This first issue of Debates in Aesthetics is concerned with the work of Stephen Davies; and, perhaps unsurprisingly given Davies’ prodigious interest in music, all three of the commentaries contained within this issue focus on his contributions to debates in the philosophy of music.

1 Anton Killin brings Davies’ most recent views on the evolution of art, and particularly music, to bear on his contour account of musical expression.¹ Killin provides additional motivation for the arousal account of musical expression, and specifically the phylogenetic dependence of emotional expression via contour on emotional expression via arousal. Indeed, drawing together a series of Davies’ most recent claims about the evolution of music, Killin observes that there is some precedent for such a view in Davies’ recent work: Killin notes that Davies suggests that the presence of musical practices in our first musical ancestor—which Davies believes is Homo heidelbergensis—may be phylogenetically

¹ Killin 2017.
dependent on the tendency (and “know how”) to “vent her feelings in a musical fashion”.  

Killin suggests that Hiedelbergensian crooners may at least sometimes have registered and communicated the emotions they felt in music, and presumably aroused these emotions in others, and that this might have proved adaptive. In support of this, Killin seems to have in mind the duel songs of the Inuit (following anthropologist Jean Briggs). As Inuit communities transformed from small nomadic societies to larger settlement societies, music in the form of duel songs allowed the safe relief and management (through laughter) of negative emotions that would presumably otherwise have been socially destructive.

In response, Davies suggests that Killin’s point should be understood as one about the importance of arousal and self-expression in certain music-making and -appreciating practices. Davies denies, however, that this has any bearing on the question of the truth-makers of statements such as ‘this music is expressive of sadness’. Davies may be partly motivated by the thought that the empirical question of how we, as a matter of fact, come to find music expressive is logically independent from the normative question of what makes statements about the emotional expressivity of music true or false.

Those sympathetic with stronger forms of philosophical naturalism—as Davies himself surely is—may worry about the extent to which this response hits its target. Killin may be understood as making the point that the phylogenetic history of music might come to bear on the truth-makers of statements about expression. For Killin, the truth-maker of such statements about expression may need to be relativized to the species of hominin concerned, and furthermore, the stage of phylogenetic development of that hominin species, together with the type of music concerned.

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3 Davies 2017.
Indeed, once we see that the ability to hear music as emotionally expressive is likely to have emerged slowly, and that there is surely a true account of its phylogenetic development (which may, as Killin believes, plausibly involve emotional arousal), it is difficult to see how these empirical facts wouldn’t have a bearing on the question of what makes it true that a given piece of music is emotionally expressive.

If that thought is right, then one might think that the force of Killin's suggestion is at least linked to the plausibility of his empirical assertions about the phylogenetic history of music. And here, readers may harbour some doubt. One aspect that speaks in favour of Killin’s proposal of ‘arousal first, contour second’ is that the adaptive advantages of expressing an occurrently felt emotion or of emotionally stirring someone by musical means are clear and plausible. Someone who expresses their anger in music may be able to manage conflict in a more controlled fashion. But, on further inspection, the examples Killin suggests may not clearly support the link with the arousal theory of musical expression by themselves. For where the emotion aroused by the Inuit duel songs is mirth, the emotion expressed by the music is anger. A better example may be the use of music to emotionally entrain group members. As a result, while it may be clear that the arousal of certain emotions may be advantageous, it is not clear that this is linked to emotional expression.

Matteo Ravasio takes aim at Davies' contour theory of musical expression. Whilst Ravasio does not deny that a great deal of music may be literally expressive of emotions in virtue of presenting the behavioural correlates of emotion, Ravasio argues that this cannot account for all emotional expression in music. Ravasio presents three examples that put pressure on Davies'
account. The first is the ascending glissando at the beginning of Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. Ravasio claims that the glissando is underdetermined as to the behavioural correlate it presents. As a consequence, Ravasio suggests that if the ascending glissando were expressive in virtue of the behavioural correlate of emotion it presents, it should be ambiguous in the emotion it expresses. Since Ravasio believes that it is not, he concludes that it cannot be expressive in virtue of the behavioural correlates of emotion. Similarly, Ravasio suggests that his second example—the menacing character of a saturated, dark timbre—cannot be expressive in virtue of a link between the timbre and some behavioural correlate, since these timbres can occur in the absence of menace.

Davies’ counters these examples by denying that the glissando in Gershwin’s *Rhapsody*, and the dark saturated timbre, are determinatively expressive; and claiming that, as a result, they do not constitute counterexamples to the contour account.\(^5\) Indeed, if they are expressively ambiguous, and if the emotional appearance that is represented is ambiguous (as Ravasio claims), then this might be taken as further support for the contour account.

Readers might also worry that Ravasio’s examples seem to set the bar for emotional expression by contour too high. Davies’ account need not involve the claims that something is emotionally expressive only if it can be seen to present the behavioural correlate of one emotion; nor that a given behavioural correlate is emotionally expressive in music only if it always co-occurs with the corresponding emotional episode in non-musical contexts. Rather, the contour account can more plausibly be taken to involve the claim that we learn to recognise music as emotionally expressive by picking out statistical regularities between behavioural correlates and emotional episodes. As a result, Davies’ contour account may both allow for dark saturated timbres to be expressive of menace and

\(^5\) Davies 2017.
Geschwind’s glissando in his *Rhapsody* to be determinatively expressive (in some manner).

This latter potential response, however, doesn’t apply to Ravasio’s third example. Ravasio points out that it can’t be the case that the tenseness of a tritone is the result of experiencing some behavioural correlate. Ravasio observes that it cannot be the case that it resembles the sound of a tense voice, since we ordinarily cannot produce three pitches at once; nor can it resemble a tense movement, since the tritone does not consist of a succession of musical sounds (which Ravasio notes is necessary for hearing movement in music). Davies responds by denying that tritones (and perhaps similar musical entities such as an isolated minor triad) are straightforwardly emotionally expressive.

Readers might wonder whether this response does enough to assuage Ravasio’s objection. For whilst tension is not an emotion *per se*, it certainly seems to be a state that one can feel and express (much like other affective states that are not fully-fledged emotions, such as moods). As such, there doesn’t seem to be any obvious and principled reason why the contour account shouldn’t be expected to accommodate such cases.⁶ Given this, readers might think that Ravasio and Davies’ exchange leaves Ravasio’s preferred account—namely emotional expression through secondary polysemy—a live possibility in future debate surrounding emotional expression.

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Nemesio Puy takes up the issue of the relative ontological weight of transcriptions, versions, and musical works. Puy pursues three main lines of argument against Davies’ view that transcriptions are new works distinct from the original.⁷

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⁶ We are grateful to Matteo Ravasio for clarifying some of Davies’ existing views in relation to this point.

⁷ Puy 2017.
Puy argues against Davies’ claim that the features relevant for the individuation of musical works are determined by the musical practices and conventions in place at the time at which the piece was composed. Since instrumentation has, according to Puy’s Davies, at least at times been conventionally considered to be an essential feature of the work, a change in instrumentation may be sufficient for the individuation of a new work. Puy claims that one can capture the fact that instrumentation was seen as increasingly relevant to the correct appreciation of works in a certain musical epoch without subscribing to the view that those conventions and practices determine that a change in the medium of a work is sufficient for a change in identity. Rather, Puy claims that one should understand this fact as mandating a preferred way for the work to be performed rather than an essential feature of the work itself.

In support of this, Puy notes that even in the nineteenth century—where, according to Puy’s Davies, the relevant musical practices and conventions dictate that instrumentation is essential to a work of art—the practices for work individuation, as indicated by naming practices, show that a change of instrumentation was not sufficient for a change in the work’s identity. Puy also offers two thought experiments which he thinks show that Davies’ view runs against our intuitions: Puy notes that a transcription of a work for the practicalities of a rehearsal would not be identified as a distinct work belonging to the transcriber; and that an audience member who expects the presentation of a new work would feel cheated by a transcription of another work even if it were a medium-specific work whose transcription involved creative skill.

In response, Davies makes two points. The first is that transcriptions of works that are stripped down for the purposes of rehearsal should be considered reductions rather than transcriptions—and so, even if one holds the intuition that such works are distinct from the original, this case is not a counterexample to his view. The second is to argue that Puy’s

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8 Davies, op. cit.
challenge here doesn’t take account of the fact that there is an established, and apt, way of referring to such works, which acknowledges both the primacy of the original composer and the contribution of the transcriber. One might think, like Davies, that the latter response at least blunts the force of Puy’s objection; but one might also think that it doesn’t seem to unequivocally support the view he defends. For if the original composer is primary, and the title of the work remains the same, then arguably it doesn’t seem obvious that they are two different works.

Puy’s argument doesn’t rest on mere naming conventions, or on plumbing intuitions. And perhaps this is for the best, since readers might think that one of the conclusions that emerges from Puy and Davies’ exchange is that our naming practices are at least indeterminate with regard to their respective positions. Puy challenges what he takes to be two of Davies’ other theoretical reasons for considering transcriptions of medium-specific works (at least), but not versions, to be new works.

Puy interprets Davies as holding the view that a change of medium can result in a different work on the grounds that two works that differ in their aesthetic properties are different works, and that some aesthetic properties such as virtuosity are medium-dependent. Puy rejects these cases by arguing that all such aesthetic and medium-specific properties are more appropriately attributable to the performance, and only derivatively to the work itself. Taking the example of virtuosity, Puy argues that works can vary in the extent to which they are virtuosic—depending on the skill of the musician, technological change, or otherwise—without thereby changing their identities. Taking himself to have shown that the property of virtuosity, at least, is not essential to the identity of the work, Puy claims that there are no such aesthetic properties of a work that are medium-dependent and predicated of the work rather than the performance.

Davies makes two responses to Puy’s claim. The first is that virtuosity may indeed be a property of works rather than merely of
performances. That performances of works can vary to the extent that they are virtuosic without changing their identity doesn't show that virtuosity isn't ever an essential property of the work. As Davies notes, there may be circumstances in which the work itself will be the source of the virtuosity. Even a work that is easily played may be seen as virtuostic under certain conditions. Davies’ second response is that, virtuosity aside, there are other aesthetic properties that are medium-dependent and apply to the work. Davies proposes that the properties of being rushed, and perhaps noisy, might qualify.

But perhaps there is less of a disagreement between Puy and Davies than might appear at first sight. After all, Puy also recognises the role of normal conditions, at least in identifying some properties that apply to performances. He claims, for example, that a work wouldn't be considered virtuosic if an appropriate rendition were not virtuosic; whereas a performance cannot be atonal if the work is not atonal. Since one might think that the performance of a work may be atonal even if the work is not—imagine someone playing a work on an instrument that is somewhat out of tune—Puy may yet also wish to turn to normal conditions in identifying the properties that attach to works themselves.

