

ROMAN INGARDEN'S PROBLEMS WITH AVANT-GARDE MUSIC

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Roman Ingarden's theory of the musical work is usually criticized for not being able to handle the problems of avant-garde music. The most important reason for this criticism is its dependence on the musical score and, generally, on the conventions of pre-twentieth century European classical music. In my article I offer a revision of Ingarden's theory, which on the one hand leaves its substantial arguments intact and on the other allows the theory to tackle the problem of avant-garde music successfully. I ultimately hope to demonstrate that this revised theory is suitable for dealing with the problem, and can yield fruit when applied.

Roman Ingarden's inquiry into the ontology of works of art in general started as a particular inquiry within a larger ontological project.¹ In this larger project – which was carried out in his *Controversy over the Existence of the World* (1947 and 1948) – he aimed at solving the disputes between two ontological positions, idealism and realism, by providing a systematic overview of the possible modes of being in the world. Within this inquiry, works of art presented a peculiar problem: they could not have been considered ideal objects, because, unlike ideal objects, works of art have to be created by a real author and need to have some real thing as their carrier; they could not have been considered real objects either, because, unlike real objects, they could have existed at multiple places in the same time and be identical. For the same reason, works of art are not mental objects, because if they were, it would have been impossible for two or more recipients to approach the same work of art. Ingarden therefore came up with third mode of being, which he called *intentional*, and he called a work of art itself an *intentional object*. The term 'intentional' entails three factors: first, the work of art arises through intentional creative acts of the artist and is existentially dependent upon them; second, the work of art itself possesses a 'borrowed' intentionality,

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¹ For a general overview of the place of aesthetics in Ingarden's ontological system, see, for example, Danuta Gierulanka, 'Ingarden's Philosophical Work: A Systematic Outline', trans. Halina Bockris, in *On the Aesthetics of Roman Ingarden*, ed. Bohdan Dziemidok and Peter McCormick (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 1–20.

which means that it can communicate with the recipient and demand certain acts on his or her side. Ingarden calls these acts *concretization* – regarding works of art we most often speak of *aesthetic concretization* – which I will inquire into later. Lastly, intentional objects are existentially heteronomous objects, which means that they have to be *carried* by existentially autonomous objects – namely, physical objects that provide them with an 'ontic foundation'.²

Ingarden first developed his ontology of works of art for literature,³ but then proceeded to develop theories for other art forms as well: architecture, painting, theatre, film, and music. The inquiry into the ontology of a work of music – *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*⁴ – is considered one of the most systematic works on music in phenomenological aesthetics.⁵ Yet it is usually pointed out right away that his theory has great problems with handling anything other than pre-twentieth century European classical music. These criticisms have been raised in articles by Zofia Lissa and Andrzej Pytlak.⁶ Lissa argues that Ingarden's theory of the musical work is unable to accommodate some avant-garde music; it cannot, she argues, accommodate aleatoric music using open scores, because if all radically different performances permitted by the open score are to be understood as performances of the same musical work, then the work of art itself as an intentional object is highly ambiguous and it is unclear what the intentional object is or what it contains. It is much more useful, Lissa asserts, to approach each individual performance of an open score as an individual aesthetic object without referring to any kind of intentional object at all. Nor can Ingarden's theory accommodate electronic music such as *musique concrète*, where no difference between composition and performance exists, and therefore there is no need to

² For a concise overview of the notion of 'ontic foundation' in Ingarden's ontological writings, see Piotr Graff, 'The Ontological Basis of Roman Ingarden's Aesthetics: A Tentative Reconstruction', in *Roman Ingarden and Contemporary Polish Aesthetics*, ed. Piotr Graff and Sław Krzemień-Ojak (Warsaw: PWN, 1975), 69–93.

³ Roman Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (1931; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965). Eng. trans. *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George G. Grabowicz (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

⁴ Roman Ingarden, *Utwór muzyczny i sprawa jego tożsamości* (1958), in *Studia z estetyki* [Studies in aesthetics], vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: PWN, 1966), 167–307. Eng. trans. *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

⁵ See, for example, Bruce Ellis Benson, 'Phenomenology of Music', in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, ed. Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania (London: Routledge, 2011), 583–85; Augusto Mazzoni, 'Music', in *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics*, ed. Hans Rainer Sepp and Lester Embree (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 224.

⁶ Zofia Lissa, 'Some Remarks on Ingardenian Theory of a Musical Work' (1966), in Graff and Krzemień-Ojak, *Roman Ingarden*, 129–44; Andrzej Pytlak, 'On Ingarden's Conception of the Musical Composition', in Dziemidok and McCormick, *On the Aesthetics of Ingarden*, 233–53.

