

*Works of Music: An Essay in Ontology.* By JULIAN DODD. Oxford U.P. 2007. pp. xi + 286.

In *Works of Music*, Julian Dodd argues for what he calls ‘the simple view’ (p. 1). On this view, musical works are types that have performances and other sound-sequence events as tokens (*the type-token theory*), and such types are individuated solely by how they require properly formed tokens to sound (*sonicism*). Although a version of the simple view has been defended by Peter Kivy in a series of papers in the 1980s, it is very much a minority view in the ontology of art nowadays, thanks in part to work by Jerrold Levinson and Gregory Currie. As far as I know, *Works of Music* is the first book-length defense of the simple view.

The type-token theory occupies the first seven chapters. Dodd begins by arguing that the type-token theory is a default (or ‘face-value’) theory: ‘the account that is *prima facie* correct and must be accepted as long as it is not defeated’ (p. 8, italics in original). He then argues that types are abstract, unstructured, modally and temporally inflexible, and eternal; and he defends parallel claims about works. Dodd completes his case for the type-token theory by arguing against rival views (defended by Carl Matheson, Guy Rohrbaugh, Gregory Currie, David Davies, and others) on which works are particulars or actions. Sonicism occupies the last two chapters. Dodd argues that sonicism is a default theory and argues against rival views (defended by Jerrold Levinson, Stephen Davies, and others) on which works are individuated either by the instruments that they require performances to use (*instrumentalism*) or by the musico-historical contexts in which they are composed (*contextualism*).

Dodd’s case for the type-token theory and sonicism depends on their default status. It is the default status of the type-token theory that allows Dodd to brush aside objections as ‘the tiniest wrinkle’ (p. 92), ‘a small price’ (p. 90, p. 94) to pay for many benefits. Likewise, it is the default status of sonicism that allows Dodd to resist objections by saying that they cut ‘little ice’ with a sonicist who is ‘[c]onvinced of her doctrine’s status as the default position’ (p. 219).

So how does Dodd argue for the default status of the type-token theory and sonicism? I begin by addressing the default status of the type-token theory and return, briefly, to the default status of sonicism at the end. Dodd argues that the type-token theory is the best explanation of how various performances are performances of the same work: performances of a work *W* are tokens of the type that is *W*. But it seems that other theories can explain this repeatability equally well. For example, on the set-member theory, performances of a work *W* are members of the set that is *W*. (Dodd denies that the set-member theory is a better explanation of repeatability (p. 3); but, even if he is right, that does not mean that the type-token theory is the best explanation.)

Perhaps the type-token theory is a default theory because its rivals have independent vices. Dodd presents two objections to the set-member theory (pp. 17-18). The first is that, on the set-member theory, one cannot hear a work without hearing all of its performances, since one cannot hear a set without hearing all of its members. (One might balk at talk of hearing a set, but Dodd allows abstracta to enter into causal relations (pp. 13-16).) A set-member theorist might reply that she is in good company here, since one cannot hear a type without hearing all of its tokens either. But Dodd denies this (p. 18; cf. pp. 11-16). The crucial difference on Dodd's view is that a set, unlike a type, 'just is an extensional construction from its members' (p. 18). But it is not clear what the content or import of this claim is. It seems that a set-member theorist might reasonably deny it or insist that it doesn't entail that one cannot hear a set without hearing all of its members. The second objection is that sets have their members essentially, whereas works don't have their performances essentially: a work could have had more, or fewer, or different performances. A set-member theorist might reply by adopting counterpart theory with multiple counterpart relations. But Dodd finds counterpart theory 'counter-intuitive' (p. 18) and 'implausible' (p. 190 n. 17), and he says that it is 'a dead end' (p. 190 n. 17).

The type-token theory explains how a work could have had more, or fewer, or different performances, since a type could have had more, or fewer, or different tokens (p. 19). But the type-token theory apparently clashes with the intuition that, for example, Bruckner could have completed his Ninth Symphony (p. 90), since—at least on Dodd's view (p. 54)—a type could not have imposed a different requirement on how properly formed tokens of it are to sound. (Incidentally, it is strange to find Dodd arguing here for the modal inflexibility of types on the basis of claims about their individuation, since—following Guy Rohrbaugh—he recognizes that claims about the individuation of works don't entail claims about their essential properties (p. 249, p. 249 n. 6).) Dodd's reply is that the possible world that we describe by saying 'Bruckner could have completed his Ninth Symphony' is one in which Bruckner completes a distinct work (p. 91). But this is very close to counterpart theory. (It is not quite counterpart theory, since Dodd allows that Bruckner, rather than a counterpart of his, does the composing in other worlds; and, although Dodd does invoke counterparts for some *de re* modal sentences about events (p. 191), he doesn't invoke counterparts for all *de re* modal sentences.) Dodd says, 'none of this is *so* counter-intuitive as to undo all the good work that the type/token theory has done up to now' (p. 91, italics in original). But, if counterpart theory or something like it is acceptable, then it is not clear how to establish the default status of the type-token theory in the first place.

I have focused on the set-member theory, not because I think it is particularly worthy of attention, but rather to illustrate the difficulty of establishing the default status of any theory. I turn now to the default status of sonicism. Dodd argues for the default status of sonicism by appealing to intuition and to the claim that all of the aesthetic properties of a work can be revealed by listening (*moderate empiricism*), which is itself supported by the practice of ordinary listeners (pp. 204-212). Appealing to practice is a good thing, but it is not clear whether appealing to ‘some of the responses typically made by ordinary listeners in a variety of situations’ (p. 205) is enough to settle the issue, especially since moderate empiricism is at odds with the practice of music critics (p. 207) and sonicism has consequences—particularly, anti-instrumentalism—that are at odds with the practice of musicians (p. 222). To resist contextualism, Dodd advises the sonicist to ‘stick out her chin’ (p. 266) and be ‘bullish’ (p. 268): in some cases, she should rely on moderate empiricism and deny that the problematic claims are true. (In other cases, she should rely on the type-token theory together with Dodd’s theory of types and paraphrase problematic claims away by attributing artistic properties to composers or their actions rather than to works (p. 258).) In advocating this strategy, Dodd in effect assumes moderate empiricism and uses it to reject contextualism. But, by appealing to different intuitions and practices, a contextualist might attribute default status to a different theory and hence draw a different conclusion from the incompatibility of moderate empiricism and contextualism.

*Works of Music* is a lucid work of analytic metaphysics. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in the ontology of art.

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