On the other hand, Puy might agree with Davies that *The Rite of Spring* is a noisy work, but deny that this counts as an aesthetic property that is medium-specific. A performance utilising brass instruments alone will surely be noisier than one performed entirely with woodwind instruments, but the work itself might still be noisy to the extent that this is the upshot of the sound structure itself—irrespective of the particular instrumentation chosen.

Finally, Puy argues that Davies presses his view by drawing an infelicitous analogy between colour and form on the one hand, and timbre and musical structure on the other. Puy argues that the supervenience bases of colour and timbre are not sufficiently alike for Davies to be able to infer that timbre influences musical form from the fact that colour influences visual form.
Davies replies by countering that Puy misunderstands the purpose of the analogy. The relation between timbre and musical form is importantly similar to, but not the same as, the relation between colour and form. Moreover, Davies clarifies that the analogy is supposed to pick out a similarity between timbre's contribution to the experience of musical form and colour's contribution to the experience of visual form, and not the structural relation that holds within each pair.

A reader might worry that it is not easy to disentangle experience from structure here. The experience of colour might plausibly be thought to influence the experience of form in virtue of some fact about the physics of colour. As such, to the extent that the structures are different, one might not expect the experiences to be similar.

In light of this, one might think that if the point can be made without using an analogy with colour then so much the better, and Davies clearly thinks that it can. Davies claims that if we were to imagine Ravel's Bolero rendered in pure sine waves we would “hear how the work fades away...”. Clearly there would be a difference between this and a standard performance, but how is this difference to be glossed philosophically? One might worry that it is not clear that the timbre contributes to the form of the work. Indeed, it may be precisely because it is not clear that timbre influences form that the analogy with colour is so often invoked. But even if it is not true that timbre contributes to sound structure in any precise sense, Davies' example may yet have the resources to deal with Puy's objection. For are any of the differences between the original and the sine-wave version aesthetic, and medium-dependent, differences?

In closing, we would like to thank Anton Killin, Matteo Ravasio, Nemesio Garcia Puy, and Stephen Davies for their contributions to the issue, and forbearance whilst we organised the re-launch of the journal. We hope that readers will find sustenance

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9 Davies, op. cit., p. 64.
for further debate about Stephen Davies' work in these pages, as well as the issues he addresses.

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References


HOMININ MUSICALITY AND MUSICAL EXPRESSIVITY
Revisiting Davies’ Contour Theory

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**ABSTRACT** Stephen Davies defends an analysis of musical expressivity dubbed the ‘contour theory.’ In other work, Davies argues that hominin music could be as much as 500,000 years old. The musical expressivity debate is typically concerned with ‘pure’ (or ‘absolute’) music, taking examples from the Western art music canon as paradigmatic. I register some reservations about applying contour theory to musical expressivity in hominin prehistory, even though we might have reason to think that early musical activities were ‘pure’ insofar as they were wordless (e.g., utilising vocables, not lyrics) and not programmatic.

Over the last few decades Stephen Davies has contributed to a wide-ranging array of topics in the philosophy of the arts. More recently, Davies has been focused on explicating and assessing evolutionary and psychological theories about the arts, and associated empirical research, in addition to advancing his long-standing philosophical research agenda in parallel. The general question I put to Davies in this discussion piece is this: Has your more recent research on the evolution and cognition of the arts impacted your earlier philosophical theories and their application? To narrow the scope somewhat, my focus will be Davies’ contour theory of musical expressivity.

It is a commonplace observation that music induces affective responses in many of those who listen to it. And those who listen to music ascribe properties of an emotional kind to the music they hear,
such as sadness.\textsuperscript{1} Despite this, music is not—and is not thought to be—sentient. Yet this situation has led to a curious philosophical puzzle. If the music is not itself sad, and is not capable of being sad, how does it express sadness? Philosophers have proposed a number of theories that aim to capture the nature of musical expressivity. This debate is typically concerned only with ‘pure’ (or ‘absolute’) music, taking examples from the Western art music canon as paradigmatic, in order to black-box any expressive effects due to lyrics or programme.

Davies has both motivated and defended the contour theory of musical expressivity.\textsuperscript{2} According to this view, musical expressivity is explained by appeal to the manifestation of qualities in instances of music that are characteristic of human emotions, “by virtue of resemblances between their own dynamic structures and behaviours or movements that, in humans, present emotion characteristics”.\textsuperscript{3} So an instance of music is expressive of sadness just in case that instance of music is disposed to elicit a response of sadness-ascription, regardless of the occurrence of emotions in the individuals involved, reached via musical resemblances with the manifestations of emotions in human beings. Andrew Kania lists these as “the phenomenology of the experience of the emotion, the emotion’s typical facial expression, the contour of vocal expression typical of a person experiencing the emotion, and the contour of bodily behaviour typical of such a person”.\textsuperscript{4} Here Davies has in mind such bodily behaviours as “gait, attitude, air, carriage, posture, and comportment”\textsuperscript{5}.

Musical sadness, on this theory, is thus like the sadness of weeping willows: the whispery, downturned structure of a weeping willow resembles that of a downcast, whiskery, hunched-over

\textsuperscript{1} See e.g. Watt and Ash 1998.
\textsuperscript{2} See e.g. Davies 1994, 2001, 2006.
\textsuperscript{3} Davies 2001, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{4} Kania 2012, §3.1.
\textsuperscript{5} Davies 2006, p. 182.
individual; or the sadness we ascribe to a droopy-looking canine face, given its resemblance to the dynamic characteristics of genuinely sad human faces (perhaps a furrowed brow with deep-set eyes).

Of course, Davies’ contour theory has its detractors. But in the following I take a different tack to that usually deployed against him. I query whether Davies’ account captures the full scope of music that he appeals to in more recent work. Even though Davies circumscribes the kind of music he intends the contour theory to be applicable to (so-called ‘pure’ music), extending the discussion of expressivity to music in an evolutionary context should not be too problematic (in principle), on the plausible assumption that much music in hominin prehistory was ‘pure’ in the sense that it was both wordless (e.g., utilising vocables) and not programmatic.

Davies argues that music may be as much as a half million years old—appearing and incrementally evolving in our Heidelbergensian predecessors. Let me quote Davies at some length:

H. heidelbergensis possessed the physiological prerequisites for song: fine tongue and thoracic breath control, descended voice box and appropriate hyoid bone structure, hearing geared to detect and process the pitchbands in which the species vocalized, the neural resources to process and store patterned sound strings, and so on. Moreover, these hominins lived in social groups and depended on coordination, communication, and cooperation, so they had the social capacity to make group music and could benefit from doing so.

Music-making [...] is often more about emotional expression and group entrainment and coordination than about abstract or symbolic thought. Individuals with mental deficits can be highly musical. Very young

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6 For Levinson's variant, and objections to Davies' specific account, see Levinson 2006.
7 Davies 2015, p. 28.
children can participate in group dancing and singing. Music-making is a practical skill that calls for “know-how” but need not require “knowing that,” the capacity to verbally cognize and articulate what is done. What matters, then, is not whether H. heidelbergensis qualified as what we would nowadays call an intellectual but whether she was inclined to vent her feelings in a musical fashion, perhaps interacting with her baby or while cooperating with her fellows. If her group celebrated their successes and mourned their losses, these ancients would have found applications for the musical capacities that they possessed.⁸

[... I]t is plausible to think that the earliest music itself was made as much as 500,000 years ago.⁹

It is not my goal here to evaluate Davies’ evolutionary comments. Rather, notice the discussion about music as an expressive outlet. If we are to take seriously the affective nature of music in our evolutionary past, we might take more seriously the expression and arousal theories of musical expressivity.¹⁰ Heidelbergensian crooners and chanter, on this picture, presumably vocalised to one another in order to register and communicate some internal affective state, at least sometimes.¹¹ In which case, it seems to me that the emotion expressed/aroused via the musical utterance is theirs, regardless of resemblances with other phenomena. Moreover, I think it plausible

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⁸ Ibid., pp. 28–29.
⁹ Ibid., p. 30.
¹⁰ See Killin 2014. Expression theorists hold that the emotions expressed in music belong to the composer(s), performer(s), or both; the emotions are behind or expressed through the composition or production of musical sound. Arousal theorists hold that the emotions expressed belong to the listeners of the music; they constitute the affective response evoked in listeners under standard perceptual conditions. Advocates of expression theory include Collingwood 1938 and Dewey 1934. Arousal theorists include Matravers 1998.
¹¹ In making this point I am not assuming that that individual’s affective state need be unobvious to other individuals until it is expressed in this way.
that capacities for emotional expression/arousal through music would confer adaptive value and be selected for, but perhaps not mere emotional recognition by contour, which might be thought of as a by-product of more general capacities for pattern recognition. The capacity for affective recognition by contour, indeed, might build upon more basic affective expression/arousal capacities as well as pattern recognition. And given that we have come to recognise expressive music in cases where an emotion is actually expressed, all this together does not immediately suggest that a contour-like theory would be correct.\textsuperscript{12} I offer the following ethnographic example. This is not intended to be a conclusive test case, yet it should aid our discussion of theories of musical expressivity.

As Inuit communities shifted from small-camp, nomadic-forager ways of life to larger-group, established-settlement societies in the twentieth century, individuals submitted to a sea change in their experience of the social realm.\textsuperscript{13} Music took on a clear social management role—extreme cases of hostility among adults was publically ritualised and dealt with through music in the form of \textit{song duels}:

The song duel [...] was resorted to in exceptionally troublesome cases, when the feelings of the antagonists ran too high to allow them to keep silent. In the duel, the two offended parties exchanged scathing songs while an amused audience looked on. [...]\textsuperscript{14}

In short, the duel embedded conflict in an artistic form, isolated it within a ritualized context, concealed it behind irony and ambiguity of genre, and at the same time publicized it by focusing the attention of the entire community on it.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Thanks to Ryan Doran for pressing me on this.
\item \textsuperscript{13} See Briggs 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 111.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 112.
\end{itemize}
It seems to me that analysing instances of these song duels for expressivity along the lines of the contour theory would be misguided, and not just for the reason that they involve music with lyrics (i.e., they are not a case of pure music). Rather, song-duel music seems to be straightforwardly expressive of the emotional profile of the duellers. However, the contour theory requires abandoning “the attempt to analyse music’s expressiveness as depending on its connection to occurrent emotions”, and in this context at least, this approach seems to me to be a bug, not a feature, of Davies' theory.

In my view, beginning at the beginning of music, some kind of hybrid expression-arousal theory of Pleistocene musical expressivity is not only salvageable but very plausible (the main objections to the expression and arousal theories appeal to possibilities that we can, it seems to me, cast aside in speculatively reconstructing Pleistocene music-making). Later developments in music evolution—for example, those that render music’s participatory status as one of trained specialists performing for passive audiences, who hear the performance as, and aesthetically evaluate it as a decoupled art object—utilise our capacities to intentionally express emotion through music and be emotionally stirred by music, and are thus candidates for contour theory. But not all later developments are plausible candidates for contour theory (e.g., Inuit song duels). In brief, then: expression-arousal first and foremost, in hominin musicality; plausibly, contour theory later, in certain contexts. This idea is not, of course, adequately developed or defended here, but I hope I have gone some way towards motivating

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16 After all, a hypothetical wordless (e.g., vocable) version would serve my purposes, as would analysis of the actual music and musical emotion explicitly decoupled from that of the lyrics. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this.

