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	Tomkins	II.B.5

Art in the Seventies -- John Cage (5/23/78

He feels a lot of interesting things are happening, such as earthworks, sound environments (Max Neuhaus, Liz Phillips). "An insistence on bringing the art into the whole society and the whole environment -- this is what you get over and over in the seventies. This was unheard of in the fifties and sixties. This year's Zagreb Festival is based on getting art out of the concert halls. David Tudor's work goes in this direction -- his notion of composition is setting up something that can go on indefinitely in a space not as limited as these spaces used to be."

Art's Social Utility?

"I think art is classically the handmaiden of the religions, and the religions had to do with coming to terms with living on the part of individuals. My feeling is that the problem of how to come to terms with your living as an individual has been solved. You can get it from art, or from medicine, or from oriental philosophy, or from any number of other sources. It seems to me that what we're dealing with now are social problems. This is why music is so interesting in recent years, because music is a social art. How people might act together in society is exemplified by musical and choreographic activities. This is where art-in-environment is useful --it opens the mind to changes. Nam June is an example of carrying the art outside of the gallery into the media. Even the Living Theater goes in this direction.

"The 'mind' they're working with is no longer the individual mind but world mind (which can be sobered and quieted, etc). A religion, maybe, but a religion of the whole world, subscribed to by society. Bucky Fuller looks more and more in this connection like a high priest, someone who really knows about society.

"I also think that at the moment there's too much comfort. I don't understand why there isn't more revolution in the air. Why don't people object more to their economic situation? Why is there so much non-revolutionary art? (e.g., Phil Glass) -- I don't feel changed or challenged by his music.")

John himself is writing more music than ever. I asked about this, reminding him that years ago he said it was nice that other people were writing the way he did because he didn't have to any more. His answer this time was that a lot of people were writing electronically, so he is going back to writing for orchestra and voice.

Rauschenberg's "Gap" - John always found that concept a little "spooky," and not what Bob was doing at all. The important thing is to blur the distinctions between art and life, as Marcel did, and as Bob does.

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Cage: Statements

Beauty is now underfoot wherever we take the trouble to look. (This is an American discovery).

...Our poetry now
Is the realization
that we possess nothing.
Anything therefore
is a delight
(since we do not possess it)...

(from 45' for a Speaker)

The novelty of our work derives therefore from our having moved away from simply private human concerns towards the world of nature and society of which all of us are a part. Our intention is...simply to wake up to the very life we're living...

(from introduction to 1956 performance by Merce Cunningham - see also p.12, Silence)

Where do we go from here. Towards theater. That art more than music resembles nature. We have eyes as well as ears, and it is our business while we are alive to use them.

(from Experimental Music, 1957)

"...The mind, though stripped of its right to control, is still present(i.e. in the new music)...There are, demonstrably, sounds to be heard and forever, given ears to hear. Where these ears are in connection with a mind that has nothing to do, that mind is free to enter into the act of listening..."

(from Composition as Process, p.23)

"...there is a tendency in my composition means away from ideas of order towards no ideas of Order"

(ibid, p. 20)

"When we separate music from life what we get is art (a compendium of masterpieces). With contemporary music, when it is actually contemporary, we have no time to make that separation (which protects us from living), and so contemporary music is not so much art as it is life..."

(ibid, p. 44

"If there were a part of life dark enough to keep out of it a light from art, I would want to be in that darkness, fumbling around if necessary, but alive and I rather think that contemporary music would be there in the dark, too, bumping into things, knocking others over and in general adding to the disorder that characterizes life (as opposed to art) rather than adding to the order and stabilized truth beauty and power that characterize a masterpiece (if it is opposed to life). And is it? It is."

(ibid, p. 46

"Why is it so difficult for so many people to listen? (ibid, p. 48)

Debussy quote: "Any sounds in any combination and in any succession are henceforth free to be used in a musical continuity." (History of Experimental Music in the US, p. 68)

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Cage Statements (2)

"At the present stage of revolution, a healthy lawlessness is warranted. Experiment must necessarily be carried on by hitting anything -- tin pans, rice bowls, iron pipes -- anything we can lay our hands on. Not only hitting, but rubbing, smashing, making sound in every possible way. In short, we must explore the materials of music. What we can't do ourselves will be done by machines and electrical instruments which we will invent."

(Goal: New Music, New Dance (1939), p.8 7)

"I remember loving sounds before I ever took a music lesson. And so we make our lives by what we love."

