in the process of engaging in music through playing, listening, setting up an instrument, cleaning up from practice, or even tapping on a desk, we are engaged in a ritual. 'Ritual' for Small does not necessarily mean the habits or daily activities we enact, nor does he want to be understood as meaning ceremony, as in religion. Although it can include habits and ceremonies, ritual is an art or activity that is central to how humans understand their relationship to each other and the world at large (Small, 1998).

"It is very important to realize that in taking part in ritual we do not only see and hear, listen and watch, or even taste, smell, or touch, but we also act, and it is in the bodily experience of performing the actions in company with others that the meaning of taking part lies" (Small, 1998, p. 105).

Here, Small explains how taking part in the ritual of music is an activity that takes on further social and mental dimensions. The difference is that the artifact is an activity rather than an object. In this case, Small refers to musical activities as 'musicking' (Small, 1998). The depth of the social and mental dimensions of the musicking depends on how actively participants take part in the proceedings. This does not mean that involvement requires more physical, emotional, or mental exertion than is necessary. Participants need only act in the appropriate manner to give the musicking meaning to meet the needs of ritual and its participants. For those of us who live in the West, the

idea of ritualistically listening to and taking part in musicking explains why we spend our time and money congregating in various venues to hear our favourite musical works. But according to Small, this is the opposite of what is going on.

The behaviour of congregating to hear revered musical works is a very Western, capitalist invention that is a perversion of musicking (Small, 1998). Westerners are so accustomed to revering musical works that we have come to believe that the purpose of performances is to instantiate the musical work. Small disagrees, stating, “On the contrary, *performance is the primary process of musicking*, from which all other processes follow” (Small, 1998, p. 113, emphasis retained). This inversion of performance and musical work is exactly what MST aims to achieve as a performance-centric ontology (Moruzzi, 2018, 2020). Most musicking, both within and outside of the West, does not have anything to do with musical works. Tapping a rhythm with your foot does not indicate a musical work, nor does humming. Large-scale rituals, such as concert events, may seem to have more importance because of mass participation, but these do not require musical works either. Improvisation has long been a part of performance, and participation can be encouraged. Jam sessions, writing sessions, and drum circles are all musicking, and they do not function as intended if they are focused on musical works. (Small 1998, p. 105).

It is the performances that take on the social and mental meaning beyond just a gathering of people. This is why performances do not require works and why the work-as-performance notion is not required for MST to function. If performances are artifacts where participants are in the act of creating, MST is performance-focused, as Moruzzi originally proposed. When in the act of musicking, participants may choose to recreate a

performance from the past in some capacity. If this performance is contextually similar enough to another performance, it may become part of a work-as-construct. Recreation is common in Western classical and Western non-classical musicking, but it is far from the only way that musicking occurs. Performances do not need musical works to function; all that is required is the creation of music and social and mental dimensions that go beyond utility. This is why I claim that MST is, in part, artifactualist.

The Benefits of Performance as Artifact

Treating MST as partially artifactualist helps alleviate two problems. The first is how musical works drift. If musical works are dependent on performance rather than the inverse, then it stands to reason that musical works drift as the various circumstances of performances shift (Small, 1998). Relationships to performances can, and do, shift over time, which in turn changes the work-as-construct over time. The second problem alleviated is how artifactualism poorly explains track-centric and supposed non-work music traditions. If the performance is the artifact, then reliance on a score or track is not a requirement for musical works. Thus, jazz is not a workless art form.

Treating performances like artifacts reinforces the performance-centric nature of musical works and reflects both Western and non-Western practice. Performances need not be related to works, but can be related. How performances connect to create the musical work, or work-as-construct, is based on the R-relation, which is a kind of social constructionism.