17 Davies 2001, p. 34.
it, and have given some reason to revisit Davies’ contour theory with a critical eye.\footnote{Thanks to Ryan Doran and an anonymous referee for detailed and constructive feedback on previous versions of the manuscript. I have also benefitted from helpful discussions with Johanna Guest.}

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STEPHEN DAVIES ON THE ISSUE OF LITERALISM

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ABSTRACT In this paper I discuss Stephen Davies's defence of literalism about emotional descriptions of music. According to literalism, a piece of music literally possesses the expressive properties we attribute to it when we describe it as 'sad', 'happy', etc. Davies's literalist strategy exploits the concept of polysemy: the meaning of emotion words in descriptions of expressive music is related to the meaning of those words when used in their primary psychological sense. The relation between the two meanings is identified by Davies in music's presentation of emotion-characteristics-in-appearance. I will contend that there is a class of polysemous uses of emotion terms in descriptions of music that is not included in Davies's characterization of the link between emotions in music and emotions as psychological states. I conclude by indicating the consequences of my claim for the phenomenology of expressive music.

1 Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss Stephen Davies's defence of literalism about expressive properties in music. I will start with a brief outline of two opposite approaches, the metaphoricist and the literalist. As the claims defended by these two accounts are relative to a specific class of emotional descriptions of music, it is useful to specify the scope of the linguistic expressions in question. These are descriptions of music that attribute psychological properties to it, particularly properties related to the emotional sphere. Music is described as 'sad', 'happy', 'despairing', 'joyful', and so on, and these adjectives are presumably not meant to indicate the actual
possession of emotional states by the music. Although agreement about these descriptions is hardly ever complete, all the evidence suggests that competent listeners reliably produce similar descriptions of the expressive qualities possessed by music. Davies's defence of literalism is centred on the concept of polysemy. According to him, the use of emotion words in describing music bears a relation to the central use, in which these words denote psychological states, but it is not identical with it: emotion words refer in the musical case to the presentation of behavioural correlates of emotions. The use of emotion words in describing music is therefore not metaphorical, but polysemous and literal. I will argue that there is a class of polysemous uses of emotion terms in describing music that has not been analysed by Davies. I conclude by presenting the consequences of my claim for the phenomenology of music listening.

2 Metaphoricism vs. Literalism

Metaphoricists tend to couple the idea that descriptions of music as ‘sad’ or ‘happy’ are only metaphorical with a related anti-realist position concerning the metaphysics of expressive properties. For instance, Roger Scruton holds that emotional descriptions of music are ineliminable metaphors, and pairs this thesis with the claim that expressive properties are not real properties of music.¹ Nick Zangwill holds that emotional descriptions of music are metaphors that track the aesthetic properties of music and no other property.² Others, such as R.A. Sharpe, take emotional descriptions of music to be the layperson's way of pointing to musical features.³ Against metaphoricists, literalists claim that emotion words applied to music constitute a case of literal use of language.⁴ This

¹ Scruton 1997, p. 154.
² Zangwill 2007, p. 392.
³ Sharpe 1982, p. 81.
⁴ A sophisticated and somewhat unorthodox literalist position is the one held by Saam Trivedi (2008). As Davies points out, arousal and expression theories of
view is normally paired with a form of aesthetic realism concerning expressive properties. In Davies's case, the linguistic claim is linked to a metaphysical claim that construes expressive properties as response-dependent properties possessed by the music itself. Relative to a certain kind of experiencing subject (human listeners with a shared evolved nature), music can be legitimately described as possessing expressive properties.

3 The polysemy strategy

Davies's literalist account appeals to the concept of polysemy. Polysemy is described by linguists as the association of a single phonological shape with two or more systematically interrelated meanings (e.g. 'mole' used to refer to both a small burrowing animal and a secret agent working undercover). It is normally contrasted with homonymy, which is the association of a phonological shape with two or more unrelated meanings (e.g. 'bank', which may refer to both the riverside and the financial institution). Davies contends that emotion words, when used in describing music, are not used to refer to emotions as psychological states. Instead, they refer to emotion-characteristics-in-appearance (henceforth ECA). These are behavioural correlates of emotions. Although we learn to recognize them from a concurrent actual emotion, to which they give expression, their subsequent recognition is independent from the occurrence of any actual emotion. We describe an actor's face and posture as sad because we have learnt the sort of faces people pull when in the grip of sadness.

How does Davies explain the shift from actual emotions to ECA in the musical case? The polysemy strategy is grounded on a specific phenomenology of music listening: it is because we experience expressive music as presenting ECA that we may describe musical expressiveness also tend to result in a literalist reading of emotional descriptions of music. According to these theories, words such as ‘sad’ and ‘happy’, when applied to music, refer to emotional states experienced by, respectively, the listener and the composer (Davies 2011, pp. 23–24).
it with emotion words used in a secondary sense, related to the primary psychological one. Because this use is not an idiosyncratic use of emotion words in the psychological sense, but rather the use of a different polyseme with a related meaning, the main argument in favour of a metaphoristic strategy is rejected. This argument relies on the apparent impossibility of a literal use of emotion words in the description of inanimate entities such as pieces of music. This is taken to entail that either we are irrationally attributing psychological states to the music, or we are using emotion words metaphorically. Against this interpretation, Davies construes the expressive qualities we attribute to music as depending on the music’s presentation of behavioural correlates of emotions. This results in a use of emotion terms that, although related to the psychological use, differs from it. The emotion terms may therefore be literally applied to music and other inanimate objects (e.g. to a weeping willow presenting the typical downcast configuration of a body bent by sadness).

4 There is polysemy, and there is polysemy

The polysemous use of emotion words in music that Davies describes is based on our musical experience of ECA. According to Davies, music is experienced as resembling typical human emotional behaviour, and this is what grounds our use of emotion words in describing it. I will call this phenomenological foundation of the polysemous use of emotion terms in music the experiential basis of such use. Call the sort of polysemous use I just described ECA polysemy. My claim is that there is a kind of polysemous use of emotion words that is different from ECA polysemy. I call this secondary polysemy, with reference to Wittgenstein’s discussion of secondary meaning, to which I will briefly refer. I will present three examples of secondary polysemy. In these cases, I contend, the experiential basis cannot be traced back to the music’s presentation of ECA.
1) **Underdetermined Musical Cues.** To illustrate his contour theory, Peter Kivy discusses the well-known case of Monteverdi's *Lamento di Arianna*.

One might concede that in this case the music bears a clear resemblance to the emotional prosody typical of sadness and despair. Other instances of expressive music might clearly appeal to our spatialized experience of music and recall the demeanour of people in the grip of emotions. But consider now the elated ascending glissando at the beginning of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. What kind of ECA does this glissando correspond to? Does it recall a vocal or a bodily human expression of emotion? Suppose we allow for both interpretations. The glissando could be heard as a musical presentation of either vocal or bodily behaviour. The trouble with this is that allowing ECA to be underdetermined as to their sense modality might result in an exceedingly ambiguous determination of the emotion expressed by the music. If we interpret the glissando as a rise in pitch, we might hear it as a piercing scream of pain. As a bodily behaviour, it might recall a body rising up as if freed from a burden. To go back to vocal behaviour, the glissando might also be considered analogous to the rise in pitch characteristic of happy or excited speech prosody. In contrast to the relatively determinate character of the emotional descriptions we might offer of this musical stimulus, the ECA we might associate with the glissando are unable to determine its emotional character, shifting as they do from the positive to the negative side of the emotional spectrum. These considerations suggest that the source of the glissando's expressiveness is not to be found in its connection with the phenomenology of music listening outlined by Davies.

2) **Timbre.** ECA have an essential connection with emotions as psychological states: they acquire their secondary meaning of mere ‘appearances’ when they occur in isolation from those psychological states. Timbre, although expressive, often cannot be meaningfully interpreted as an ECA. A saturated, dark timbre, rich in

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5 Kivy 1980, p. 20.
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overtones and using a low register, has a menacing character. It is natural, for the resemblance theorist, to look at resemblance to the speaking voice. Speaking in a raspy, dark voice, and using a low register can sound equally threatening. A raspy, dark voice, however, is not a behavioural correlate of an emotion: when it occurs in humans, it might give rise to what we are saying is a menacing and slightly ominous feel, but 1) it does not need to occur when people are in fact being menacing, nor does it often occur in these cases; and 2) it may occur regularly in the expression of other emotions, or when we are expressing no emotion at all (as some individuals simply happen to have a dark and raspy voice). Its expressive character seems independent of its occurrence in human expressive behaviour—something that is definitely not true of things such as prosodic cues or bodily behaviour. Whereas these assume their expressive character through their behavioural association with the expression of actual emotions, timbre does not need such an association.

3) The expressive character of harmonic intervals. I believe that the distinction between the two cases of emotional polysemy lies at the heart of various difficulties faced by resemblance theories of musical expressiveness. For instance, Peter Kivy realized from the outset that it was problematic for a resemblance-based account such as his contour theory to explain cases in which an expressive character is attributed to “isolate” musical features, that is, to bits of music that do not essentially occur as part of a melodic contour. This is a self-inflicted problem for a theory that seeks to explain musical expressiveness in terms of features that require a melodic contour or movement in tonal space. This problem is particularly evident in Kivy’s discussion of major and minor chords, the expressive quality of which he explains through conventional association. Rather than accepting the questionable associationist strategy, one could consider the ascription of expressive quality to these musical entities as a case of secondary polysemy, in which there is no phenomenal

6 Ibid., p. 77.
resemblance between the music and ECA to justify our ascription.\(^7\)

Why should we accept this suggestion? In the lack of a plausible interpretation of chords and harmonic intervals in terms of ECA, I contend that secondary polysemy offers the best candidate for an account of the expressive character possessed by these musical entities.

Another example in favour of this strategy is represented by the tritone as harmonic interval. We speak of this interval as tense, and indeed we often use it to emphasize the yearning quality of the music when approaching a resolution. Yet the tritone's resemblance to a tense voice (or to a tense body) is impossible to specify in terms of ECA. A tritone does not sound like a tense voice, because, for one thing, we can produce no more than one pitched sound at a time (unless appropriately trained). Neither could it resemble a tense movement, as hearing movement in music requires a succession of musical sounds, through which we hear movement in the musical space. In conclusion, what the tritone shares with a tense voice is nothing but its being tense, or rather, the fact that it seems to be aptly described as 'tense'.