talk of any kind of intentional object as a work of art itself. Pytlak adds that Ingarden's theory cannot accommodate improvisations, because here the musical work does not first exist in the form of a score. This becomes more relevant the more abstract the improvisation is, because in the most abstract improvisation we cannot, for example, appeal to any standardized melodic progressions that can be known before the improvisation. He also adds that Ingarden's theory fails to provide us with the 'marker' that differentiates a musical work from non-musical sounds. This becomes important with the advent of avant-garde music, for it challenges the common understandings of what music is. According to Lissa and Pytlak, avant-garde music therefore either shows that the Ingarden doctrine of a musical work of art as an intentional object is invalid for every kind of music or is at least severely limited. Instead of examining Lissa's and Pytlak's arguments in detail,⁷ I will focus on a certain interpretation of essential Ingarden concepts of the intentional object and the concretization that these criticisms implicitly contain. Both Lissa and Pytlak, as well as others,⁸ identify intentional object and concretization with the score and the performance respectively.⁹ Admittedly, in his main treatise of the musical work, Ingarden himself – and this mainly comes down to his choice of examples – may sometimes lead us to believe that there is an essential link between score and intentional object on the one hand and performance and concretization on the other. But I believe that Ingarden's theory of the musical work can be consistently developed without these identifications. The argument that avant-garde music presents specific problem for Ingarden's theory then loses its force.¹⁰ Moreover, I believe that the Ingardenian approach can yield a specific theory of avant-garde music. In my article I will try to show this by (I) examining and clarifying the relation between the musical work as an intentional object, acoustic waves, and the musical score and (II) examining and clarifying

⁷ Ingarden partly did so himself in his 'Uwagi do uwag Zofii Lissy' [Remarks on the remarks of Zofia Lissa], *Studia estetyczne* 3 (1966): 115–28.

⁸ For example, Dufrenne also understands Ingarden's notion of concretization as a performance, although he can hardly be blamed for Ingarden's ambiguities. Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. Edward S. Casey et al. (1953; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 19, 37.

⁹ Pytlak's argument regarding the lack of 'marker' is a bit different from the first three arguments. I shall return to it later in this article.

¹⁰ Avant-garde music therefore does not require the kind of revision of Ingarden's theory of the musical work which abstract paintings required of his theory of painting. In order to accommodate abstract paintings into his theory, Ingarden was required to make substantial changes to the results of his earlier analysis by increasing the number of possible strata operative in the ontology of painting from three to four. See Roman Ingarden, *O budowie obrazu: Szkic z teorii sztuki* [On the structure of a painting: a sketch in the theory of art] (1946), in *Studia z estetyki*, 2:81–90, and Roman Ingarden, 'O tak zwanym malarstwie abstrakcyjnym' [On so-called 'abstract' painting] (1960), in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 3 (Warsaw: PWN, 1970), 188–205.

the relation between notions of performance and concretization. Lastly, I will try to sketch out (III) the particular way in which Ingardenian theory can approach avant-garde music and what kind of theory of avant-garde music it can yield.

I. CARRYING AND PRESERVING

As in his other works concerning the ontology of art forms, Ingarden starts by enumerating what does not belong to the musical work of art itself; that is, it is neither the score nor the mental processes of the composer, the performer, or the listener. Furthermore, the work of music itself cannot be equated with the real physical processes, that is, acoustic waves. If it could be equated, we should not be able to talk about multiple performances of one and the same musical work. Acoustic waves are only physical carriers for the musical work, but the work of music itself is an intentional object. Its mode of being as an intentional object is *supratemporal*, by which Ingarden means that the musical work does not exist as *really* temporal, it does not endure, change, or deteriorate in the way physical objects do. A musical work specifically does not necessarily cease to exist once it has been played and perceived. And as is the case with any other art form in Ingarden's aesthetic conception, the musical work as an intentional object is not what we directly perceive; it has to be aesthetically concretized. Because a musical work is to be perceived in time during aesthetic perception, the immanent structure of the intentional object is quasi-temporal, that is, it is phenomenally temporal.¹¹ Ingarden uses this characteristic because, according to him, some art forms, paintings in particular, are not phenomenally temporal.¹² Although other phenomenally temporal art forms, for example, literature, have the same ontological structure, nowhere does Ingarden claim that they are 'supratemporal'. According to Jeff Mitscherling, both notions of supratemporality and quasi-temporality are first introduced in the analysis of musical work.¹³ There surely is

¹¹ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 228. In the same way, a literary work of art is quasi-temporal. See Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, § 36, 247–57.

¹² This claim is doubtful, for it obviously takes time to look over the picture. As Dufrenne aptly puts it, 'painting is not without relationship to time, nor is music unrelated to space'. Dufrenne, *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 241. The notion of quasi-temporality can still be explained, however, with the help of Husserl's phenomenology. What Husserl qualifies as temporal with the prefix 'quasi-' are objects of imagination, which are approached in an imaginative or neutralized mode of consciousness, as opposed to positional consciousness. 'The object of imagination is present to consciousness as temporal and temporally determined, enduring in time; but its time is a *quasi-time* [...] it is a *time without actual, strict localization of position*.' Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, trans. Karl Ameriks and James S. Churchill (1939; London: Routledge, 1973), 168–69.

¹³ Jeff Mitscherling, *Roman Ingarden's Ontology and Aesthetics* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), 170–74.

a reason why such a notion is not introduced before the analysis of musical work of art. While every other art form participates in the realm of objective real time by means of its physical carriers, which are real objects, the physical carriers of a musical work, that is, the acoustic waves, are not enduring objects but processes.¹⁴ Even without Ingarden's theory it is obvious that when I put a book down, the literary work still exists because the book as physical thing still exists. This basic insight may mean that the notion of supratemporality does not appear until the inquiry into the ontology of musical work. But, in principle, Ingarden would have been consistent had he applied the characteristic of supratemporality, in the manner just described, to every art form, because it is the feature that most distinguishes intentional objects in general from other objects with different modes of being.