MST as Idealist (Social Constructionist)

Now that I have established that MST is still performance-centric, but that performances are understood to be artifacts rather than work-as-performances, I can move on to how musical works come about, or how performances link together. MST already has a great answer to this in the R-relation. The R-relation's normative and contextual mechanics are already in place and inform audiences of how performances relate to the work-as-construct. In this way, MST is already a social constructionist theory, although Moruzzi makes no moves to affirm this. However, the R-relation is still overly focused on authorial intention, which is a Western classical bias. I argue that the R-relation helps audiences form work-as-constructs by both informing audiences of its contextual parts and that audiences, in turn, construct these contextual parts.

Contra Moruzzi's Hesitancy, I embrace social constructionism as a means of explaining how the social and mental dimensions of performances behave in order to create a musical work (work-as-construct). Sally Haslanger's (1995) account of social construction explains how the R-relation functions and teases out the implicit Western-classical bias. Haslanger gives several definitions for the ways things are socially constructed, but here I am only interested in three of her descriptions (Haslanger, 1995). First, she claims that socially constructed things are causally constructed (Haslanger, 1995, p. 98). MST also claims a causality-relation as part of the R-relation. Next, Haslanger claims a thing is socially constructed because of what is attributed to it (Haslanger, 1995, p. 99). MST claims that musical works come together based on how the musical parameters of one performance are attempted in another performance.

These musical parameters and relations are the attributes of that entity. The relations do not exist without an audience but are attributed to the musical work. Lastly, Haslanger claims that something is socially constructed when "in defining it we must refer to social factors" (Haslanger, 1995, p. 98). I explained how performances require a social dimension. When linking performances together to create a work-as-construct, contextual factors are a significant part of the makeup of how the R-relation functions (Moruzzi, 2018, 2022). This means both artifacts and the way they are linked to create the work-as-construct are socially constructed. Haslanger's view maps onto the R-relation exceedingly well, reinforcing how the R-relation ties performances together to create socially constructed works.

I also appeal to Haslanger to show that there is a bias towards Western classical music practice in the R-relation. Haslanger explains that when things are socially constructed, they are often defined inaccurately with definitions that suit the power dynamics of those who define them. Haslanger explains:

"Our classificatory schemes, our distinctions, and our judgements are inevitably influenced by many different social factors; and some of our judgements are not tracking any facts but are instead only perpetuating socially meaningful illusions. Moreover, we must be attentive to the possibility that the terms we use are defined by and in the interest of dominant social groups," (Haslanger, 1995, p. 118).

It is not that the socially constructed entity is based on the definition(s) assigned to it, but the fact that those definitions may not reflect the actual entity itself. They merely reflect, and often benefit, the needs of the people who are responsible for defining them (Haslanger, 1995). Moreover, the result of these definitions can cause

people to view events only by the given definitions and begin to see entities as only fitting that mold (Haslanger, 1995, p. 99).

I suggest that the same thing is happening with MST's R-relation. Despite the primary desiderata of reflecting musical practice, MST is still overly focused on Western classical music tradition. This is because Western musicologists and philosophers of music have a vested interest in the very specific and elitist way that musical works are treated in Western classical music. This is likely to do with the way that musical works have been commodified in the West (Goehr, 1992). This has led to a concerted effort to maintain control over musical works, not just as commodities, but also in who has the right to change them. This is why there is such a strict sense of authorship and authorial intention in Western music broadly. It is perhaps stricter in the Western classical tradition, but it is everywhere in Western music. After all, if a work can be changed by anyone, what makes the composer's version special and gives it value over any other version? This is why the current mechanics of MST's R-relation cannot stand. They are a reflection of the Western classical music tradition that benefits the owner and author/composer, which is an elitist idea of musical works that does not reflect all musical practices. Moruzzi outlines how the R-relation works by claiming that it has normative features that rely on the four types of authenticity: authenticity-as-intention, authenticity-as-sound, authenticity-as-practice and personal-authenticity (Moruzzi, 2019).