As anticipated, I believe that secondary polysemy is an instance of a sort of secondary use of words that has been described by Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein noticed that we talk about mental and physical 'strains'. We do not find the use of the same word in the two circumstances puzzling, although we are at a loss when it comes to justifying the basis of this linguistic habit.\(^8\) What grounds our use of

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\(^7\) Davies observes, however, that “chords are not merely aggregates of pitched tones” (Davies 2011b, p. 102). Rather, chords are perceived in terms of harmonic function. The tones of which the chords are composed are part of melodic lines that possess their own contour. This line of reply could allow Davies to argue in favour of a complete assimilation of the major/minor chords case to his standard explanation of musical expressiveness.

\(^8\) “But why do you speak both of physical & mental 'strain'?—'Because they have a certain similarity, they have a common element.' What is this common element?' [...] 'It is a certain tension.' That doesn't get us any further, for why do you talk of tension in these different cases.” (Wittgenstein, Ms 105, 14).
the same word in these two cases? Wittgenstein denies that we can further specify the resemblance of mental and physical strains, except by pointing to the fact that we find the same word appropriate to describe both situations.  

In connection with these remarks, there is a passage in Davies's most recent defence of his theory of musical expressiveness that is worth discussing.

I think music is expressive in recalling the gait, attitude, air, carriage, posture, and comportment of the human body, just as someone who is stooped over, dragging, faltering, subdued and slow in his or her movements cuts a sad figure, so music that is slow, quiet, with heavy or thick harmonic bass textures, with underlying patterns of unresolved tension, with dark timbres, and a recurrently downward impetus sounds sad.

Here Davies mentions various “first-order” properties of music that make it possible to hear it as expressive. After mentioning melodic and rhythmic aspects (which in the passage are paired with behavioural correlates of emotions), he goes on to list ‘dark timbres’ and ‘unresolved tensions’, using a language that is characteristically ambiguous between an interpretation in terms of musical properties and one in terms of psychological properties. Music, he says, is expressive in recalling behavioural correlates of human emotions. It is clear how musical movement might recall the gait, carriage, and posture of people in the grip of emotions. Through the movements of a melodic line in tonal space, music may resemble, for instance, the

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9 Discussing these remarks by Wittgenstein, Michel ter Hark observes: “This does not mean that to speak of similarity here is forbidden. If the point is to emphasize a difference with word ambiguity where two items are referred to by the same word, e.g. ‘bank’, but not in virtue of any similarity, it might be even relevant. The point rather is that if the similarity cannot be specified, it cannot be cited as a justification of one’s use of words” (ter Hark 2009, p. 600).

10 Davies 2006, p. 182.
figure cut by an individual who is expressing sadness. This is the experiential basis for the polysemous use of emotion words identified by ECA polysemy. But how do dark timbres and unresolved tensions secure the recalling of expressive behaviour? Dark and menacing timbres, I have argued, do not receive their expressive quality from their behavioural correlation with the expression of emotions. Unresolved tensions, as exemplified by the case of the tritone, are hard to hear in terms of vocal behaviour. Neither can they be interpreted as bodily behaviour, as their tense character is in principle independent from any “horizontal” musical movement (which seems required for the experience of movement in the tonal space).

Dark timbres and musical tensions, I contend, relate to sombre mood and psychological tension just as physical and mental strains relate to each other in the Wittgensteinian case discussed above. A view that relates musical properties to human emotion-characteristics-in-appearance in order to explain their expressiveness is bound to leave a number of basic cases unexplained, in which music is experienced as possessing expressive or psychological properties.

5 ECA polysemy and secondary polysemy: A sketch for a general distinction

I have so far pointed to a number of examples to suggest that our use of emotion words and other psychological predicates in describing music falls into two different categories: ECA polysemy and secondary polysemy. I have not yet proposed, however, a general criterion to distinguish the two cases. What is the best way to flesh out this distinction? I suppose that this could be done in a number of ways, but I wish to focus here on two aspects: justifiability and resemblance.

1) Justifiability. In the domain of emotional description of music, secondary polysemy differs from ECA polysemy because of
differences in what grounds the use of emotion words in the two cases. Whereas ECA polysemy is grounded on Davies's phenomenological analysis of expressive music, according to which “we experience music as presenting emotion characteristics in its aural appearance”, secondary polysemy cannot be justified in the same way. That is, although we might be able to specify how a slow descending melody can constitute a musical appearance of a body bent and slowed down by sadness, we are not able to do so in cases such as those mentioned above. It is worth noting, in passing, that we might sometimes be able to suggest a causal explanation for cases of secondary polysemy. Suppose we discover that a timbre's capacity to suggest a particular mood is related to its particular constitution in terms of upper harmonics and its effect on us. This might explain our related use of certain emotion words, but does not constitute a justification of the use in question. Davies correctly identifies the experiential basis of ECA polysemy. This use of emotion words is based on the musical presentation of emotional-characteristics-in-appearance. Secondary polysemy, however, has a different experiential basis, and is therefore differently grounded.

2) Resemblance. Another way to describe the experiential basis of ECA polysemy is to say that music is experienced as resembling human expressive behaviour. This is how we come to hear music as presenting ECA, and it is because of this that theories of musical expressiveness such as Davies' have been labelled ‘resemblance theories'. Secondary polysemy cannot be analysed in

12 In a German formulation of the remarks discussed above, Wittgenstein considers and rejects a possible causal explanation for the use of 'strain' in both the physical and mental domain: “Nun weiß ich auch warum ich das immer “eine Spannung” nennen wollte.’ (Ich habe etwa herausgefunden, daß dabei gewisse Muskeln gespannt sind. — Aber das wußte ich eben nicht als ich geneigt war es Spannung zu nennen.)” (Wittgenstein, Ms150, p. 12) ['I now know why I always wanted to call it “a strain”’. (I have found out that whenever that happens, certain muscles become tense.—But this is exactly what I did not know when I was inclined to call it a 'strain')] (my translation).
terms of an experience of resemblance with human expressive behaviour. More accurately, we might speak of a ‘resemblance’, or ‘recalling’, but this will have to be a different sort of resemblance to the resemblance in outline and dynamic structure that grounds ECA polysemy. This suggests that the distinction between the two cases of polysemy could be specified by developing a taxonomy of musical resemblance to extra-musical objects that distinguishes between the two cases.

6 Consequences for the phenomenology of expressive music

Davies’s polysemy strategy is linked to a particular phenomenology of music listening. This phenomenology provides the experiential basis on which the polysemous use of emotion terms in descriptions of music is grounded. My analysis of the kinds of polysemy involved in the relevant emotional descriptions of music suggests that there is a class of descriptions that does not acquire its polysemous status from the phenomenology outlined by Davies. Secondary polysemy undermines the argument according to which the literal use of emotion words in describing music is based on their reference to ECA. The experiential basis on which secondary polysemy is grounded must be of a different sort.

If all this is correct, I take it that it will not be without consequences for an account of the phenomenology of musical expressiveness. According to Davies, the expressiveness of music depends on its presentation of emotion-characteristics-in-appearance. He ties his defence of literalism to a phenomenology of musical expressiveness that entails a necessary reference to human expressive behaviour. I have suggested that a reference to human expressive behaviour is not necessary for the experience of expressive properties in music. A more liberal account of the connection between the use of emotion words in a psychological sense and their derivative musical use is therefore paired with a
more liberal, thinner phenomenology of music listening. This is, I submit, a subject that deserves further investigation.

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MUSICAL VERSIONS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

Disputing Stephen Davies’ Account

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ABSTRACT According to Stephen Davies, versions and transcriptions of musical works have different ontological weight. In his view, transcriptions are new musical works derived from the original, whereas versions are not, and are taken to be the same work as the original. Therefore, transcriptions are ontologically heavier than versions because they count as new entities. Davies holds that transcriptions involve a change of instrumental medium, while versions do not. For Davies, when the medium of a medium-specific work is changed, the result is a new work that is different from the original. In this paper, this difference in ontological weight is rejected, arguing that neither versions nor transcriptions are new musical works. Although Davies’ general account is grounded on strong intuitions concerning musical practices, it will be shown that his view on this point at least is not consistent with the robust intuition that transcribers are not composing new musical works when they transcribe. In first place, we will reject Davies’ distinction in ontological weight between versions and transcriptions as a revisionist view regarding our musical practices. Then we will contend that, in Davies’ account, there are no additional reasons strong enough to support the revisionist idea that a change of instrumental medium is sufficient to generate a new musical work.

1 Davies’ Account of Versions and Transcriptions

Versions and transcriptions of musical works can be undertaken either by the work’s composer or by someone else. For instance, on the one hand, Sibelius modified his Fifth Symphony twice—in 1916 and 1919—after the premiere of the work, seeking to improve the previous versions. On the other hand, Karl Marguerre is said to have...
penned a performing version of Mozart’s *Horn Concerto* in D K412/514 from the original manuscript, which was incomplete. In this paper, due to the peculiarities involved, we will put aside this second kind of version. Thus, we will focus only on versions produced by the work’s composer and on transcriptions produced either by the work’s composer or by another person.

Stephen Davies has devoted a significant part of his work in the philosophy of music to the study of versions and transcriptions. On Davies’ account, a common feature of versions and transcriptions is that both can take place only after the completion of the work of which they are versions or transcriptions. In Davies’ words:

A musician might begin to compose, using a finished work as her source. If she carries the process of recomposition far enough, she writes a new piece. The new work is influenced by the original, and perhaps audible traces of this inspiration remain detectable in quotations or allusions. In a different scenario, the composer does not carry the process very far and she conceives of herself as revising the source rather than going beyond it. The product is what I have called a work version. The practice of transcription lies between these extremes. The audible relation with the original is preserved, as is the sound-structural outline and much else, yet the change in instrumental medium distances the transcription from its model, with the result that a new work is produced.¹

Accordingly, versions and transcriptions are musical products that require as a necessary condition that a musical work has been finished. Versions are revisions of a previous work without departing so substantially from it that they constitute a new musical work. By contrast, what is characteristic of transcriptions is, roughly, that they translate a previous work into a different musical medium. For

¹ Davies 2007, p. 87 (my emphasis).
instance, when the original piece is written for orchestra, its medium is the orchestral instruments. Changing the medium of this piece would be transcribing it, for example, for piano, organ, or voices. In contrast to versions, transcriptions are considered by Davies to be new musical works. Thus, in Davies’ view, versions and transcriptions have different ontological weight: the latter but not the former constitute new musical works distinct from the original.

According to Davies, versions involve changes in the constitutive properties of the work. When revising a work in order to produce a new version, the composer can alter the sound structure of the original piece, changing notes, adding new parts and deleting others. However, for Davies these changes in the sound structure are not sufficient to give rise to a new work. On the other hand, transcriptions do not necessarily involve changes in the sound structure. Transcriptions, as Davies points out, aim to preserve “the audible relation with the original” and “the sound-structural outline”. In making a transcription, modifications in the sound structure are required only when the instruments of the new medium are not technically able to play the original sound structure. However, as indicated in the passage above, the change of medium necessarily involved in transcriptions is nonetheless sufficient for a transcription of a medium-specific work to count as a new work. Following Davies’ view, there may be cases in which differences in sound structures are not enough to give rise to new musical works—the case of versions—, while there may be others—works whose medium has been specified by the composer—in which a change of medium is sufficient to obtain a new musical work. This is the case of transcriptions of medium-specific works.