These two temporal characteristics of the musical work should be sufficient for Ingarden theoretically since they successfully differentiate the mode of being of the intentional object from other types of objects. Nevertheless, Ingarden keeps looking for concrete enduring objects, that is, the 'score or any other method of "preserving" the musical work once composed'.¹⁵ As he himself notices in his writing on the literary work of art, however, the question of carrying, that is, of ontic foundation, and the question of preservation should not be confused.¹⁶ Consider a literary work spread only by the oral tradition. In this case, only the actual speech of the narrator can reasonably be considered the physical carrier of an intentional work, though it can still be the same work even when related by many narrators. In other words, there can be many different carriers preserving the same intentional object. The disadvantage of a literary work spread by the oral tradition is that preservation is more difficult or unlikely, but we still do not necessarily have to write it down. One would expect the same with a musical work. A concert of free improvisation after which both listeners and performers forget the work instantly is conceivable. They both know it happened, but they cannot reproduce it. It would nevertheless be philosophically valid to say, that a given musical work exists as an intentional object. Though Ingarden admits that a similar situation can occur in literature, when considering music he ignores this possibility mainly because he ties the musical intentional object too closely to musical scores and notation.

If we interpret the notion of intentional object in Ingarden's treatise on music analogically to his treatises on other art forms, a written score should in principle be only as significant as a sketch of a novel with regard to a literary work or

¹⁴ Ibid., 172.

¹⁵ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 235.

¹⁶ Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, §§ 66–67, 385–94.

a screenplay with regard to a film. It would follow, then, that Lissa's suggestion to consider different performances of an open score – and, in fact, also different performances of a traditional score – as individual objects would comport with Ingarden's conception; except that we should not refer to them as 'individual aesthetic objects', as Lissa does, because individual aesthetic objects in Ingarden's system refer to aesthetic concretizations. We should instead relate each such performance to a different individual intentional object. According to such a position, a score therefore lacks a strong ontological function in the constitution of a musical work as an intentional object, and cannot be understood as its ontic carrier. Unfortunately, Ingarden sometimes appears to understand a score in this way. This needs to be corrected and the place of the score must be reinstated to its proper position within Ingardenian aesthetics, even if this runs contrary to Ingarden's thinking.

In his main treatise on the musical work, Ingarden conflates two distinct questions. The first question concerns how the musical work is preserved as identical if it is only carried by physical processes. In other words, it asks what the means of preservation are. The second question concerns how the individuality of the musical work as an intentional object is constituted. He says, for example, that the written score constitutes a single 'original' musical work, which he calls 'an ideal aesthetic object',¹⁷ and he even claims that the question of identity is actually a question of preservation and that open scores are just insufficient means of preservation.¹⁸ This question of preservation, however, has no special philosophical relevance for a musical work; it can be posed with relation to any art form. It can be answered as follows: a work of art as an intentional object can be preserved identically with the help of physical carriers, secondary physical carriers, individual memory, and cultural memory. Physical carriers provide the direct ontic foundation for works of art as existentially heteronomous intentional objects. These can function as the means of preservation too, for example, in sculpture, but in music, these are not physical objects but processes, and are thus by themselves insufficient means of preserving a musical work.

¹⁷ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 298.

¹⁸ Ingarden, 'Uwagi do uwag', 120. This claim is surrounded by his discussion of open scores. He admits that these are a very insufficient means of preservation. Let me note that open scores were not devised primarily as a means of preservation. Nor were they devised to increase improvisation. The challenge that the open score presents to the performer is that it is still binding. In, for example, Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise* (1967), the performer is confronted with 193 pages of symbols meant to be interpreted as piece of music, but any instructions about how to read them are missing. The performer is required to devise his or her own way to interpret the symbols while simultaneously interpreting them by performing the score. As a result, the performer comes up with a performance that is neither intuitive improvisation nor the result of an inherited performance practice.

Secondary physical carriers are used to preserve primary physical carriers – for example, recordings of music, film footage of theatre plays, and photographs of paintings.¹⁹ Simply put, works of art can be copied.²⁰ Individual memory is an uncontroversial carrier; someone can memorize a whole musical piece, which in turn exists as long as the person remembering it exists. Cultural memory is more problematic. It would be wrong to interpret it as several people remembering a composition, whereby, for example, one person remembers only the first part of the piece, another only the second, and so on, and that together they remember the whole piece. Rather, we should speak of a cultural tradition that is supra-individual.²¹ Obviously, folk music is preserved in this way and a traditional written score, when understood as a means of preservation, should, in fact, fall into this category, too.²²

The second question concerns how the individuality or quiddity²³ of the musical work itself is constituted. Ingarden tries to answer this question together with the first one in a single go, but that is unnecessary. The description that follows could have been provided without touching on the problems of preservation at all and without inquiring into whether the musical work is notated, recorded, improvised, and so forth. According to Ingarden, the individuality of the musical work is purely

¹⁹ A book is, in fact, a secondary carrier of a literary work that is, according to Ingarden, ontically founded on the spoken word, which is thus its primary carrier. It poses no problem for Ingarden to say that a literary work exists in multiple exemplars – books – and is preserved by them. It should, by analogy, pose no problem for him to say that a musical work exists in multiple exemplars – recordings – and is preserved by them.