(Lecture on Nothing, p. 114 -- see ff pages for bio material)

"All I know about method is that when I am not working I sometimes think I know something, but when I am working, it is quite clear that I know nothing."

(ibid, p. 126)

Psychoanalysis anecdote -- p. 127

",,,music is one part of theater...Theater is all the various things going on at the same time."

"The highest purpose is to have no purpose at all. This puts one in accord with nature in her manner of operation."

(45' for a Speaker, p. 155)

*"It may be objected that from this point of view anything goes. ~~Actually~~ anything does go, -- but only when nothing is taken as the basis."

(ibid, p. 160)

"The way to test a modern painting is this: If it is not destroyed by the action of shadows it is a genuine oil painting."

(ibid, p. 161)

"As contemporary music goes on changing the way I am changing it what will be done is to more and more completely liberate sounds." (ibid., p161)

"When I wrote the Imaginary Landscape for twelve radios, it was not for the purpose of shock or as a joke, but rather to increase the unpredictability already inherent in the situation through the tossing of coins."

(ibid, p. 162)

"Chance, to be precise, is a leap, provides a leap out of reach of one's own grasp of oneself." (ibid, p. 162)

"In other words there is no split between spirit and matter. And to realize this one has only suddenly to awake to the fact." (ibid, p. 168)

"I write in order to hear; never do I hear and then write what I hear."

(ibid, p. 169)

"To see one must go beyond the imagination and for that one must stand absolutely still as though in the center of a leap." (ibid, p. 170)

"Theater takes place all the time wherever one is and art simply facilitates persuading one this is the case." (ibid, p. 174)

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Cage Statements (3)

"There is all the time in the world for studying music, but for living there is scarcely any time at all. For living takes place each instant."
(ibid, p. 179)

"Let us move however for unpredictability...I am talking and contemporary music is changing. Like life it changes. If it were not changing it would be dead. That is why chance enters for me so largely into my means which are skillful. It is the point of potentiality."
(ibid., p. 181)

"Is man in control of nature or is he, as part of it, going along with it? To be perfectly honest with you, let me say I find nature far more interesting than any of man's controls of nature...Not all of our past, but parts of it we were taught...that we are in the driver's seat. With respect to nature. And that if we are not, life is meaningless. Well, the grand thing about the human mind is that it can turn its own tables and see meaninglessness as ultimate meaning." (p. 195)

Cage quoting Thomas Mace (also Indian philosophy): "The purpose of music is to sober and quiet the mind, thus making it suspectible to divine influences."

Center for Experimental Music - p. 233

"We are involved in a life that passes understanding and our highest business is our daily life."
(Where Are we Going etc. p.)

"It is better to make a piece of music than to perform one, better to perform one than to listen to one, better to listen to one than to misuse it as a means of distraction, entertainment, or acquisition of 'culture.'" (Forerunners, p. 64)

Cage's shift from chance to indeterminacy, 1959: "However, more essential than composing by means of chance operations, it seems to me now, is composing in such a way that what one does is indeterminate of its performance." (History of Ex.Music, p. 69)

On Bach: see Silence, p. 262

On Mushrooms and Buddha: Silence, p. 85

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Cage - statements (from Kostelanetz' "John Cage")

"...I'm not interested in whether any of my works are good or bad."v

"There are things to hear and things to see, and that's what theater is."
"Why do you waste your time and mine by trying to get value judgements? Don't you see that when you have a value judgement, that's all you have?, They are destructive to our proper business, which is curiosity and awareness."

"The essential thing, surely, about a work of art is that it somehow be useful to us in connection with our daily lives."

"We are living in a period when our nervous systems are being exteriorized by electronics, so that the whole glow is happening at once. There is no need to minimize the complexity of the situation, but rather a great need to make this complexity something we can all enjoy. If our arts introduce us to it, then I think they are performing a useful function..."

McLuhan's Influence

"Marshall McLuhan, by showing that society is undergoing a profound change, greater even than that from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, and that this change is happening regardless of one's willingness to accept it or knowledge that it's happening, has greatly influenced many artists simply by encouraging them to continue their work. He has given a dramatic cause (the effect of electronics as opposed to the effect of print on sense perceptions) for the present social change. Art and now music in this century serve to open people's eyes and ears to the enjoyment of their daily environment. We are now, McLuhan tells us, no longer separate from this environment. New art and music do not communicate an individual's conceptions in ordered structures, but they implement processes which are, as are our daily lives, opportunities for perception (observation and listening). McLuhan emphasizes this shift from life done for us to life that we do for ourselves."

