

When a composer puts together a composition he surely has an idea he is trying to portray, that idea has some sort of meaning and therefore the composition does have a meaning. The composer is trying to express a notion and by doing so the piece of music gets an identity, the identity or meaning of the composition is then put in the hands of the one playing it.

When a musician plays a certain piece of music he does not necessarily have to be in the same or similar mindset as the composer but he has to be true to the identity of the work, or does he? Is it truly necessary for the musician to know the story behind the work he is playing or is it adequate to know the notes? Does a musical work become a new one or get a new life when someone orchestrates it differently than the original composer?

I believe the answer to these questions to be yes, a musician has to be true to the identity of the piece, he has to know the story behind the piece at least approximately and yes, a musical piece does gain a new identity when orchestrated differently than it originally was. All these speculations do apply in some way, just like with other artistic exertions like ballet. There are choreographic steps, lifts and so on that are essential to the work but there is still leeway or flexibility for the director to change the work, usually very mildly but a change nonetheless.

The collaboration or perhaps interdependence between an artist and his instrument is also an interesting concept. They do both play a part in delivering the music to the audience but is the artist solely responsible for the outcome? How does the audience come in to the equation and does the audience disturb the balance between the artist and his instrument? Is the instrument only a medium between the artist and his audience or does the instrument play an even bigger role than merely a tool to abet? If a good pianist becomes an even better pianist when playing a Baldwin or a Steinway rather than playing a Young Chang piano it is clear that the instrument does play a bigger role than it to be just a tool.