²⁰ This is not, however, the case in architecture. Although Ingarden still does not identify the building with the architectural work of art, he realizes that the intentional structure of this art form is such that it is directly linked to the given time and space in the real world, to the real environment. The sketch of the architectural work that is unable to perform this link is not an architectural work. Architectural works are designed only for the real world, not for possible worlds. Roman Ingarden, 'O dziele architektury' [On a work of architecture] (1946), in *Studia z estetyki*, 2:137–40.

²¹ The concept of cultural memory is not easy to explain by phenomenological analysis of the Ingardenian sort, but that is not necessary here.

²² A written score provides instructions for the creation of individual works of art. If the instructions are rigidly followed, the individual works of art can be so similar that they are considered identical. But the written instructions themselves are not sufficient; a common performance practice is necessary as well. Before the invention of recording devices (that is, secondary physical carriers), performance practice may have been more unified, because continuous performance was the only means of preserving a musical work and performance has been guided by the need to preserve.

²³ The question of the constitution of the quiddity of the object or the object-sense itself requires genetic-phenomenological investigations involving probes into the syntheses of identity or the associative syntheses, according to the principles of likeness and similarity. See, for example, Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 192–93. Although in his aesthetic writings Ingarden pursued some investigations that could be considered genetic, he never undertook this particular investigation. It is fair to say, in Husserlian language, that Ingarden undertook exclusively *noematic* phenomenological inquiries.

qualitative; it relies on the 'specific, unique selection and combination of qualities which co-inhabit it and co-specify it'.²⁴ The qualities themselves can be of either a sonic or non-sonic nature, depending on whether they belong to the sonic or the non-sonic elements of the musical work.²⁵ The latter mainly include aesthetic values and aesthetic qualities and also closely related emotional qualities. But these are contained in the musical work only potentially and have to be concretized. Importantly, non-sonic elements of a musical work also include 'forms of particular sound creations, for example, the special shape of a melodic line, its special ordering, the ordering of harmonic creations, the structures of particular chords in it, etc.' These forms can be either individual or general, or typical.²⁶ The reason Ingarden considers these latter 'forms' non-sonic is that they are comprised of multiple sonic elements, and are therefore elements of a 'higher order', which cannot be sonic themselves, but are purely intentional.

Let us return briefly to the role of the written score and consider the consequences of my reinterpretation of its role in Ingardenian aesthetics. One cannot speak of the written score as a means of preservation without qualification, and only in the context of concrete performance practice. The argument that there is 'an ideal aesthetic object' ontically founded by the score is not well founded. Lastly, a revised Ingardenian aesthetics does not in fact allow for the evaluation of performances as correct or incorrect; it suffices to evaluate each performance aesthetically as an individual musical piece. 'A better performance' should therefore mean only 'a better musical piece', not 'a correct or more faithful interpretation'.²⁷ Two similar performances of a single score do not multiply one musical work in the way the copying of a recording does; they are just two similar musical pieces.

The counterpart of the mistaken view that the musical work of art as an intentional object is to be identified with a score is, as I have argued, an interpretation of concretization in terms of performance. It is an Ingardenian concept of concretization, which I am going to elaborate on in the following section.

II. PERFORMANCE AND CONCRETIZATION

The musical work as an intentional object requires aesthetic concretization. Aesthetic concretization is an individual aesthetic object formed in the concrete

²⁴ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 222.

²⁵ Ibid., 239–69.

²⁶ Ibid., 248.

²⁷ Therefore, for example, the so-called 'historically informed performance', promoted by Nicolas Harnoncourt and others, should be understood just as a specific way of creating the musical piece, a specific artistic decision, not as a 'correct' way to play, for example, Baroque musical pieces. And it should be assessed only according to the individual aesthetic results.

aesthetic perception. The work of art itself is only potentially aesthetically valuable, and requires the approach of an individual recipient who perceives the work of art as aesthetically valuable and actualizes aesthetic values sketched out by the work itself. I will elaborate on this later. To consider the relation of the intentional object and concretization we need to look at an important footnote in § 63 of Ingarden's *Literary Work of Art*.²⁸ Here, Ingarden states that we never have direct access to any work of art (not just a musical work) as an intentional object. But, according to him, this does not prevent us from speaking of the structure of a work of art as an intentional object, of how the individuality of an intentional object in different art forms is constituted, and of the relation between a work of art as an intentional object and an individual aesthetic perception in general. But when we speak of what the particular individuality of a concrete work of art is, we always refer to an individual aesthetic concretization, not to the work of art itself. But because of the essential relation of the work of art as an intentional object and individual aesthetic concretization in general, we may speak of every individual aesthetic concretization – even the most misguided one – as essentially founded upon an intentional object, and every concretization therefore gives us a hint of an intentional object. Consequently, we can speak of a work of art considered as an intentional object as a potential individuality that has to be concretized. On several occasions, Ingarden maintains that musical works have to be concretized in actual aesthetic perception,²⁹ that is, regardless of whether it is a performance of a composition or an improvisation. This interpretation conforms to Ingarden's description of the structure of aesthetic perception in general: in aesthetic perception we aesthetically concretize the work as an intentional object carried by a physical object. But because Ingarden confuses the question of the carrying and the preservation of the musical work, things become ambiguous elsewhere.³⁰ When these questions are combined, Ingarden feels that he has to accommodate the means of preservation – which for him is the score of a musical work – somewhere in the dual structure of the intentional object and concretization. Ingarden therefore starts to link concretization to the performance of a composition, rather than to its aesthetic perception. The problem of performance, however, refers to an extremely difficult but different problem concerning the character of artistic production, which Dufrenne calls the problem of 'a psychology of

²⁸ Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 359–60.