Contra my assertion that MST can account for drift, Moruzzi claims that only certain individuals are in a privileged position to make permanent changes to the normative power of the musical work (Moruzzi, 2022). She claims that these individuals

seem to have the power to change the authenticity conditions of the R-relation of the musical work (Moruzzi, 2022). The most obvious of these individuals would be the composer, who opts to amend a work. Moruzzi thinks this would affect the way future performances would be linked because these individuals are allowed to change the authenticity conditions of how the work-as-construct is contextually, socially and historically understood (Moruzzi 2018). I do not think Moruzzi's claim is accurate because it does not explain drift. MST has the capacity to explain why and how drift occurs, but not while dependent on authorial intention. The idea of privileged individuals having more authority over authenticity is overly focused on Western classical music practice. If only privileged people, such as composers, authors, and musical directors, are capable of making changes to a musical work's authenticity conditions, then drift should not occur. This is blatantly inaccurate - drift does occur, and musical works change, therefore the R-relation cannot be overly focused on authority-as-intention, sound or practice. Explaining drift is only possible if a musical work is contextually situated; a collectively established, socially constructed time-worm.

Addressing Bias in the R-relation

The R-relation is meant to be a context-sensitive tool that explains how audiences are supposed to understand how performances vary based on the situation. I argue that audiences are not just informed by the R-relation but, in turn, inform the R-relation. Recall that Moruzzi presents the R-relation as having three relational mechanics (Moruzzi, 2022). These parts are:

- Causality-relation, the performance must take influence in some way from the composer or previous performance.
- Intentionality-relation, the performers must attempt to adhere to the normative features of the work-as-construct or reinterpret the musical features in a creatively fulfilling way; and
- Similarity-relation, the performance must have enough musical quality in its sonic profiles to other performances in the work-as-construct

(Moruzzi, 2019).

These relational mechanics are under the influence of a context clause that Moruzzi adds:

"The expectation concerning the authenticity of a performance may vary depending, for example, on the style to which it belongs: we would not apply the same criteria for evaluating the authenticity of a jazz solo and of an early classical Sonata" (Moruzzi, 2019, 416).

Moruzzi argues that the relational mechanics and normative power of the R-relation are context sensitive. "Social conventions determine when a performance is authentic, just as they determine which performance norms to follow" (Moruzzi, 2022, p. 10). How performances make up a work-as-construct is based on various socially understood contexts, such as genre. These social contexts, like genre, are constructed by humans (Lena, 2012). Moruzzi claims that the relational parts of the R-relation are informed by social context, but then presents the causality relation as though the performer must adhere to the composer or past performance. I do not think this is true. A performer may intend to interpret the properties of a work-as-construct in a novel way,

but accidentally produce a performance that shares a significant number of properties with other performances they have never heard. This occurs all the time when composing. The result is that the new performance is considered similar to the previously unknown work because of its similarity. The performer's intention to create a new work or adhere to past performances does not matter.

I argue that the similarity-relation is the more important relational mechanic of the R-relation, as the causality-relation and intentionality-relation are heavily informed by a contextually situated similarity-relation. I will, however, amend the similarity-relation. I do not think that the linking of performances to create a work-as-construct needs to be through **sonic** similarity. This is controversial, perhaps, but I do not think it is hard to imagine a culture where lyrical information is more important than melodic information. An oral tradition of a story set to music where the words, sentiments, or narratives are more important features of the repeatable performance is a very real possibility. The music and melody could be secondary, and whether these are similar to other performances may not be important. If the narrative structure and sentiments are the same, then the audience may think of this as part of the same work-as-construct. Melody and rhythm are given a place of prominence in musical works in Western cultures, but the same may not be true of all cultures and contexts. Considering non-sonic qualities as part of the similarity-relation could mean I am no longer dealing with only musical works, but as Small points out, at a certain point, the distinctions between music, drama, dance and storytelling are entirely arbitrary (Small, 1998). Based on this, the similarity-relation of R-related performances need only include music. What the

similarities are is entirely context-dependent and determined by the social construction of the audience.