"What I think is more important today than the accomplishment of an individual is social change. The meaning of something is in its use, not in itself."

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Cage

"It is a particularly 20th century idea that the material you are dealing with is part and parcel of the n ture of the work." (He applied this to music).

Staying with Max Ernst and Peggy G. - Gypsy Rose Lee? Original plan to have Peggy's gallery open with Cage concert but Cage wanted MOMA - see p. 18. (Duchamp: Bain NG or The Bain--)

Boza Mansion - pp 20 ff, p.29

Cage gets DeKooning to teach at Black Mountain - p. 23 ff

Charts "gave me my first indication of the possibility of not saying anything" (p.26)

Cage was editor of Possibilities (one issue only)

Cage's Lecture on Nothing at The Club -p.28 - also Lecture on Something(Feldman)

Black Mtn summer of 1952 -p.32

Going in direction of no-control; crossroads for Cage - p. 33

Cage classes at New School began 1956 -p.38 - led to Happenings: "I try to confuse any demarcation between art and life." (see also opp. p. 42) p.43,47, Kaprow invu

Indeterminacy - p.41

"Whatever we do is music"

Mentation - multiplicity of directions - opp. p. 48 (The Field)

Paul Weiss: "You open every door, but what I'm interested in is which doors you close." Cage: "With every action I take, I close a door." (p.49)

(End Bio listings)

McLuhan's "information brushing information" expresses new spirit of the time. "The surface is part of the depth." Re audience: "We want to stretch their capacity to be interested in their experiences."

Self-expressive art of Renaissance really heretical (4)

The Field of human awareness - 5.

Feldman: "What we learned was that there are no catastrophes." Also says that deKooning went to all Cage's concerts.

M.C. Richards -- once told Cage he wanted to make revolution a branch of the state. "The problem his music raises, he has said, is 'how to be free without being foolish.'"

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(See Vassar lecture for events to 1948)

Cage - Bio (1)

Born Los Angeles, on Sept. 5, 1912. "They tried to have me born on the 4th, which was my mother's birthday, but I was two minutes late."

His father, Milton Cage, is an electrical engineer and inventor, a remarkable man. His inventions carried him off into a great many fields, such as physics, and he evolved his own theory of the universe and how it functions (electro-static field), a theory not generally accepted. Like Bucky Fuller, in many ways. "Dad always had a dream that he would become fantastically wealthy, like so many 19th century inventors, but he had such bad luck most of the time that he now tends to keep his ideas secret so others can't steal them, which is too bad." He never joined a big company, always worked on his own, and managed to make a fairly comfortable living, although for many years none of the family property could be put in his name because he ~~xxx~~ had been judged legally responsible for a bankrupt company that had been formed to build his submarine.

In 1912, the year Cage was born, his father had the world's record for staying under water in a submarine of his design (13 hours, with 13 people, on Friday the 13th). But the sub had a gas engine that left a trail of bubbles -- he had never considered that people might want to use it for concealment, and so it was not used in the first World War. He also invented an electrical dehydrator ~~xxxxxx~~ that separated oil from fresh water in lakes, etc, and an electro-static method of keeping oil reservoirs from being struck by lightning -- according to his theory of the universe. One oil company used it, and has never been struck by lightning, but the theory is still disputed by scientists. During the second world war, he was engaged on a project to enable airplane pilots to see through fog (Cage was deferred from draft to work on this with him).

Cage's mother didn't go to college (his father didn't either), and was fascinated by the acquisition of knowledge. Forever starting women's study clubs , writing for newspapers.

The family was sufficiently affluent, in any case, to have two homes when Cage was a young child. They lived first in a comfortable house in Long Beach (where the submarine was invented). This became a winter house when they moved to Detroit, where father Cage worked on automobile and aircraft engines and they lived in a hotel. They also had a summer cottage on the Detroit River in Canada, where Cage refused to learn to swim (he thought adults swam by pushing against the bottom with their arms). The Long Beach house soon filled up with less affluent relatives, so that when the Cages went back there on Christmas they were really guests in their own home. Cage rather liked living in the hotel in Detroit, but says his childhood was mostly spent among adults.

Cage went to kindergarten at Ann Arbor, when his father was doing some teaching at the University, but after that he had a tutor at home. He learned rapidly, and entered the third grade in Detroit public school when he was . He was a very superior student, getting top grades in everything except physical education.