²⁹ For example, he speaks of the 'individual concretizations' that may differ even when considering two listeners sitting close to each other. *Ibid.*, 302–3.

³⁰ For example, *ibid.*, 300–301.

creation,³¹ something Ingarden never really touches upon.³² Moreover, identifying the concretization of a musical work with its performance makes Ingarden's theory vulnerable to this criticism. For although, as he insists, the musical work of art is not a score, it becomes existentially dependent upon the score as both its physical carrier and intentional object. The result of this shift in meaning is that Ingarden's theory is unable to handle improvisations (especially 'abstract' ones), open scores, electronic music, or folk music. But what the performer actually concretizes is the score as the scheme of the musical work, because the score also splits into the intentional object and the physical carrier, as Jadacki aptly points out.³³ With the help of this concretization, the performer can proceed to the performance, that is, to the actual artistic production.³⁴

It is important to note that Ingarden's inquiry into the problem of aesthetic concretization does not therefore commit him to come up with a theory of performance. We see that an individual listening to a musical work still has the structure 'physical carrier–intentional object–concretization'. But this leads us to another problem. What does concretization really mean when considering a musical work? The answer is to be sought in the ontology of the musical work itself. For concretization to happen, there must be something to concretize on the part of the musical work itself. The musical work has to be indeterminate to some degree; it has to have 'places of indeterminacy'. This indeterminacy lies in the fact that multiple elements of the musical work are only 'sketched out' by the intentional object, that is, they are potential. This holds for the majority of the non-sonic elements, such as aesthetic value and emotional qualities. Consequently, when a musical work is simultaneously perceived by multiple listeners, multiple different concretizations can arise. The essential source of this multiplicity is

³¹ Dufrenne, *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 30. This includes the problems of motivation of artistic creation, inspiration and transformation of personal experience into a work of art, gradual composition and the relation of the artist to his or her work during the process of creation, and the function of the body in artistic creation. Phenomenological aesthetics in the Husserlian vein – which includes Ingarden's aesthetics – always assumes the position of the recipient, not the author, as the point of departure in an analysis.

³² There are similar shifts of meaning regarding the performance of a theatre play. See Roman Ingarden, *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego* (1937), in *Studia z estetyki*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: PWN, 1957), 205–6. Eng. trans. *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth A. Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). A similar notion of concretization with an altered meaning could, however, be developed in any art form – does the writer not first prepare a sketch for a novel? Does the painter not have some schematized idea of what and how to paint?

³³ Jacek J. Jadacki, 'O poglądach Romana Ingardena na dzieło muzyczne' [On Ingarden's views on the musical work of art], *Zeszyty naukowe PWSM w Gdańsku* 14 (1975): 11–12.

³⁴ This is obviously an oversimplified way of putting it, but pursuing the matter further is unnecessary here.

not the difference in the personalities of the listeners, but in the indeterminacy of the musical work itself.

This may still seem somewhat unclear. For example, Jadacki harshly criticizes Ingarden for conceiving the musical work as an 'intentional object', which he considers a superfluous 'metaphysical hypostasis' that can be cut off with Ockham's razor.³⁵ According to him, an interpretation of music that focuses solely on the mental processes (involving the listener, the performer, and the composer) and the physical acoustic processes is sufficient. He calls this solution 'sceptical', but it is not in fact a solution at all. Music is a process happening in between the mental and physical processes, but Jadacki lacks any interpretative means to grasp this 'in between'.³⁶ His criticism therefore amounts to saying that although something obviously exists as music, one cannot analyse it by means of a philosophical theory. If we content ourselves with that, his criticism is acceptable. But it is obviously not what Ingarden was content with.

Let us proceed in our pursuit of the notion of concretization in relation to a musical work as an intentional object. Take, for example, one tone from a musical work. As an acoustic phenomenon, it objectively has a certain frequency, but it is at the same time a sonic element of the intentional object. As a sonic element, it contributes to the constitution of non-sonic elements such as potential aesthetic qualities. In order to do so, it must be part of other complexes of a higher order whose nature is, as we saw above, non-sonic as well, for example, melodic line, a system of tuning, a tonal system, or a system of tones and noises.³⁷ The potentiality of aesthetic values in a musical work is thus dependent on many forms that are not wholly contained in the work. The complex interplay of aesthetic values comes into existence only in aesthetic concretization. For example, the sudden interruption of a chord progression may have an expressive value, but it can also legitimately be perceived as interruption only if we can anticipate a further progression according to some tonal forms. The particular tonal form is not in the work, it is not constituted by its sonic elements, because the chord progression

³⁵ Ibid, 18–30.

³⁶ Raclavský also says that music is 'either acoustic waves or psychical processes', but he proceeds to give an actual solution to the 'in between', which is no less metaphysical, by resorting to Popper's theory of three worlds. Jiří Raclavský, 'Ontologie hudebního díla: Platonismus vs. "platonismus"' [The ontology of the work of music: Platonism versus 'Platonism'], *Organon F* 14 (2009): 211–13. It is not my intention to argue against every philosophical theory of the musical work which may compete with Ingarden's theory. I merely want to point out that theorists rarely content themselves with simply stating that there is something like music but no philosophical theory of music is possible.