I will now show why the amended similarity-relation takes precedence over the causality-relation and then the intentionality-relation. The causality-relation requires the performance to take some influence from the composer or previous performance to be part of the work-as-construct. This may still stand, but it is the audience that determines whether the performance has enough influence. This influence is subjective. Only the performer has any idea of how much prior performances or authorial intention had on their performance. Any attempt to debate this with audiences will result in an appeal to the similarity-relation.

The same goes for the intentionality-relation; a performer's intentions can matter, but are subjective. The performer is not privileged because audiences must trust their artistic mastery, but because the performer is also a part of the audience. The performer is the first audience member. This gives them the ability to hear the music and actively change and adapt their performance. If their goal is to attempt to replicate another performance or instantiate a work, then they are able to enact alterations to meet those goals in a way that non-musician audience members cannot. This is why it appears that the performer has more influence over the performance's inclusion in the work-as-construct; they appear to have more control over the performance's similarity-relation. If the performer chooses to give deference to the composer's intentions, then it also appears that the composer has control over how the work-as-construct is created. In certain contexts, like Western classical music practice, these factors are important, but any debate about the performer's or author's intentions is subjective and will result in

one scrutinizing the performance and offering arguments about why it was performed a certain way. This scrutiny will always result in a debate over how audiences, or audience members, determine what is 'close enough' and whether intention or causality matter. Any debate about Metheny's artistic reimagining of "Don't Know Why" will result in two or more parties arguing whether the work is similar enough to Jones' version, given the context of the jazz genre and instrumentation. This is an appeal to the similarity-relation and the social context that governs it. Thus, the similarity-relation, when understood in context, will always take precedence over the other relational parts of the R-relation. The causality-relation and intentionality-relation can still be important, but only if the context calls for them, such as in the Western classical music tradition.

Social Power

Haslinger, along with Ian Hacking, makes a final and important note about socially constructed entities; socially constructed entities both inform and are informed by their context. Hacking calls these socially constructed entities 'interactive kinds' (Hacking, 1999). People are aware that these entities are socially constructed, and as such, are able to change these entities to reflect or reject how the entities are viewed and constructed (Hacking, 1999). The R-relation is not simply a tool for distinguishing what is and is not part of a musical work, but it is also a force that can be actively influenced by individuals to either reinforce or change certain features of how musical works are constructed in that context. A person who is unfamiliar with "Don't Know Why" in any capacity, including its context, genre or culture, will have a drastically different

tolerance for the musical work. As they become versed in the practices and contexts of “Don’t Know Why”, their threshold changes as it is influenced by the social nature of the R-relation.

This means power plays a large part in influencing the R-relation. This is why the elitist nature of Western classical music traditions appears to give more credence to composers and conductors. A person of high social standing may have more effect on how others decide what ought to be considered part of the work-as-construct. Critics, gatekeepers and trendsetters are given credence depending on their social position or how knowledgeable they are in the context of the work in question. These are the “socially meaningful illusions” that can be “defined by the dominant group” to serve their interests (Haslanger, 1995). This is why traditional ontologies of musical works struggle to define non-Western classical practice. The interests of dominant groups in the West have made viewing musical works in any other capacity difficult for Western classical audiences and, by extension, other Western music audiences. This is the same reason why Moruzzi presents the R-relation as slightly skewed towards authorial intention. Her proposed version has great mechanics, but relies far too heavily on the Western classical bias, rather than the contextual audience-constructed nature the R-relation needs to be to construct a performance-centric, inclusive ontology of musical works.

Addressing other criticisms

In presenting MST as a theory that combines the strengths of exdurantism, artifactualism and social constructionism in a way that removes Western classical bias, I

have endeavoured to address the criticisms of Letts and myself. However, some criticisms remain; I will now address any leftover criticisms from Chapter IV.