In this paper, I argue against the idea that transcriptions are ontologically heavier than versions. There are two ways of rejecting this idea. It could be argued either that both a version and a transcription are new musical works different from the original, or that neither constitutes a new work at all. It is my contention that

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2 Davies 2007, p. 86.
the second view is correct, since it does more justice to musical practices. That is, I agree with Davies that versions are not new musical works different from the original, but not with his claim that transcriptions constitute new works. As I will show in the second section, this is more consistent with our intuitions regarding musical practices. In the third section, I will discuss, and ultimately reject, Davies’ reasons for regarding transcriptions as new musical works different from the original.

2 Davies’ Revisionism

The thesis defended in this paper, namely that transcriptions are not new musical works different from the original, is grounded on the musical practices involved in transcriptions. In this section, Davies’ hypothesis that transcriptions really constitute new musical works will be assessed. By means of two thought experiments, some pre-theoretical intuitions grounded in our actual musical practices will be highlighted to show why considering transcriptions to be new musical works is problematic, even when the original works are medium-specific. Afterwards, real examples of transcriptions of medium-specific works will be offered to show that Davies’ view is not consistent with musical practices.

It is common practice for singers to rehearse operas from Monteverdi to Puccini with a piano transcription of the orchestral part. Consider Verdi’s *Nabucco*, an opera from the 19th century that is medium-specific. Let us imagine that Lucia, a soprano, and Hannah, a pianist, are rehearsing in a room. Suppose that Maria enters the room and says: “Lucia, that sounds like the aria ‘Anch’io dischiuso un giorno’ of Verdi’s *Nabucco*—is it?” What should Lucia’s answer be? If we interpret transcriptions as new musical works differing from the original, Lucia’s answer should be that it is the aria ‘Anch’io dischiuso un giorno’, although not of Verdi’s *Nabucco* but of Mario Parenti’s *Nabucco* (Mario Parenti is the author of the transcription for piano). However, this kind of answer would be inconsistent with our intuitions regarding musical practice. Maria knows of only one opera
called *Nabucco*, which was composed by Verdi. It would be surprising for her to learn of another work with the same name, with an aria that has the same melody, rhythms, and harmony, composed by a person other than Verdi. Indeed, notwithstanding the creativity and the interpretive work involved in writing the transcription, no informed person would credit Mario Parenti with composing a musical work for piano and voices called *Nabucco*.

A second example showing how counterintuitive it is to take transcriptions as new musical works is the following. Imagine that the London Contemporary Music Festival commissions the Argentinian composer Jorge Valdano to compose a new work for a brass quintet for that year's festival. He is told that the piece should last no more than 10 minutes and that it should evoke the Argentinian musical style. To fulfil the assignment, Valdano decides to make a transcription for brass quintet of Astor Piazzolla's work *Primavera Porteña*. Being convinced that a change of medium is enough to give rise to a new musical work, he changes the medium—from bandoneon, violin, bass, piano, and electric guitar—to two trumpets, a French horn, a trombone, and a tuba. He also readjusts the original melodies to the idioms of the new instruments, avoiding certain ornaments and modifying musical articulations that are especially difficult for brass instruments (i.e. Valdano demonstrates creative and interpretative skill). As Valdano is convinced that his transcription is truly a new work, he decides to give it a different name from the original: *Bonaerensis*. Imagine now that, at the premiere, the original work is performed—Piazzola's *Primavera Porteña*—followed by *Bonaerensis*. How would the audience react? Most of the audience, I suggest, and especially those who bought their tickets expecting the premiere of a new work, would feel cheated. In sharing most of the sound structure, the harmony, and the movement of the voices, *Bonaerensis* and *Primavera Porteña* are arguably too close to be felt to count as distinct musical works: to re-present an original work doesn't seem to be to present a new work, but to present the old work in a
different way. It is true that the audience might think that *Bonaerensis* is an ironical work satirizing the concept of creating a musical work. But even in this case, *Bonaerensis* wouldn't, I submit, be considered a new *musical* work, but a new *conceptual* work of art. In sum, the idea that a transcription of a musical work is a new musical work is counterintuitive, even in cases where the musician that makes the transcription believes otherwise.

These two hypothetical examples illustrate that it is counterintuitive to take transcriptions as new musical works different from the original, even when the original piece is medium-specific. It is more intuitive to regard transcriptions of a work W as new modes of presentation of W than as constituting *new different works* (although derived) from W. As a result, Davies' account should be regarded as a revisionist view of transcriptions.

However, Davies' thesis is not only revisionist concerning our pre-theoretical intuitions involved in musical practices, it is also out of step with our practices of referring to and cataloguing transcriptions. A paradigmatic real case of this phenomenon is Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The piece, finished in 1874, was originally written for piano and, according to the context of its composition, is a medium-specific work. However, the piece figures among the orchestral repertory due to several transcriptions that have been made: Touchmalov (1815), Wood (1915), Funtek (1922), Leonardi (1924), Ashkenazy (1982), Wilbrandt (1992), and the most famous one by Ravel (1922). When Ravel's transcription is performed, programmed, or recorded, what it is said to be performed, announced, or recorded is a work by Mussorgsky, not by Ravel. The same phenomenon arises for the other transcriptions of this work. Many other examples can be cited—for instance, Franz Liszt's transcriptions for organ of Chopin's piano preludes no. 4 and 9 op. 28, or Debussy's transcriptions for piano of his own orchestral works *La Mer* and *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune*—in which, despite the original works being medium-specific, the results of these transcriptions were not considered to be new compositions by Liszt.
or Debussy. Therefore, the thesis that transcriptions are new musical works different from the original is a revisionist one, and it should be rejected if we want to respect our musical practices and pre-theoretical intuitions.

3 Discussing Davies' Reasons

Despite the conclusion of the last section, we might not be pure descriptivist philosophers, taking musical practices as having the last word in our ontology. Indeed, our actual musical practices and intuitions could be wholly mistaken, or at least require revision in light of other considerations. Consequently, the contention that transcriptions are new musical works should not be rejected exclusively on the basis of apparently fundamental intuitions concerning this topic. In fact, Davies doesn't intend his distinction to merely capture our intuitions, but offers other reasons for his distinction. In this section, we will consider Davies' main reasons for holding this view in order to see whether they are strong enough to justify such a revisionist account concerning transcriptions.

Davies' starting point is that a change of medium is enough to give rise to a new musical work, for medium-specific musical works. Davies claims:

Usually, a change in medium involves a change in instrumentation (and note changes consequent on this). It is possible to produce a new piece through a change in instrumentation, because most musical works are medium-specific.³

Where a medium-specific piece is adapted to a new medium the result is a distinct work.⁴

Therefore, a crucial feature that determines the identity of a medium-specific work seems to be the instrumental medium for

³ Davies 2003, p. 48.
⁴ Davies 2007, p. 86.
which the work was written by its composer. According to Davies, transcriptions involve a change of medium from the original work. If the original work is medium-specific, such a change is sufficient to consider the product a new musical work. Three reasons for this claim can be found in Davies' work: (1) certain aesthetic properties essential to musical works depend on the specific medium in which they are performed; (2) in the case of medium-specific works, the context in which they were composed determines that the medium specified by their composer is essential to them; and (3) colour (or timbre) is a necessary condition of the structure and content of a musical work. In what follows, we will discuss these three reasons in more depth.

The first reason says that certain aesthetic properties essential to musical works are dependent upon the specific medium in which they are performed. In this regard, Davies claims that “recognizing what is achieved in the work involves consideration of the constraints its media impose”.\(^5\) Davies takes ‘virtuosic’ as an example of those essential properties of musical works that depend on the medium prescribed by the composer. Being virtuosic is an essential property of Beethoven’s *Sonata* because “it is a characteristic of the work that it is technically demanding of the pianist who would perform it”.\(^6\) The property is essential to the work, and whether the work bears the property depends on the medium; therefore, the medium is essential to the work.

However, the first premise can be rejected on the basis that ‘virtuosic’ is not *in sensu stricto* a property predicated of musical works. Not all aesthetic predicates are applicable both to musical works and their performances in the same way. There are aesthetic predicates, such as ‘atonal’, ‘dissonant’, or ‘melancholic’, that are applicable only to musical works. For instance, we do not say that a performance of *Pierrot Lunaire* is atonal. Rather, the work itself is atonal, and a performance’s atonality derives from the work. Thus,

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 369.
the atonality of a performance necessarily depends upon the work performed: only if the work is atonal can the performance also be so. In contrast, we commonly apply the adjective ‘virtuosic’ to performances, but it sounds strange to claim that a musical work is virtuosic \textit{per se}. The musical work possesses the property of being virtuosic in a derivative way from its performances. First, we would not say that a piece is virtuosic if an appropriate rendition of it is not virtuosic. Moreover, pieces that are usually not considered technically demanding of the performer can be performed in a technically challenging way. For instance, consider a hornist playing Franz Strauss’ \textit{Nocturno} lying on the ground. While the work is not particularly demanding for the performer, the performance can be judged as virtuosic because of the difficulty of maintaining the air column while playing with the body in a horizontal position. Furthermore, there are pieces for which the appropriate renditions were technically challenging to the performer in the beginning, but have become much easier to perform due to technical advances in the instruments. When Beethoven wrote his \textit{Sonata for Horn and Piano}, true intonation and some fast passages of this piece were very difficult to achieve on the natural horn. When valves and cylinders were implemented on the French horn, the \textit{Sonata} became much easier to perform in an accurate way. However, although these technical improvements made appropriate performances of the \textit{Sonata} less technically challenging, the identity of the piece remained the same. Therefore, being virtuosic is not an essential property of the \textit{Sonata} because the piece can lose this property without altering its identity. The same phenomenon identified in the case of ‘virtuosic’ can be extended to other aesthetic adjectives, such as ‘clean’, ‘blurry’ or ‘accurate’, that primarily apply to performances and only by extension to musical works. Accordingly, properties such as virtuosic that depend on the specific medium in which the work is performed could be counted as essential properties of performances, but not of the work itself.
In empirical support for the thesis that ‘virtuosic’ is an adjective that properly applies to performances, and only in a derivative way to musical works, we can cite research on uses of ‘virtuosic’ in English (http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/). We found 205 occurrences of ‘virtuosic’, 195 of them concerning different kinds of arts: 4 for dance, 1 for architecture, 3 for painting, 2 for photography, 2 for sculpture, 7 for cinema, 8 for theatre, 17 for literature, and 151 for music. Among these 151 occurrences in musical contexts, it is significant that only 15 of them are not applied to performances, and 30 of them are applied to performance only in an indirect sense. Therefore, the vast majority of occurrences of the word ‘virtuosic’ are applications to performances in a direct sense: 106 occurrences. This tendency of English speakers supports our thesis that virtuosity is a property that primarily belongs to performances, and only in a derivative way to musical works.