³⁷ The difference between noise and tone must be understood as structural, but the difference also involves determinate and indeterminate pitches. See Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 203.

has been interrupted rather than completed. This is paradoxical, because if we speak of the expressive value as sketched in the work as the intentional object, we must speak of a tonal form that is not in the work.

This is no different from Ingarden's tackling the literary work. It too is written in some language and as such does not contain this language. But, ontologically speaking, every literary work of art is composed of four strata, with the first two strata being linguistic.³⁸ The linguistic character of these strata is not altered even if there is no one to speak the language that the literary work is written in, and therefore even if the literary work is 'ontically dead'.³⁹ In this case, aesthetic concretization is just impossible.⁴⁰ According to Ingarden, music is the only art form in which the work of art consists of a single stratum⁴¹ – namely, its purely qualitative individuality. The analogical 'ontic death' of a musical work can therefore only mean the inability to concretize the musical work aesthetically, that is, the inability even to listen to it as music. I shall now elaborate this point by focusing on what an ability to listen to something as music implies within Ingarden's theory.

It is fair to speak of different tonalities as simultaneously determining the musical work from outside and being contained in it. Ingarden maintains that in order for the recipient to be able to concretize the given aesthetic values, he or she has to be *qualified* in certain way.⁴² One must know the language in which

³⁸ The four strata in a literary work are the stratum of linguistic sound formations; the stratum of meaning units; the stratum of represented objectivities; and the stratum of schematized aspects. For a concise overview, see Mitscherling, *Ingarden's Ontology*, 129–39. Ingarden explicitly refrains from giving the exact definition of a stratum. Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 25. It is clear that although these strata are not distinguished in the aesthetic perception of a literary work, they can be approached relatively independently in a philosophical analysis of a literary work in general. No such independently analysable aspects are, however, present in a musical work.

³⁹ Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 394.

⁴⁰ What can still be aesthetically concretized in a literary work of art written in a dead language is the stratum of linguistic sound formations (although the qualification 'linguistic' makes proper sense only when the stratum of meaning units is present as well). In avant-garde poetry that invents and uses nonsense 'words', Ingarden considers the possibility that a literary work, pushed to its limits, turns into a musical piece. See Roman Ingarden, 'Graniczny przypadek dzieła literackiego' [A borderline case of a literary work], in *Studia z estetyki*, 3:180–82. He specifically analyzes the work *Atulli mirohlady* by Julian Tuwim, and concludes that this particular work of art is still a literary work, not a musical one. But, for example, in works of so-called 'sound poetry' (like Kurt Schwitters's *Ursonate*) and some Futurist poetry (like Aleksei Kruchenykh's 'Dyr bul shchyl'), it is reasonable to conclude that such 'poetry' turns completely into music. Although interesting, it is not necessary to pursue this topic further here.

⁴¹ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 210.

⁴² The notion appears in Roman Ingarden, 'Uwagi o względności wartości', in *Studia z estetyki*, 3:212–13 (Eng. trans.: 'Remarks Concerning the Relativity of Values', trans. E. M. Swiderski, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 6 (1975): 102–8), and Ingarden, 'O poznawaniu dzieła', 220.

the literary work is written in order to concretize it aesthetically. The qualification has interesting consequences for music, where this notion can relate only to a single stratum, and therefore forms the basic condition of the possibility of aesthetic concretization as such. The expressive value is sketched in the musical work, and it is concretized if a qualified listener approaches it. In this case, the listener's qualification lies in the fact that he or she anticipates a certain chord progression according to a tonal system (determining the work from outside) that matches a tonal system (contained in the work) required by the potential expressive value of the work itself. And just as every possible recipient speaks some language, so everyone anticipates musical progressions according to some tonal systems, some rhythmic forms, and so forth. For example, someone living in Europe is qualified to concretize European classical music with a tempered tuning, a divisive rhythm, and a set of timbres, but has difficulty listening to gamelans tuned in just intonation or sub-Saharan African folk music with its additive rhythm, and may experience great displeasure when confronted with different and aggressive timbres such as Korean *taepyeongso*. But for each of these traditions there are other qualified listeners. The question of the possibility of music for which there are no – and cannot be – any qualified listeners is discussed in the following section.

What I have so far sought to demonstrate is that the notions of physical carrier, intentional object, and concretization, essential relations between these notions, and problems arising from them can be analysed – unlike Ingarden in his main treatise – without reference to the notions of score, performance, or even recording. Any problematization of the notions of score, performance, or recording, which can arise in aleatoric music, electronic music, free improvisation, and so on, does not therefore affect the validity of Ingardenian terminology. In such a revision of the Ingardenian ontology of the musical work the score is not aesthetically relevant. It is possible therefore that there is no aesthetically relevant difference between aleatoric works and works of total serialism, or between structured and free improvisation, or even between improvisation and composition. In the end it turns out that the criticism and appraisal of a musical piece that is based either on the examination of a score or on the fact that it deviates from classical notation is misguided. But this still does not mean that Ingarden's conception of the musical work can yield a specific theory of avant-garde music. This is what I am going to inquire into now.