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*also an uncle

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One Christmas, when they were back in Long Beach house during vacation, his father climbed a tree to cut off a blossom for his wife, and in doing so nearly severed his wrist. They never went back to Detroit after that. His support on the project had been cut off. "For the first time I became aware of not being well off. We couldn't live in our own house because it was full of relatives, so we took a small place at Ocean Park, right on the beach. Dad was making some sort of oscillators for automobiles, he made them right in the house, I think. I was usually taken down to the beach for the day, and every day about noon I would faint. The sun wasn't good for me, but nobody knew that. (See Cage anecdote in Silence, p. 88)

"I'd always been fascinated by the wildflowers in California, the purple lupin and the bright orange poppies. I'd heard of Luther Burbank, and I remember that summer trying to cross breed them to make a purple poppy. I wasn't successful."

The next move was from Ocean Park to Santa Monica, down the coast a little. Cage was in sixth grade then. There was a sign on the house next door offering piano lessons. Cage begged for them. His mother resisted strenuously -- there were two other musicians in the family, her sisters Phoebe and Marge, and "the general feeling was that it was the wrong thing to do." But Cage kept begging, and his parents gave in.

They moved again soon, this time back to the family house in Long Beach (relatives out by then). Cage's parents bought him a baby grand piano, and he remembers being so excited he played on it before the movers got it into the house. "I wasn't extraordinarily gifted on the piano. I disliked the technical exercises and all the physical aspects. What interested me was sight reading, which seemed to open the door to the whole field of music." His teacher now was his favorite aunt, Phoebe, to whom he had once proposed that she stop growing until he caught up and they were the same age, so they could marry.

The Los Angeles public library had an excellent music collection, and Cage was always taking out scores and exploring the literature. Oddly enough, he didn't discover Bach or Beethoven until much later. Aunt Phoebe had a low opinion of them. She liked 19th century music, from the volume called "Music the Whole World Loves to Play." In this field, young Cage's favorite was Grieg. He wanted at one time to be a pianist who would play nothing but Grieg.

Cage's real ambition, though, all through school, was to be a minister. His grandfather had been an itinerant Methodist minister, and Cage felt drawn that way.

All through school, he was considered a sissy, and got along rather badly with his fellows. "Mostly I disliked and was disliked by the others, sometimes even by the teachers." He was teased cruelly, often ambushed by boys and beaten up. One day he came home for lunch after a particularly humiliating morning, and told his mother he wasn't going back. "Another school was found for me, in which I did better." He changed schools several times, had a pretty painful time of it.

High School

Cage went to LA High, which was on the other side of town. He used to do his homework on the streetcar.

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He also joined the Boy Scouts. Although he barely managed to go beyond the Tenderfoot stage, he conceived notion of putting on a weekly Boy Scout radio program, and approached Boy Scout headquarters about it. In a foretaste of his future dealings with ~~authority~~ established authority, headquarters refused. Cage went ahead on his own, and actually managed to put on a one-hour, weekly show. He was 12 years old at the time. He got scouts to come on and give trombone solos, ministers and rabbis to give talks, etc. Cage played the piano a lot. The show became very popular, and Boy Scout headquarters took it away from him.

In high school he had a few close friends, mostly boys interested in the ministry like himself. He used to go to football games with one, a Christian Scientist, and have long religious discussions during the play. He was also writing poetry, and getting straight A's in school. ~~Obviously~~ He was class valadictorian, and had highest scholastic average in school's history. The torments he suffered from his schoolmates didn't make him change in any way, and only served to make him feel somewhat self-righteous.

All this time, music was never primary. It was useful for the Boy Scout program, mainly. He had another teacher named Fanny Charles Dillon who taught him Brahms -- she used to listen to bird calls, write them down, and compose pieces from the notes -- but he was still completely uninformed about Bach and Beethoven, had never heard of Mozart.

College

Cage entered Pomona College at age 16 in 1928 (Claremont, California - 35 miles from LA). He stayed only two years, and his grades slipped to Bs and Cs. He tells why:

"One day we heard a history lecture, at the end of which the lecturer gave the assignment, which was to go to the library and read a certain number of pages in a book. The idea of everybody in the lecture reading the exact same information just revolted me. I made an experiment, ~~and~~ which consisted of going to the library and reading anything except what we'd been told to read, and then approaching the exam with that sort of preparation. I got an A. I deduced that if I could do something so perverse and get away with it, the whole system must be wrong and I wouldn't pay any attention to it. I'd discovered Gertrude Stein at the time, and I took to answering exams in her style. I got an A on the first, and failed the second. I was losing interest in the whole thing."