Recordings

Moruzzi does not mention recordings or how they may affect MST (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022). Under the social constructionist reframing of MST, recordings often have the effect of becoming a prominent performance in the work-as-construct. Recordings are disseminated in a way that other performances are not. This means they may become ubiquitous amongst audiences. The recording is still a single performance; playback events are different from each other, but they do not constitute a different or new performance. Because recordings are ubiquitous, they may have more influence. This may cause future performances to adhere closer to their parameters, and listeners to expect performances to sound closer to that performance. Consider the popularity of Jones' recording of "Don't Know Why" compared to that of Harris'. Both are recorded, but because Jones' version has more uptake, it has a wider and larger impact on the R-relation of "Don't Know Why". This is why authors like Gracyk assumed that Western rock and pop rely on tracks as their musical work artifact (Gracyk, 1996). In these contexts, the recording has a lot of social significance. This is not because they are recorded, but because recordings are performances that can have significant normative power. A recorded performance can be accessed at any time by a wide range of people, especially in the age of the internet. The result is that a performance like Jones' 2002 "Don't Know Why" has become a hugely popular performance, possibly the most important performance in the work-as-construct. It has a profound effect on the R-

relation itself, which affects how new performances may be R-related to the work-as-construct.

Works *In Potentia*

One of the criticisms Letts levelled at MST relates to how Moruzzi presented *Works in potentia*. This criticism is once again far too biased towards Western classical music practice. Western classical music is the only tradition where the encoding of musical information happens without the involvement of performance. Only a handful of people have a real knack for how the language of Western notation represents and encodes musical information (Small, 1998). Other Western composers of the same period, geography, and education seem to be less inclined, or less capable, of composing this way (Small, 1998). Instead, they opt for the more common process, which involves performing the music as part of composing. As Christopher Small says:

“Composing begins when a performer, liking what he or she has just done, repeats it, perhaps many times, and tries to improve it so that a more or less fixed sequence of sound, simultaneous perhaps as well as in succession, crystallizes out from the flowing stream. It evolved out of performing and is directed always back toward it” (Small, 1998, pp. 113-4).

Composing is an iterative process that, more often than not, links to performance. The composer is the performer who is also the first listener, and so the performance has an audience. A very small audience, but enough that this is a performance. The smaller the audience, the less normative power the R-relation has. The relatively small number of performances also affects the R-relation. Composing is a

context that allows for a lot of variation in the similarity-relation, meaning, at this point, composers have more say in how the work changes and what it ought to sound like. The composer, performer and audience are indistinguishable until the composer(s) see fit to share through, either encoding, performing or recording. Any one of these will widen the audience and begin solidifying the R-relation per the musical work's contexts.

This leaves those talented few composers who are capable of encoding without the iterative performance process. This is not composing, as it does not involve the iterative performance process. This is not meant to detract from the creativity and skill of imagining the music and then immediately encoding it. On the contrary, that is a tremendously complex skill, but it lacks a performance, and so cannot be a musical work under MST. Imagining music is called auditory imagery, and while it is fascinating, arguing for or against auditory imagery as a kind of performance is not within the scope of this project. For the time being, the act of imagining and encoding, while creative and impressive, does not create a musical work.

Letts argued that the year a score is finished is when it is considered a completed work, even before it is performed. I argue Moruzzi's work *in potentia* still stands (Moruzzi, 2018). Letts' criticism about musical works being attributed to the year the work was written is simply a quirk of the Western classical music context. The R-relation of the Western classical tradition means audiences are taught to defer to the intentions of authors and composers. This is why works can be attributed to when they were encoded rather than when they were first publicly performed. This can be true for other genres as well. "Don't Know Why" is attributed to Jones in 2002, but the work was first released in 1999 by Harris, and composed before that. The designation of when a

musical work came into existence is simply a part of the context. This allows different genres to designate works *in potentia* based on the encoding, recording, release, or the first performance. None of them is an accurate description of when the work truly began. They are simply reflections of what is important to the specific musical work's audience.