III. AVANT-GARDE MUSIC: METHODS AND STRATEGIES

Pytlak's problem regarding the 'marker' distinguishing music from mere sound has been implicitly present in the preceding analyses of the qualification of a listener and the 'ontic death' of the musical work of art. Since we have no

direct approach to the qualitative individuality of the musical work as an intentional object, we cannot say what the actual determining characteristic of a musical sound is. But, as we shall see, we can set up some formal conditions. Basically, the musical work as an intentional object intends some form of aesthetic concretization and if the recipient's qualifications correspond to this intention, the work is perceived as musical. This question of differentiation is not, in principle, tied to any particular kind or genre of music, but arises or becomes more acute with the advent of avant-garde music. This can be interpreted by extending the Ingardenian notion of qualification in the following way: avant-garde music, at its most radical,⁴³ 'dis-qualifies' every listener, because it tries to break with any notions of tonality or rhythm and to remove the difference between musical sounds and noises.⁴⁴ This is the starting point for a sketch of the kind of theory of avant-garde music that the Ingardenian conception of the musical work can yield. The challenge is now to elaborate upon it in such a way that 'dis-qualification' does not result in the ontic death of the musical work.

Ingarden has little to say about avant-garde music explicitly. He complains about the lack of rational organization⁴⁵ which he includes amongst the non-sonic elements. What is actually at stake is whether we can, so to say, 'track down' the aesthetic values and aesthetic qualities in the work itself and whether the musical work offers us aesthetic values and aesthetic qualities in concretization at all. What Ingarden can complain about is either an inability to perform the former or a lack of the latter. This refers also to two strategies in avant-garde music – namely, either to obscure the intentional object or to hinder the process of aesthetic concretization. The former involves, for example, the excess of conflicting aesthetic qualities present in Mahler's late symphonies – which can therefore be considered to employ avant-garde techniques – and consequently makes the musical work opaque. This strategy can also include a Japanese harsh noise scene, except that here formal simplicity is obscured by an extremely intense

⁴³ That is, when it is not a musical work from another genre using, in addition, some avant-garde techniques.

⁴⁴ An easy way to do this is by assigning each member of these originally hierarchically organized systems equal weight. Schoenberg's twelve-tone serialism, for example, attempted to do this with the organization of pitches, thus destroying the tonal centre, which is based on the special weight of the fundamental tone. Later, total serialism, for example, of Boulez and Stockhausen, extended this serialist technique to other features of the musical work, such as timbre and rhythm. For a general overview, see, for example, John Covach, 'Twelve-Tone Theory', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 603–27.

⁴⁵ Ingarden, 'Utwór muzyczny', 252. It is not clear which particular composers Ingarden is addressing with this remark, but it may be the serialist composers of the Vienna School.

sensual quality that is of course simultaneously aesthetic.⁴⁶ But most avant-garde music uses the latter strategy. With regard to what has been said so far, we can interpret it as an effort to subvert all tonal, rhythmical, and timbral forms that any recipient could use to anticipate the musical progression and thus to obtain aesthetic values from the musical work. In other words, it tries to subvert any possible qualification of the listener.⁴⁷ The frustration of anticipation forces the listener either to devise or to discover new possible forms, by which the musical piece will be understandable. As when listening to a different tradition of folk music, for example, a European listening to gamelans, the listener has to 're-qualify' himself or herself. But, with regard to avant-garde music, as opposed to gamelans, there are no present forms available and, unlike ancient folk music, the music is devised so that there should not be any.

It is here that we can formulate an Ingardenian theory of avant-garde music. For Ingarden, the 'perfectly non-idiomatic musical work' is a contradiction in terms. Avant-garde music can never fulfil its ambition because it either develops new idioms or fails to differentiate itself from the environment and thus does not motivate any aesthetic concretization.⁴⁸ The aesthetic concretization of the musical work is based on potential aesthetic values constituted within the qualitative individuality of the musical work as an intentional object. If there is no possible qualification allowing the aesthetic concretization then, correlatively, it just means that there are no potential aesthetic values to be concretized. A perfectly non-idiomatic work is therefore just non-musical sound. So the kind of theory of avant-garde music that Ingarden's conception of musical work can yield is one that makes us approach, interpret, and assess avant-garde music as something principally trying to dis-qualify every listener while remaining music and simultaneously something in principle incapable of doing so;⁴⁹ in short, it presents avant-garde music as a 'paradoxical'

⁴⁶ As Iser points out with regard to literature, this is the quality of most mainstream popular art as well. This can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to music too. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 11.

⁴⁷ Rainey speaks in this case of *obliquity* as a tactical device used in undermining the authority of the performer/improviser. Bhub Rainey, 'Introduction', in *Manual*, ed. Bhub Rainey (New Orleans: No Books, 2011), 17–19.

⁴⁸ Such may be the case of the *glitch* movement – it may sometimes be difficult to tell a damaged skipping CD from a musical piece 'composed' of skipping on a CD, for example, Yasunao Tone's *Solo for Wounded CD* (Tzadik, 1997).