Cage also lost his religious tendency at this time. He had moved out from Methodism and become interested in ritual. In LA, he had found something called the Liberal Catholic church, which used luxurious rituals from several religions.* Cage wanted to become an acolyte. His parents said if he did so he'd have to leave home. He went to the priest and said he was leaving home, but the priest said 'Don't be a fool, there are many churches but you have only one father and mother. Go home.' He showed Cage how to perform the mass alone in his room. Cage tried it once, found it very unsatisfactory and gave it up. Soon afterwards, in college, he took one course in religion that not only decided him against taking any more, but against going into religion himself. It involved a good deal of free thinking. "The whole thing just evaporated for me."

* See anecdote in Silence, p. 271

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* See anecdote in Silence, p. 85 ("I love this machine much more than I do your Uncle Walter").

* During his two years at Pomona, Cage was writing more and more poetry. He began to think he wanted to be a writer. He persuaded his parents that a trip to Europe would be more useful than college, and promised them it would cost him less to live there than to stay in Pomona. They agreed reluctantly. In 1930 he hitchiked to Houston and, after waiting two weeks, sailed from Galveston to France.

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Oratorical Contest: The Southern California Oratorical Contest had been won two years running by LA High, one more victory would retire the cup. Cage was chosen to compete in his senior year. He wrote a speech called "Other People Think," in which he advocated that this country should stop talking and listen to what people in other countries, especially Latin America, had to say. It was a call for international patriotism -- and also, incidentally, a proposal of silence. Cage's uncle Walter,* an editor with the AP, was highly incensed by the speech, and actually ran an article in the local paper attacking it as an example of wrong thinking among the young (note: California's super patriots). The speeches were judged twice -- first as written documents, then again for delivery. Cage's got uniformly low marks in its written form -- Cage says because it was written without proper connectives or transitions, but may have been on ideological grounds. He was told that he would have to get a first from all the judges as a speaker to win, [redacted] he decided that winning was out of the question. The speeches were delivered in the Hollywood Bowl before an audience of forty people (almost all judges). Having decided he couldn't win, Cage thought he would just speak in as simple a manner as possible, without any particular effort -- "so of course I won. All the others were straining for effects, but mine came out naturally." He got first prize, and LA High retired the cup -- although this probably didn't make Cage any more friends.

More on College: Before he entered Pomona, Cage had been for several years collecting Oriental objets -- porcelain, figurines, etc. that he would pick up in Chinatown. His room at college was thus highly unusual in decor, showing his increasing tendency to do things differently from others. Not accepted by his classmates, he tended more and more toward eccentricity, toward accentuating the differences. In the same spirit, he changed his name to Jonathan -- "a ridiculous piece of artificiality" that didn't last.

At college he had fully expected to become a brilliant speaker, and thus entered the competition for debating society. "The first speech I wrote was on the value of eating flowers. It was so absurd that nobody paid any attention to it, and [redacted] all my interest in oratory just dropped away. This shows how my tastes were going, though -- more and more eccentric."

Cage was reading a great deal of late 19th century poetry and prose, both English (Oscar Wilde) and French. "I had a notion that prose-poetry was somehow better than either prose or poetry alone, and I guess I still think it is."

One of Cage's college roommates was Greg Anderson, who had studied bookbinding before coming to college and who introduced Cage to Hazel Dreis, a colorful and formidable lady who lived in a large house in San Francisco, surrounded by student-apprentices who were learning the [redacted] trade of fine bookbinding. She was an extremely powerful personality, and the atmosphere was bohemian and stimulating. Cage used to go up to see her by boat, and [redacted] it was on one boat trip up there -- feeling detached from his life and habits -- that he started smoking. In much the same spirit, he started drinking on the boat to Europe -- beer first, his first spirits. He was not yet 18 then. He had graduated from high school at 15, spent 2 years at Pomona, would be 18 in September.

Europe *

"My notion was to earn my own living over there, or at least to accept very

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little from Mother and Dad, but as it turned out I lived mostly on what they sent."