Unperformable Works

I raised a question about how MST might deal with unperformable works, like “A&~A” (Cray, 2016). The answer is that they are not musical works under MST. This is due to how MST treats performances. While unperformable works like “A&~A” are interesting to think about, they are not musical works because they are not meant to produce music. The way Cray presents “A&~A” means it cannot be performed at all. This is antithetical to what works are under MST. Works like “A&~A” are still a kind of artwork in the broader sense. The presentation of a paradox is a valuable kind of art. A study of paradox works is an exciting idea, but if music is the practice of performing, and the work in question cannot be performed, then it cannot be said to be a musical work under MST.

In this chapter, I reintroduced MST by focusing on Moruzzi’s primary desiderata of creating an ontology that is performance-focused and reflects musical practice. In order for MST to successfully do these things, I reframed it away from Western classical music bias by showing how MST is compatible with other ontologies of musical works. It

incorporates exdurantism in how stages can be thought of as events but that performances do not require a work. It incorporates artifactualism in how performances are a kind of artifact that works should be based on, rather than the opposite. It incorporates social constructionism in how the R-relation needs to be understood as a context-sensitive mechanic that is not reliant on the Western-centric notion of authorial intention.

Under MST, Jones's *Come Away With Me* version of "Don't Know Why" is a recording that holds significant social power. Its position in the zeitgeist makes it potentially the most important version in terms of the normative power of the R-relation. Jones's *First Sessions* demo version very closely adheres to the R-relation's normative force due to its similarity to the prominent *Come Away With Me* version. The fact that the demo version came out first is important for its influence on the *Come Away With Me* version, but because MST is in part a social constructionist theory, past events are retroactively reevaluated based on the present social construction of the musical work. This is the same reason why Harris's version has less significance to the R-relation's normativity. Harris's version is still important because it was a wider audience's introduction to the musical work, making it the first time the work was established, solidifying the R-relation. However, Harris's version did not, and does not, have the uptake of Jones's *Come Away With Me* version.

Metheny's reimagining adheres close enough to the R-relations similarity-relation to be considered a stage in the musical work. This is because of the contextual sensitivity of the R-relation. "Don't Know Why" is partially rooted in jazz, where reimaginings and improvisation are encouraged. Metheny's reimagining is a perfectly

acceptable part of the work-as-construct despite its lack of lyrics, improvisational approach to melody, and instrumentation.

“Don’t Know Y” is also an acceptable deviation while still adhering to the work-as-construct’s contextual R-relation. In jazz and folk, lyrical content is not as important as relative harmony or melody. “Don’t Know Y” is also clearly a self-referential parody. By changing the lyrical content, this version spoofs the musical work and draws attention back to the work. Parody songs function only if they differ from the musical work in a comedic or subversive way while maintaining enough similarity to make clear what musical work is being referenced. The R-relation and work-as-construct allow parodies to function as they ought to: as both a deviation from the work and as a stage in the work-as-construct.

Jones’s Grammy performance is also clearly a part of the work-as-construct, despite the mis-timed vocal queue. Mistakes are a contextual allowance that are understood to be a part of the context of live music. Some genres might be more stringent about how many or how obvious mistakes can be, but mistakes are understood to be a side effect of recital performances.

The 20th anniversary live stream performance is an interesting reimagining because it features drastic changes to the work due to orchestration and tempo. However, this is done by both the composer and the most famous performer of the song together. The inclusion of Harris and Jones offers more credence to the changes in the version. While not a piece of Western classical music, “Don’t Know Why” is still a piece of Western music, and authorship still holds significant value in most Western musical

contexts. The inclusion of Jones and Harris adds credence to the changes, but even if they were not present, this version does not feature enough drastic deviations to the musical attributes of the work to be left out of the work-as-construct.

All of these versions are a part of the musical work because of the way the R-relation allows for variation. If I had selected another work as an example, like Beethoven's *Fifth*, then the contextual nature of the R-relation would have changed how stringently performances would need to adhere to past performances. Things like playing in alternate keys or improvisation(s) would have been cause for immediate disqualification from the work-as-construct because of the Western classical contextually situated R-relation.