Consequently, in light of the reasons adduced above and of the empirical evidence offered, ‘virtuosic’ is an aesthetic property that cannot play a role in determining the identity of a work. By contrast, Davies (2008), Levinson (2011), and Kivy (1988) take ‘virtuosic’ to be an adjective predicating a property of musical works. For instance, discussing Kivy’s arguments against Levinson’s instrumentalism, Davies claims:

To say a work is original or virtuosic is to say something about the properties it has when played correctly [...]. Surely it is false to assume modern listeners are incapable of recognizing the virtuosic character of Nicolai Paganini’s music when they see and hear it played on a violin.

The point is that ‘virtuosity’ is a normative property of a work W that must be satisfied by W’s performances in order for them to be

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7 I am very grateful to David Bordonaba Plou for his contribution and help on this point.
8 Davies 2001, p. 63.
performances of W. However, according to Davies, virtuosity has nothing to do with the number of notes, the register, or tempo, but with the difficulty of playing certain passages on a specific instrument. Therefore, in medium-specific pieces, it would seem that “the virtuosic character of a piece rests on the difficulties of playing it correctly on the specified instruments”.\(^9\) However, it is not true that the difficulty of a performance rests exclusively on the instrument played. It also depends on the abilities and skills of the instrumentalist, that is, the particular person who plays the instrument on a particular occasion. Consider Schumann’s work *Adagio und Allegro* for horn and piano. Let us imagine two horn players: Sarah, who has a special gift for playing fast notes and for playing notes in all registers, and Elizabeth, who finds it difficult to play high notes and very fast arpeggios and scales. In a concert, both play *Adagio und Allegro* perfectly, without missing a single note. However, if virtuosity were a normative property of the work, it would be a property that the work has when it is played correctly, so that any correct performance of the work should possess this property. Since Sarah plays *Adagio und Allegro* without effort due to her abilities, Sarah's performance would not be a correct performance of the work, which seems to be counterintuitive. These kinds of problems do not arise if we think that virtuosity is a property of performances and that any work can have virtuosic and non-virtuosic performances. Therefore, properties such as virtuosity, dependent on the instrumental medium, are not essential properties of musical works, but of performances. Consequently, a change of medium does not determine a change in the work’s identity, resulting in a new work. In sum, Davies' argument from aesthetic properties in favour of the thesis that a change of medium is enough to produce a new work, if the original is a medium-specific one, seems to be the following:

\(^9\) Ibid.
(1) A work, $W_1$, is not identical with another work $W_2$ if the aesthetic properties of $W_1$ and $W_2$ differ.

(2) Virtuosity is an aesthetic property of works.

(3) Virtuosity depends on instrumentation or instrumental medium, at least in some cases.

(4) Therefore, a change of medium can, at least in some cases, be sufficient for a change of identity.

However, since virtuosity is not a property of musical works, there is no pressure to accept the conclusion of the argument. It is noteworthy that this is only one case—namely, virtuosity—, so Davies might be able to run the above argument with other properties successfully. Nonetheless, as no other such properties are forthcoming, the burden rests on Davies to come up with them.

Next, Davies’ second reason for the arguing that a change of medium is a sufficient condition for obtaining a new work will be considered. It has to do with the role played in the individuation of musical works by the musico-historical context in which they are composed. According to Davies, the features relevant for a work’s identity are determined by the musico-social context in which the work is composed.¹⁰ The conventions governing musical practices in the context of the composition of a work determine the meaning of the composer’s notations in the score, and hence the properties that are normative for performances of that work. Consequently, it is the context of composition that determines whether instrumentation is part of the identity of a given piece. If the conventions implicated in the context in which $W$ is composed determine that the medium is essential to $W$, since transcriptions always involve a change of medium, a transcription of $W$ should be counted as a new musical work different from $W$. However, Davies does not think the conventions always determine that instrumentation is essential to the identity of a work. Hence, he rejects an absolute instrumentalist account for the individuation of musical works; that is, he rejects the

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 58, 74, 76.
thesis that a properly formed performance of a work must not only exhibit the timbral qualities intended by the composer, but also be performed by the instruments prescribed by the composer, regardless of the conventions involved in the context of composition.\textsuperscript{11} According to Davies, musical works began to be more and more medium-specific from the 18th century, and he claims that it is only since the 19th century that instrumentation (colour) has been mandated by composers.\textsuperscript{12} In short, instrumentalism only holds in those contexts in which conventions and musical practices mean that the composer's indication of the work's performance-means are to be taken as directions concerning the identity of the piece. The practices of the Renaissance do not determine that the instruments prescribed by the composer are essential to her work, for example. Gabrieli's \textit{Canzona per sonare no. 1} performed either by an organ or by a brass ensemble would count as a properly formed instance of that piece. By contrast, according to Davies, the relevant practices in Tchaikovsky's context exclude any performance not played by the instruments mandated by Tchaikovsky as a properly formed instance of his Second Symphony. The latter is a context in which the work's instrumentation is taken to be mandated by the work's composer. Pieces composed in these contexts are thus medium-specific works.\textsuperscript{13}

We have seen that, despite the claim that the context of composition settles the properties that belong to the work's identity,\textsuperscript{14} it does not follow from this that a change in instrumentation results in a new work. Contrary to what Davies thinks, when a transcription of a medium-specific work is made, sometimes the result is not a new musical work. Even in 19\textsuperscript{th}-century contexts, where practices determined that being performed by the

\textsuperscript{11} Davies 2008, pp. 374–75.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 374.

\textsuperscript{13} Davies 2007, pp. 86–87; 2003, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{14} This idea of the complex contribution of the context to the individuation of a piece is also shared and developed by David Davies, who claims that the identity of a piece is work-relative (cf. Davies 2004, pp. 103–126).
instruments prescribed by the composer was a normative property of musical works, the practice of transcription was common and transcriptions were not usually counted as new compositions. From the idea that instrumentation is a normative property for properly formed performances of a musical work (in those contexts), it does not follow that it is an essential property of that work (in those contexts). What follows is the weaker claim that it would be more or less preferable for the work to be performed by the original instrumentation. Thus, this opens the possibility of having new instrumentations of a medium-specific work without creating new musical works different from the original. Let us recall the example of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The first transcription of this work was made in 1886—five years after Mussorgsky's death—by Mikhail Tushmalov, a student of Mussorgsky's friend Rimsky-Korsakov. The relevant practices in the context of composition of this transcription are the same as those of Mussorgsky. However, the transcription was neither premiered nor identified as a new musical work composed by Tushmalov—a work different from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Moreover, this transcription is usually programmed as a work from Mussorgsky, and when people go to a concert to listen to the transcription, or reproduce a recording of it, what they intend to listen to is a work by Mussorgsky, despite its being orchestrated by Tushmalov. The same can be said of Ravel's transcription. If, as Davies claims, transcriptions are new musical works, different from the original, our practices of referring to this work would be mistaken. But we are successful in our referring practices concerning this work. Consequently, *Pictures at an Exhibition* illustrates how a medium-specific work does not have its medium as an essential component, since transcriptions of it are never considered new musical works different from the original piece written by Mussorgsky. Although the context in which *Pictures at an Exhibition* was composed determines the medium-specificity of this work, changing its medium is not enough to give rise to a new work.
A third reason given by Davies for considering transcriptions new musical works is that colour (or timbre) is generally a condition of the structure and content of a musical work. Since transcriptions involve a change of medium, and a change of medium (usually) entails a change of colour, a transcription of a work W would usually modify W’s original structure and content, resulting in a new and different piece. Davies defends this point using an analogy between music and painting. Concerning painting, Davies claims:

The colours of paintings often make a vital contribution to organizing the represented space or revealing its contents in other ways [...]. Other structurally relevant spatial effects are generated via interactions between the relative area, contrast, complementarity, saturation, hue, and brightness of the colours used.  

And in the case of music, an analogous phenomenon takes place. Davies claims:

A work’s instrumental colour often makes a vital contribution to structural and other features. It helps delineate form and can add expressive and depictive qualities that are central to the work’s character and identity.

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15 Cases in which a change of medium does not entail a change of colour are logically possible. If we play Beethoven’s 5th Symphony on a Perfect Timbral Synthesizer, ex-hypothesi there is a change of medium without a change of timbre. However, in practice, there have not been—and nor does it appear that there will be any time soon—transcriptions that change the medium without altering the colour of a piece. It is hard to see how such cases would satisfy our practical interests in transcriptions (cf. Davies 2003, pp. 51–54). Accordingly, I will assume for the rest of the paper that, concerning transcriptions, a change of timbre follows from a change of medium, although one can imagine that one does not necessarily follow from the other.


For Davies, the key of the analogy is that “in music, the equivalent of colour is timbre”.\(^{18}\) However, although we ordinarily use the word ‘colour’ to refer to the instrumentation of musical works, I argue that we do so in a metaphorical way, and that the analogy with painting is essentially mistaken. In the case of painting, we talk about harmony between colours. Chromatic harmony is a specific term that refers to the “correct proportion and correspondence between colorations or between combinations of colours”.\(^{19}\) For instance, we say that Monet’s *Impression, soleil levant* has a harmonic combination of blues and greys. However, we do not talk about harmony between timbres in the case of music. For example, we do not say that the orchestration of Debussy’s *Sirenes* is harmonic. We would say that it is balanced, brilliant, or smooth—but not harmonic. Strictly speaking, harmony in music refers to the proportion between pitch heights, and this point illustrates the disanalogy between colour in painting and timbre in music. This disanalogy is grounded on the physics of colour and sound. Colour depends on wave frequency. Higher wave frequencies tend towards the ultraviolet spectrum, while lower wave frequencies tend towards the infrared spectrum. On the other hand, height of pitch or tone also depends on the frequency of the fundamental pitch. If wave frequency is higher, the pitch is more acute, and if wave frequency is lower, the pitch is less acute. However, timbre does not depend on wave frequency but on the intensity of the harmonic pitches associated with a fundamental pitch. Intensity is related to wave amplitude, which is independent of wave frequency. Therefore, if we want to draw an analogy between music and painting, height of pitch in music is a better candidate than timbre as an analogue of colour in painting. According to this analogy, a sound structure would require the existence of a sequence of pitches. Sound structures thus would depend on heights of sounds and not on timbre. It follows, then, that the form or structure of a musical work would not depend on timbre.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 364.

