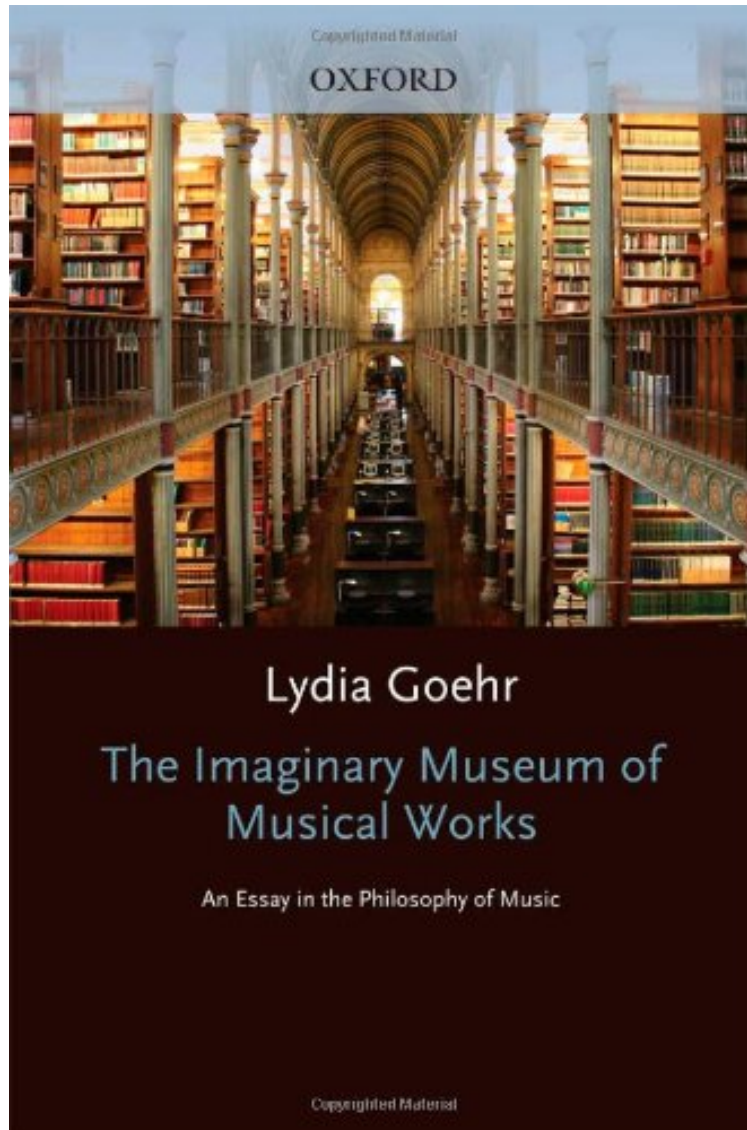


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The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music

Lydia Goehr

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Lydia Goehr : The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerI love this text!! Very thorough and well written2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. For philosophersBy Jeffrey HuntingtonThis book does not

claim to be more than *An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* and addresses itself primarily to the question "What Is a Work?" I can see that this is a hot issue in early music, but in the last two centuries, I had thought that these matters had all been thrashed out by the Absurdist and copyright lawyers. Evidently, philosophers are still chewing on this question. Try, "Character indifference is a reflexive, symmetric, and transitive relation which, by obtaining, produces a class of character-indifferent inscriptions under the partition generated by this relation" (p.23). However, the arcane terminology of professional philosophers, particularly the post-modernists, can look like bafflegab to a layperson. Do you exist? Do I? Is there any such thing as Reality? Skipping over those, the author asks some tough questions, such as "How much liberty should the conductor be allowed in interpreting an orchestral score?" There are deep discussions here, but the author does not offer firm answers and I believe I've seen more concise answers in other books. If your interest is mainly in music history of the last two centuries, this will be slow going for a meager yield. 9 of 33 people found the following review helpful. I really enjoyed it. By Christopher K. Koenigsberg I found this book to be thoroughly engrossing, exciting, and fascinating. I frequently get into all sorts of hand-waving strange arguments with people, about "musical works" (e.g. my pseudo-"composition"/appropriation work "Your Life Up To This Moment"), and in Lydia Goehr's book, I found a very useful framework for thinking clearly and critically about such things.

What is the difference between a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the symphony itself? What does it mean for musicians to be faithful to the works they perform? To answer this question, Goehr combines philosophical and historical methods of enquiry. She describes how the concept of a musical work emerged as late as 1800, and how it subsequently defined the norms, expectations, and behavior characteristic of classical musical practice. Out of the historical thesis, Goehr draws philosophical conclusions about the normative functions of concepts and ideals. She also addresses current debates amongst conductors, early-music performers, and avant-gardists.

"Goehr's position and discussion are sober, carefully reasoned, clearly set out, and remarkably persuasive."--Choice "A novel and definitive study of a concept of major importance in both the history of music and the philosophy of music."--Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism "A splendid historical investigation."--James Grier, Yale University "This is a brilliant and fascinating book... a book to be read by anyone interested in music and concerned for the health of our culture."--Music and Letters "One of the most exciting books on music to appear for a long time... exceptional, clearly the product of a fresh, imaginative, lucid mind... the style is elegant and the argument neatly and persuasively constructed. the book is eminently readable and at the same time exhilarating for the way in which it stimulates the mind... this book cannot fail to be essential reading for a long time to come... with this volume we have a feast par excellence!"--Times Higher Educational Supplement "Goehr brings the conceptual arsenal of her field productively to bear upon the subject."--Common Knowledge About the Author Lydia Goehr is at Wesleyan University, Connecticut.