I have shown that MST can answer the three issues that plague ontologies of musical works as well as reflect musical practice. Under MST, performances can be incredibly flexible, but still relate to the musical work because of the R-relation. This is how MST answers the problem of audibility. The problem of repeatability is also solved by the R-relation because performances are linked by the work-as-construct, and so feature contextually similar features. Lastly, the problem of reference is also answered because a work-as-construct is an ongoing, socially constructed time-worm that can be referenced at any time. Further, sections of the work-as-construct could be referenced as either performances or sets of performances, to denote how drift has occurred over time, which is a more realistic way of answering the problem of reference. MST is rooted in practice, as the work-as-construct is a socially constructed continuant that is constructed by R-related performances. This means MST can reflect different musical

practices and can flex to meet their contexts, rather than attempt to fit practice to its theory.

MST also has the capacity to incorporate some other theories. Social constructionism is similar to Cray and Matheson's sophisticated idealism (2017), but does not require a shared mental representation. Millikan's idea of unicepts (2017) could be compatible with MST as a way to explain how mental representation functions individually, which is then shared through language to navigate the R-relation and socially construct musical works. This is also how fictionalism, like Levinson's notions of imagination, is compatible, as MST is a kind of participatory social construction (2025). Norm-kind theories, like the one proposed by Nussbaum (2003), could also be compatible, as they could explain how performances exist but are linked together by a kind of reproduction, like the R-relation. MST can explain both why many Western music traditions are centred on the author, composer, conductor, performer paradigm, and why that is not the case for other music traditions. MST explains how audiences are taught to follow the relational conditions of the R-relation, which they then reinforce and help perpetuate, which in turn creates contextually situated musical works.

Conclusion

I have shown that MST is a viable and defensible performance-focused, exdurantist ontology of musical works that aims to reflect all musical practices in a descriptive fashion rather than prescriptive, and, at the very least, is compatible with artifactualism and social constructionism.

In Chapter I, I presented several versions of "Don't Know Why" as an example and asked whether each version connected to the same musical work despite myriad differences. I also did this to showcase how the notion of a musical work is not clearly understood despite its everyday usage.

In Chapter II, I applied the various versions of "Don't Know Why" to the current landscape of the ontology of musical works. I showed how these theories attempt to answer the questions of repeatability, or how different performances appear to showcase the same work; audibility, or how performances can be compared to the work; and reference, or how works are spoken about when performance or playback is not currently happening. I also emphasized the importance of an ontology's ability to explain musical practice, as this was the primary goal of MST. I presented these ontologies to show where MST sits in opposition to, or in harmony with, current theories. I began with Platonism, including type-token theories, which easily explain how musical works can be referenced at any time as universals. Audibility and musical practice, on the other hand, are far more difficult for Platonism. Idealism's strength was also in its ability to be referenced, but it is difficult to explain how something purely mental is extended spatio-

temporally. Arifactualism showed a lot of promise in its answer to repeatability and reference, but musical practice was more difficult to explain when scores or recordings are not present. Fictionalism is interesting, as it treats musical works as collective imagining. This means properties of musical works can be understood as internal, or external, to the fiction, solving problems of repeatability and audibility. However, this kind of error theory is unsatisfactory and does not solve the problem of reference. Nominalism, and in particular theories of four-dimensionalism, can explain how works are repeatable by being causally linked together. Perdurantism does not explain how works can be referenced due to the gaps between performances that occur when trying to construct a perduring time-worm.