\(^{19}\) Sanz and Gallego 2001, p. 96.
Since a change of medium entails a change of timbre, and since the structure of a musical work would not depend on timbre, a change of medium of a work W would not entail a change in W's structure, and hence in W’s identity. The result of this change of medium would not be a musical work different from W. Therefore, Davies’ third reason does not go through, because an accurate analogy between music and painting would show that a change in timbre is insufficient for a change in a work’s identity.

Consequently, none of the reasons in Davies’ account are strong enough to warrant the revisionist idea that transcriptions are new musical works different from the original. Even for those pieces that are medium-specific, we thus conclude that a change of medium is not a sufficient condition to designate a musical work as being new. Therefore, if we follow our common intuitions about musical practices, and there are no good reasons to reject them, transcriptions should not be counted as new musical works different from the originals.

4 Conclusions

According to Davies, transcriptions—but not versions—are new and different musical works from the original. In this paper, this thesis has been shown to have unacceptable consequences for our intuitions concerning musical practices, and thus it has been considered revisionist. We then examined whether in Davies’ account there are additional reasons that could lead us to accept such a revisionist claim. Davies’ main point is that a change of medium is sufficient for obtaining a new work in cases where the original is a medium-specific one. Three possible reasons supporting this claim have been examined and rejected here. First, we rejected Davies’ assertion that certain aesthetic properties essential to musical works depend on the specific medium in which they are performed by pointing out that those properties do not pertain primarily to the works themselves, but to their performances. Second, according to Davies, the context of composition determines
whether a piece is medium-specific, and if a piece is medium-specific, instrumentation or colour is essential to it. Against this, we argued that even in contexts that determine that musical works are medium-specific, their transcriptions are not taken to be new works different from the original. Finally, we rejected Davies’ idea that colour (or timbre) is a necessary condition of the structure and content of a musical work by showing the physical disanalogy between colour in painting and colour (or timbre) in music.\footnote{This paper was funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain by means of the Programa Nacional de Formación del Profesorado Universitario (FPU13/0070), and by the research project Naturalismo, Expresivismo y Normatividad (FFI2013-44836-P). I would like to express my sincere thanks to my PhD supervisors, Juan José Acero and Neftalí Villanueva, to Derek Matravers, to David Bordonaba Plou, and the members of the research project FFI2013-44836-P, to the anonymous peer reviewer and to the editors of the DiA, Ryan Doran and Shelby Moser, whose comments and suggestions were crucial for the improvement of this paper.}

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Musical Versions & Transcriptions

References


I want to express my gratitude to Anton Killin, Matteo Ravasio, and Nemesio Puy for engaging so generously with my work. Their consideration of some of my earliest writings, as well as more recent ones, remind me of how many decades I have spent beating around the same bush...

In January 1980 my first philosophy paper was published in the journal Mind. Fortunately for me, it was subsequently collected for The Philosophers' Annual. Impressed by this, my seniors at the University of Auckland converted what was a temporary job into a permanent one. At last, after some frustrations and delays, my academic career was underway.

The paper derived from my Ph.D., which was awarded in 1978. In it I outlined a resemblance theory of musical expressiveness and also discussed the case in which the listener responds by feeling what the music expresses. According to my view, music is expressive in virtue of a resemblance between its dynamic pattern and behaviours that can be recognised as giving expression to an emotion where one does not know the emoter's beliefs or the intentional object of her feeling. This view has been termed the "contour theory" or "appearance emotionalism". And as regards the listener's mirroring response, this depends on emotional contagion and provides an exception to the cognitive theory of the emotions. (This was before psychologists began to study human-to-human emotional contagion
and mirror neurons.\textsuperscript{1} These and other views were developed and elaborated in *Musical Meaning and Expression* of 1994.

Much more recently I have written on the evolutionary status of art and on its ancient origins.\textsuperscript{2} I speculate on the basis of physiological and behavioural data that recognisably musical behaviours might go back as far as 500,000 years to our predecessor *Homo heidelbergensis*, and in any case should pre-date the permanent departure of some *Homo sapiens* from Africa about 60,000 years ago.

\section{Reply to Killin}

Anton Killin invites me to draw these two strands of my work together and thinks that doing so makes clear that musical expression is more about the communication of affect than the recognition of contour.\textsuperscript{3} He writes: "In my view, beginning at the beginning of music, some kind of hybrid expression-arousal theory of Pleistocene musical expressivity is not only salvageable but it is very plausible […]. Later developments in music—for example, those that render music's participatory status as one of trained specialists performing for passive audiences—utilise our capacities to intentionally express emotion through music and be emotionally stirred by music, and are thus candidates for contour theory. But not all later developments are plausible candidates for contour theory (e.g., Inuit song duels)".\textsuperscript{4}

I think these comments tend to skate over a distinction that we need to bear in mind. The first part concerns whether or not composers/performers express their emotions in the music they make and whether or not listeners respond emotionally to the music's expressive communication. Both claims have been denied by philosophers, the first by Zangwill, for instance, and the second by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Davies 2011a.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Davies 2012, 2015, forthcoming.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Killin 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 16.
\end{itemize}
But I am not so inclined. Composers most certainly can put their feelings into their music by appropriating the expressive potential of musical materials. (We should recall how sophisticated this mode of self-expression is, though. It is one thing to burst into tears, but quite another to burst into a song duel.) And the fact that musical expressiveness is deliberately contrived, unlike the shape of a willow tree or the basset hound’s physiognomy, primes the listener to hear a communicative element in the music and to be moved by that. Moreover, I think that the expressiveness is heard directly in the music, not deduced from a self-conscious comparison of its dynamics with human behaviours. So I see my theory as consistent with the importance of self-expression and emotional communication in music’s earliest forms. However, and now we get to the second part that should be seen as distinct from the first, the expression and arousal theories claim more than that music can express its maker's feelings and can arouse the listener by doing so. They are theories purporting to explain how music is expressive. The truthmaker for "the music is expressive of e" is alleged to be "its maker feels e" in the one case and "the listener feels e" in the other. As theories attempting to analyse music's expressiveness, I think both fail.

When Killin writes of a "hybrid expression-arousal theory of Pleistocene musical expressivity," I think that, rather than appealing to those theories of musical expression, he is better understood as drawing attention to the facts of self-expression and arousal and to their occasional importance in the musical encounter. And the importance of those facts is not inconsistent with appearance emotionalism in my view.

I do have a concession to make, however. When I thought about the resemblances between human emotions and music, I

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6 Davies 1999.
7 Davies 2006.
8 Davies 1994.
9 Killin, op. cit., p. 16.
discounted some that have been claimed for shared forms, shared phenomenological profiles, and shared sonic qualities. To take the last, the sounds that are wrung from us under the force of powerful emotions—sobs, shrieks, roars, groans—are not very musical and are not usually mimicked in expressive music. I did not consider a comparison with prosodic features of emotionally heightened speech, however, even though some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theories tried to account for musical expressiveness as recalling these. In recent years there has been empirical confirmation of a correlation between expressive inflections in music and emotion-laden speech in the work of the psychologist Patrik Juslin and his colleagues. They asked musicians to play a single, short piece happily, angrily, sadly, and so on and matched differences in the renditions with differences in the prosodic features of speech expressive of the same emotions. (Notice, by the way, that by keeping the piece always the same, they are in no position to tell whether the overall dynamic contour contributes to musical expressiveness, so they are not warranted in claiming to have accounted for musical expressiveness in its entirety.

I accept that this empirical programme is successful in accounting for at least some aspects of music's expressiveness. Moreover, and here is the concession that brings my view nearer to Killin's, I think that prosodic expressiveness rather than dynamic profile might play the larger role in short, repetitive songs that are generally simple and similar in character. The expressive contribution of the music's dynamic profile might become more prominent as musical pieces become longer and more complex, which presumably first happened after the earliest music in the history of music.

But there is one caution to register. The assumption is that music imitates expressive speech. If it were the other way round, we would have no explanation of how music is expressive. Yet there is

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10 For instance, Juslin and Laukka 2003.
11 Davies 2011b.
controversy over whether language preceded music and over whether they both descended from some quasi-musical protolanguage. So it is simply not clear how far back in musical history we could trace a resemblance between music's expressiveness and emotional verbal prosody.

2 Reply to Ravasio

I have always regarded the attribution of expressive predicates to music as literal. When we say "the music expresses sadness" (or "is sad" for short), of course this is not to be glossed as "the music feels sad." In my view, it is instead equivalent to "the music presents in its dynamic pattern the appearance characteristic of sadness as it might be displayed in a person's comportment," which is literally true of the music. In my copy of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the second meaning listed for "sad" is *causing or suggesting sorrow (a sad story)* and the sixth for "expression" is *conveying of feeling in the performance of a piece of music*. Dictionaries deal in literal meanings, not lively metaphors.

I think the same about talk of musical space—notes being higher and lower, for instance—and musical movement. The movement we hear in music is that of temporal process by change—like fluctuations in the value of a currency—rather than that of a re-identifiable individual that moves from place to place. I guess that the experience of musical space and temporal process is a by-product of our experience of octave equivalence; that is, of hearing notes at the octave as equivalent but as occupying different locations within the dimensions of a sonic world generated by music. Octaves are "the same note but higher or lower, bigger or smaller."

I suggested (in 2011) that all these usages are polysemous and that they are cross-cultural. All cultures describe music in spatial or

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12 Davies 2014.
13 Ibid.
14 Davies 2011c.
size terms\textsuperscript{15} and attribute expressiveness to at least some of their music, just as they all recognise octave equivalence even if the scales they divide octaves into might differ. This universality is important, because it suggests that these terminologies, rather than being eccentric, highly creative neologisms, instead respond to something deep and fundamental in our experience of music, something that is grounded in our evolved auditory capacities.

In discussing these cases, Matteo Ravasio draws a distinction between two kinds of polysemy.\textsuperscript{16} One sort might be grounded in perceived (or perceivable) resemblances, which is how I explain the expression of emotion in music. But others, such as the darkness of certain timbres, do not rest on resemblances that we could point to, despite our sense of the appropriateness of this cross-modal use of the term "dark." And these apparently ungrounded cases also may have an expressive import. Therefore, the contour theory does not account for all the kinds of musical expressiveness.

The first example is the clarinet glissando that begins Gershwin's \textit{Rhapsody in Blue}. Ravasio maintains that this equally resembles emotion characteristics of positive and negative emotions, so appearance emotionalism cannot account for its expressive character (the nature of which he does not specify). I don't find this example troubling. It seems to me that in the few seconds it occupies, the glissando is expressively ambiguous at best, and that the relaxed, calm descent over the next four measures resolves the ambiguity to the positive side.

The second example is of a saturated, dark timbre, rich in overtones and using a low register, that has a menacing character. Here, I guess Ravasio intends the weight to fall on the menacing character of the timbre rather than on its darkness, to which I return below. But as with the glissando, I think I would need to hear more, to hear how the timbre features in the wider musical process, before applying the term "menacing" to it.