⁴⁹ This should dampen the enthusiasm with which Eco approaches the aleatoric compositions of the Darmstadt School, calling them 'openness of the second degree'. Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (1962; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 80. I am by no means implying that those works are not more open than classical pieces, but using an Ingardenian approach we should be precisely reminded of the ontological necessity that any work 'closes itself' at some point, and that no degree of indeterminacy in the score can prevent it. Just a year after the publication

endeavour. Such a theory runs counter, for example, to the frequent claim made on behalf of some avant-garde music that it inquires into 'pure sound',⁵⁰ since the distinction between acoustic processes and intentional objects must hold for every kind of music. We are thus encouraged to conduct formal analyses of any kind of musical work. Examination of the musical score can be helpful in such analyses and graphical notation (akin to a score) can be developed even after, for example, a piece of free improvisation has been played.⁵¹ Moreover, such an analysis allows us to perceive the constitution of idioms in avant-garde music, and allows us also to analyse how the re-qualification of the listener affects listening habits, for example, in the potential 'musicalizing' of any sonic environment as the result of the frequent use of field recordings in avant-garde music such as *musique concrète*. Continuous art-critical inquiry into the idioms and forms of avant-garde music pieces helps to prevent us from falling for experimentation created solely for shock value. And it also allows us to set some criteria according to which avant-garde music can be assessed on its own terms, that is, its success or failure in deploying these two strategies.

One should not confuse these strategies with compositional methods either, even when they are understood in a broad sense. Strategies involve the relations between the work itself and possible aesthetic concretizations, and motivate the listener to a particular sort of activity. Compositional methods are ways of construing the work, and include total serialism, aleatoric music, stochasticism, structured improvisation, free improvisation, and so forth. Though helpful in formal analyses, these methods do not establish the criteria for an assessment of the musical work, and this holds true regardless of the views of the actual composer.⁵²

of *Open Work*, that is, in 1963, the avant-garde composer Xenakis convincingly attacked the suitability of open scores for the purposes of creating open works. See Iannis Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 2nd, rev. ed., trans. Christopher Butchers et al. (1963; Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2001), 38.

⁵⁰ This claim is often made on behalf of music like EAI, noise music, *musique concrète*, lowercase-improv, and so forth. See, for example, Voegelin's interpretation of Pierre Schaeffer's acousmatic project as a 'reduction of music to a sonic core'. Salomé Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (London: Continuum, 2011), 34.

⁵¹ A good example is provided by Bullock in his graphic analyses of a free-improv piece by The BSC. Mike Bullock, 'Two Graphic Analyses of 23% Bicycle and/or Ribbons of Natural Order', in Rainey, *Manual*, 107–10. Moreover, the graphic analyses provided by Bullock really serve the purposes of a phenomenological analysis of the piece.

⁵² Babbitt's infamous article 'Who Cares If You Listen?' is marred by its ambiguity concerning strategy and method, and because Babbitt is unclear about what preparation he requires from the listener the article understandably garnered a lot of criticism. If preparation includes knowledge of methods, Babbitt certainly goes too far and consequently misunderstands even his own work. The only correct way to understand this preparation is by means of the listener's will to re-qualify himself or herself. See Milton Babbitt, 'Who Cares If You Listen?' (1958), in *Composers on Modern Musical Culture: An Anthology of Readings of Twentieth Century Music*, ed. Bryan R. Simms (New York: Schirmer, 1999), 154–59.

As an example, let us consider the dodecaphonic compositions of Arnold Schoenberg. It would be wrong to establish as a criterion of assessment the listener's ability to reconstrue the rational, mathematical organization of a piece such as *Suite for Piano*, Op. 25, and this is not changed even by the fact that this is one of Schoenberg's own criteria. What is at stake is only how such a work conditions the aesthetic concretization, for example, whether it motivates the listener to re-qualify himself or herself or whether it alienates the listener so much that his or her aesthetic concretization is ultimately very poor. And in fact the failure of the criteria set by Schoenberg and his method (that is, the listener's inability to perceive the rigid organization of the piece) can result in the successful employment of an avant-garde music strategy.⁵³

Ingarden's conception of the musical work of art does not yield a particular theory of avant-garde music without further conceptual developments. In this final section, I have sought to show the potential of Ingarden's concepts of qualification, intentional object, and aesthetic concretization for avant-garde music. To undertake such a task, however, it was first necessary to reject an interpretation linking Ingarden's two key concepts – intentional object and concretization – to the notions of score and performance respectively. One final remark has to be added with regard to the theory of avant-garde music hereby presented: avant-garde music can theoretically still pose a grave challenge to Ingardenian theory, but we can now see precisely how it would have to do so – namely, not by challenging the notions of score and composition, but by coming up with a 'perfectly non-idiomatic piece of music'. That means, it could pose a challenge by coming up with a musical piece which would present us with aesthetic values, but where strategies would be absolutely untraceable in their particularity, a piece that we could perceive aesthetically without being able directly to analyse its aesthetic effectiveness at all. Such a musical piece would finally render the notion of 'intentional object' useless; it would discard the explanatory value of it and, by extension, of Ingardenian theory. Despite my experience in avant-garde music,⁵⁴ I am unaware of any such piece, nor can I imagine one. I therefore believe the presented theory holds with regard to the music that has been created so far. But, as Ingarden puts it, 'phenomenologists are not and cannot aspire to be

⁵³ This is pointed out by Adorno in his great analysis of Schoenberg's music. Despite calling himself Hegelian, Adorno provides some superb insights that could just as well be labeled phenomenological. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (1949; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 27–102.

⁵⁴ Especially in free improvisation, alternatively sometimes called 'non-idiomatic improvisation', Derek Bailey's term.

prophets.⁵⁵ In other words, it is impossible for phenomenology to foresee what the radically new challenges will be like.

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⁵⁵ Ingarden, 'Uwagi do uwag', 115.

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