The conversation about perdurantism led into Chapter III, where I broke down MST as an exdurantist theory of musical works based on the stage theories presented by Theodore Sider as an alternative to David Lewis' perdurantism (Sider, 2001). MST was presented as a stage-centric theory where the musical work is an aggregate time-worm called a work-as-construct, created by linking together separate stages that are works in themselves called work-as-performances. These work-as-performances are separate events but are linked together by a normative feature called the repeatability-relation, or R-relation. The R-relation is a normative mechanism that links work-as-performances together through causality, intentionality, and similarity-relations. The R-relation is how MST is able to explain how performances are repeatable. Reference is solved by referring to the work-as-construct, which is an exduring, stage-based time-worm. MST answers audibility by way of the normative features of the R-relation, which can be compared to a performance. It answers repeatability because performances that

meet the normative requirement of the R-relation are considered similar enough to be a repeated link in the work-as-construct. Lastly, due to its performance-focused, context-sensitive features, MST is far more flexible in how musical works feature in different musical practices.

In Chapter **IV**, I presented the criticisms of MST by Philip Letts and myself. The most pressing of Letts' arguments was that Moruzzi's appeal to Hawley's notion of stages is incorrect, meaning that performances are too long to be stages. This would make MST untenable, as stages are meant to be the way musical works are constructed. Letts and I also raised concerns about the semantic ambiguity between the meanings of work-as-construct and work-as-performance. My criticisms focused on MST's primary desiderata of attempting to reflect musical practice. I found that many of the mechanics and explanations in MST were still rooted in Western classical assumptions about musical works, which undercut MST's main goal of focusing on performance and reflecting practice (Moruzzi 2020).

In Chapter **V**, I addressed the criticisms and amended some of MST's flaws to show that it is a viable and defensible ontology of musical work. The central argument was that in order to meet MST's primary goal of being a performance-focused ontology that reflects practice, it must address a Western classical bias. I offered a robust solution by showing how MST is compatible with, and already encompasses, the strengths of, exdurantism, artifactualism, and social constructionism. I argued that MST was still a four-dimensional exdurantist theory of musical works. Musical works are a time-worm made up of performance stages, but I proposed that the work-as-construct notion is not needed to reduce the linguistic confusion and to reduce work-centric

Western bias. I also proposed that stages be viewed as events in order to allow performances to have more flexibility in length. I then argued that performances should be treated as artifacts and MST is, in part, artifactualist. Performances can still connect based on the R-relation, but need not be a musical work, and do not necessarily link to a musical work. If they do link to a musical work, that link occurs through the R-relation. I argued that the R-relation is already partially social constructionist and would benefit from further embracing the strengths of that theory. I used social constructionism to show how the R-relation was overly biased towards Western classical music traditions, which go against its context-dependent mechanics. I argued that the similarity-relation must be the most important feature of the R-relation, as it allows musical works to be constructed in a way that does not focus on authorial intention. I then took up some stray criticism of MST, including how MST accounts for recordings and unperformed works.

A last consideration should be taken into account. I have repeatedly mentioned that MST's main goal is to reflect musical practice (Moruzzi, 2020). I have also mentioned that the concept of a musical work was created around the 1800s in the West (Goehr, 1992). If musical works are a Western concept, why does it matter that ontologies of musical works reflect the musical practices of non-Western cultures? This points to an issue that Lydia Goehr calls "conceptual imperialism" (Goehr 1992, p. 245). This is the notion that Western peoples are forcing concepts onto other musical practices because this is the only way we are capable of understanding musicking anymore. This is the way capitalism has transformed music into a musical work commodity in the West (Goehr 1992). This is something worth pursuing, but it is a

question of the social ethics of the musical work concept. The purpose and scope of this project is the ontology of musical works. The answer I give to the question of why MST should reflect all cultures and contexts is that it creates a more robust ontology that allows for flexibility and inclusion. If an ontology of musical works aims to reflect how musical works exist, then it ought to be able to explain how all musical works exist in all practices. A future project focused on ethics could take up the issues presented by musical conceptual imperialism.

MST can answer the problems of reference, repeatability and audibility, and most importantly, it is far more reflective of practice due to its performance-focused approach and its compatibility with other ontologies of musical works. Therefore, MST is a strong, viable ontology of musical works.

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