\textsuperscript{15} Davies 1994.
\textsuperscript{16} Ravasio 2017.
A third case is that of the sad character of an isolated minor triad, for example. This is a limb I have already gone out on. I don't think decontextualized minor chords are expressive of sadness. We should recall that the "happy" major scale allows for minor chords (rooted on the supertonic, mediant, and submediant) and that, in Medieval music, the major third was a discord. If we hear sadness in the minor chord, as music psychologists regularly suggest that we do, I think this is because we contextualise it in imagination as a tonic triad that brings with it associations with sad-sounding dynamic processes.

Ravasio refers to my talk of dark timbres and unresolved tensions, as well as to the tension of the tritone. All of these do seem to be examples of Ravasio's second kind of polysemy. None of these qualities appears to depend on an enumerable resemblance across domains. They fall under the category of synaesthesia, perhaps. But though these features can combine with others to contribute to the emergence of musical expressiveness, I am not sure I would count them as examples of emotional expression in their raw form.

I should add that I had not thought of making the distinction between the two kinds of polysemy that Ravasio draws, though I am now convinced by his account. I also agree that his musical examples point to some of the first-order properties on which music's expressiveness supervenes. What I question is the idea that, on their own, tense intervals, dark timbres, and the like are unambiguously expressive. So I also deny that the argument here establishes the subsequent conclusion that music involves modes of expressiveness not covered by appearance emotionalism.

I want to re-emphasise a point made earlier. Ravasio thinks that appearance emotionalism is committed to a particular phenomenology of the listening experience, one in which we are aware of a resemblance between human expressive behaviour and

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17 Davies 1994.
18 For a philosophically and empirically informed discussion of musical synaesthesia, see Chapter 6 of Higgins 2012.
the dynamics and structures of musical processes. This isn't quite how I think of it. Our immediate awareness is likely to be of the music as expressive on its own terms. But when I think about why it is so, or how I can justify attributing one expressive character as opposed to another to the music, the resemblance with humanly expressive comportments comes to mind. (Or, in other cases, perhaps it is the resemblance to the prosodic features of expressive speech that comes to mind.) By contrast, I have no ready-to-hand explanation of why I hear notes as high or low, or timbres as bright or dark, or chordal progressions as involving the waxing and waning of tensions. If there is an explanation, I would expect it to be physiological, with talk of linked or shared neural circuits and the like.

3 Reply to Puy

"Are these two similar works or two versions of a single work?" This is the kind of question that might give philosophy a bad name with ordinary folk. And it might not matter how we answer, so long as the path we take in getting there provides clarifying insights. But it is a question I have considered in several contexts: first, when I was thinking about the transcription of musical works against the background of issues of authentic performance,\(^{19}\) and later, having written at length on the varied ontology of musical works.\(^{20}\)

I argued that, where musical works are instrument-specific and the transcriber adapts the original to a different instrumental medium while preserving its sound-structural outline, the resulting transcription is a *different* but *derivative* work. Nemesio Puy regards this view as counterintuitive and argues against it.\(^{21}\)

One counterexample Puy offers is that in which Astor Piazzolla's *Primavera Porteña* is transcribed by Jorge Valdano and

\(^{19}\) Davies 1988.
\(^{20}\) Davies 2007.
\(^{21}\) Puy 2017.
premiered as a new work under the title of *Bonaerensis*. According to Puy, "[m]ost of the audience […] and especially those who bought their tickets expecting the premiere of a new work, would feel cheated" or would take the piece for an ironic conceptual work.\(^{22}\) I am inclined to agree. But this is an unusual case in which Valdano's piece flouts the usual convention for transcriptions by not publicly announcing the source from which his is derived.

There is a more or less standard way of titling one's work as a transcription when it is intended for concert presentation. (This was well-observed for transcriptions intended for fee-paying audiences from at least the nineteenth century.) It acknowledges the primacy of the original by giving the name of its composer first and the name of the transcriber second. In addition, the transcription retains the name or title of the original. So we get Beethoven–Liszt, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, for instance, or Mussorgsky–Ravel, *Pictures at an Exhibition*. It is not correct to say, as Puy does, that "[w]hen Ravel's transcription is performed, programmed, or recorded, what it is said to be performed, announced, or recorded is a work by Mussorgsky, not by Ravel."\(^{23}\) What is normally said to be performed is a piece by Mussorgsky–Ravel, this being shorthand for saying the source piano work is by Mussorgsky and the orchestral transcription that is to be played is by Ravel. (*Pictures at an Exhibition* is fairly unusual in that the transcription is played more often than the original and I would not be surprised if many music listeners are unaware that the original was not an orchestral piece.)

Turning now to the counterexample that is introduced first: there is the case of piano versions of ballets and operas created for use in rehearsals. These are more often characterised as "piano reductions" than as "piano transcriptions" and the name of the reducer might not be indicated. In public performance, the intended orchestra usually replaces the piano. But in the absence of suitable orchestral resources, the performance may be accompanied by a

\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 37-38.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 38.
piano playing the reduction in a public concert. (Riccardo Muti played the whole piano reduction of *La Traviata* one night, when the musicians were on strike.\(^{24}\)) In my view, this can be represented as a performance of the original work, *though in a compressed form*. We might compare this with a concert (that is, unstaged) rendition of an opera. So I accept that Lucia should agree with Maria that she is singing 'Anch'io dischiuso un giorno' from Verdi's *Nabucco* in the rehearsal room, but I disagree that this is a transcription and as such a counterexample to my view. In most cases, transcriptions are based on the entirety of a work and are presented as independent of the original, whilst acknowledging their derivative status. That is not what happens when the orchestral score of an opera or ballet is reduced for piano for the purposes of facilitating rehearsal with singers or dancers.

In sum, I don't accept the proposed counterexamples as supporting the objection that my position is unintuitive and seriously revisionist.

Puy then criticizes the argument that a change of medium for a medium-specific work results in a new work. The first objection is to my treating "virtuosic" as applying to musical works, as against only to performances of those works. (The point here is that I claim this can be an essential property of a musical work that depends on the medium prescribed by the composer.) Puy's claims are that it would sound "strange to claim that a musical work is virtuosic *per se,*" that we could make a work virtuosic by having the musician play it while lying down, that improvements to musical instruments can render works that were originally virtuosic easy to play, and that an easy piece could be virtuosic when well-played by a novice.

All I can say about the first point is that my intuitions are different. Would we say that it is *performances* of *The Rite of Spring* but not the *work* that is noisy? I don't see why. It surely was not the case that Stravinsky discovered that it was noisy only at the first

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\(^{24}\) See http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1995/Muti-Plays-Piano-for-La-Scala-During-Orchestra-Strike/id-7cbd2e98db5ef7b3e19acff90d33428b.
performance. To say that the work is noisy is to say that accurate performances of it will be noisy, because it is determinatively specified as such by the composer. Similarly, to say that a work is virtuosic is to say that, even if it is played with seeming ease, it should be apparent that it is difficult to play on the specified instrument under standard circumstances, including relativisation to the time of composition (to allow for general improvements in technique).

The assumption about "standard conditions" also deals with the prostrate horn player. It would surely be more challenging to play a concerto with the instrument behind one's back—and such musical tricks are not unknown—but I agree that we would not attribute the property of being hard to play to the work when the usual playing conditions are not observed. What of improvements to instruments that make the performance easier? If there are radical changes then there might be questions to be asked about the authenticity of the rendition, precisely because the playing comes easier. But as Stan Godlovitch has argued, musical "guilds" typically control the kinds of innovations that are acceptable in order to prevent the removal of challenges to skilful instrumental playing, which is why the pre-programmed synthesizer has not replaced all the other instruments. And I disagree that the neophyte's playing is virtuosic as a result of being both flawless and very difficult for her to bring off. The relevant standards and degrees of difficulty are relative to professional-level performances.

As Puy notes, I allow (and have argued) that not all musical works are instrument-specific, especially in earlier times when orchestras were not standardised. Arranging such a work for instrumental resources that might not have been available to its composer is then consistent with performing the original, as against

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26 For discussion of the move from natural to valved horns, see Davies 2001, pp. 219–22.
creating a transcription. So, I agree with Puy that Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzona per sonare primo* (which is specified by the composer as "for playing on all sorts of instruments with the organ bass") could be authentically instanced by different ensembles. I would add this small caveat, however. We can often know a work's general instrumental type. For instance, it is for keyboard, though it could be performed equally on a clavichord, harpsichord, or organ; or it is for brass, or strings, or woodwind, or voices. A work specified at that more general level—either by convention or through the composer's publicly expressed intention—could be transcribable in principle.

Puy challenges me to come up with further properties that belong to the work as a result of the specified instrumentation. I don't think that is difficult. See, for instance, the discussion in Levinson 1990, where the way we describe passages of the work depends on how the sounds are elicited from the indicated instruments. In an organ work, a passage for the pedals (feet) might be rushed whereas, when it is transferred to the keyboard (hands), it isn't.

The next argument repeats the claims about orchestral transcriptions of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* to which I have replied above. Puy says these show that a work can be instrument-specific yet be instanced in performances on other instruments. I think that imperfect renditions can count as performances of their target work, though they involve departures from maximal authenticity and (like the piano reduction rendition of an operatic aria at a public concert) may require careful advertising if an audience is expected to pay. It is hard to find an ophicleide these days, so we usually substitute the tuba for performances of Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But I do not think of transcriptions as similarly imperfect. It would be odd to fault Liszt's piano transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies for being for the piano.
Finally, Puy challenges the analogy I drew between colour in painting and instrumental "colour" or timbre. This analogy, which is not my invention but is entrenched in many music cultures, is "essentially mistaken," he says. A closer, more precise analogy would be between painterly colour and musical harmony, though this better analogy does not help my argument.

Sound structures thus would depend on heights of sounds and not on timbre. It follows, then, that the form or structure of a musical work would not depend on timbre. Since a change of medium entails a change of timbre, and since the structure of a musical work would not depend on timbre, a change of medium of a work W would not entail a change in W's structure, and hence in W's identity.

This strikes me as missing the point altogether. Analogies are just that, not identities. A more extended or closer analogy is not thereby a better one for a given purpose. The analogy I drew was perfectly apt for my purpose, which was to highlight a similarity between how we experience colour and timbre, not to seek an underlying structural similarity between them. To repeat: just as colour can contribute to the form, content, and expressiveness, and thereby to the identity, of a representational painting, so timbre (commonly called instrumental colour) can contribute to the form, content, and expressiveness, and thereby to the identity, of a musical work. Instrumentation regularly contributes to the delineation of form, to the articulation of melody, and to the presentation of expressive nuance. Instrumental colour can contribute to the work's sound structure, therefore, and thereby to a work's identity. Imagine the note sequence of Ravel's Bolero rendered by a computer in pure sine wave tones and hear how the work fades away...

28 Davies 2008.
29 Puy, op.cit., p. 48.
30 Ibid., p. 49.
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References


