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“Works of Music: Ingarden and Beyond”

**Abstract:** In the relatively small field of ontology of music, no writer approaches the sophistication and descriptive adequacy of Roman Ingarden. His account of the nature of music works and their relationship to their creation, notation, performance, audition and reproduction takes account of features and complications to a far greater extent than alternative theories. This can be illustrated by considering the most prominent alternative candidates, some of them of more recent provenance than Ingarden’s own. Platonism, as proposed at monograph length by Julian Dodd, apart from its ontological extravagance, makes excessive demands on the work and belittles the creator’s act. Meinongianism recognises the indeterminacy of works, but again undervalues the creator, and imposes additional constraints of its own, not to mention requiring that although there are infinitely many works, no work exists. Ingarden charts the multiple dependencies of work on creator, scores and performances, but underestimates the complexities and varieties of the relationships between work, performances and variants. Can we do better? Yes we can. A bottom-up approach rooted in actual, concrete performances takes account of all Ingarden’s subtleties and more, allows for a greater range of variation and exception, yet remains ontologically austere. While in a loose and popular sense there are works of music, in a strict and philosophical sense there are none; nevertheless our conception of works can be adequately explained and justified by judicious use of the notion of vagueness and the operation of abstraction.