Arriving in Paris, he spent a good deal of time looking for work, with little luck. Finally he was offered a job as a tourist guide. "I learned two or three routes around Paris, with historical lore on the monuments. Then, late one afternoon, the agency called and told me I was to take a party to Versailles early the next morning. I stayed up all night studying booklets on Versailles, which I'd never seen, and tried to map out a path through the palace and the gardens. It was interesting, but I got no sleep at all and went out to meet the party trembling all over. I took them through, and then at lunch, in a very elegant restaurant, they told me they'd all been to Versailles several times before, but were so entertained by my mistakes that they didn't let on." Cage left the tourist agency soon after.

What had struck him particularly in Paris was the Gothic architecture, particularly the late flamboyant style, "in which I preferred above all the balustrades." He found an architectural library, the Bibliotheke Mazarine, and spent his days in it reading about flamboyant Gothic balustrades. He was living on what his parents sent him then. When he had been doing this for about a month, he ran into an old teacher of his at Pomona, Jose Pijaun, who was passing through Paris. Cage and Pijaun met in the railroad station -- Pijaun being a large, rather flamboyant figure himself. Pijaun asked him what he was doing. Cage told him. Whereupon Pijaun "lifted his foot and gave me a swift kick in the pants." He said he would make an appointment for Cage the next morning with a modern architect in Paris, and did so. (See Silence, p. 261)

The appointment was with a young Viennese architect named Goldfinger, who had been a student of Perret (a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete). Goldfinger took Cage into the firm, whose work was mostly redecorating apartments around Paris. Cage had two duties -- going around to the apartments and taking measurements, and sitting in the office drawing Greek columns, as preparation for more complicated architectural drawings. This he found extremely boring. He was reading Leaves of Grass on the bus to and from the office, quite a change from his fin de siecle prose-poetry, and becoming less and less pleased with the architecture business. "I wrote home saying I didn't want to stay in Europe any longer, but Mother wrote back saying don't be silly, that I should stay and soak up all the culture I could because I probably would never get to Europe again."

"Goldfinger told me one day that if I wanted to get anywhere I must devote myself entirely to architecture. I replied that I had too many other interests, and soon after that I left."

By this time, Cage was living with two former Pomona students in a cheap apartment. One of them, John Goheen, knew the Baronne d'Estournels de Constant, very haut monde, descended from Benjamin Constant, a woman who wore either black or white silk at all times. "Once when we were at her house, she asked if I played the piano. I said yes, and she then told me to play her a Beethoven sonata. (Although I still knew nothing about Bach or Mozart then I did know a little about Beethoven, thanks to a Japanese Davis Cup tennis player I'd come to know at Pomona, Tamio Abe, who used to say he was the only tennis player in the world who 'app-reshiated Beethoven,' and who had a lot of Beethoven records). When the Baronne asked me to play a sonata, I explained that I couldn't play the fast movements

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because I didn't have enough technique, but I would be glad to play the slow movement. She said this was all wrong, but to go ahead if that was all I could play. Afterwards, she told me that I had a beautiful touch and that I was definitely musical, and in view of this she would give me an introduction to M. ~~xxxxxx~~ Lazare-Levy, who was the leading piano teahher then at the Paris Conservatoire.

"I went to Lazare-Levy, who was extremely surprised to learn that I had no knowledge of Bach or Mozart. He accepted me as a pupil -- the Baronne's recommendation was something of a command -- but I took only two lessons with him. I could see that the lessons would lead to technical accomplishment, but I wasn't interested in that. He sent me to concerts, and to a Bach Festival, where I finally discovered Bach -- you can imagine how delighted I was with him! At the same time, I went to a concert of modern music by John Kirkpatrick, the pianist. Kirkpatrick was really the one who got me interested in modern music. He lived in a room not much larger than the piano, and had his sleeping accomodations over the piano. He played some Stravinsky, and some Scriabin, and some other things. I went right out afterward and got myself some ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Bach -- the Inventions -- and some modern music, in a collection called "Das Neue Klavierbuch," with short pieces by Hindemith, Stravinsky, Scriabin." ~~xxx~~ Spent time sight-reading other modernx scores.

"I also became aware of modern painting about this time, also through John Goheen, who was sketching. Picasso, Braque, the whole kit and caboodle. We spent a lot of time in galleries. My conclusion from this exposure to both modern music and painting was, Well, if this is the state of affairs, I could probably do it myself." Not the usual negative idea that "my child could do it better," but a positive desire to do something along those lines. "The notion of being able to make something myself made me want to leave Paris." (Although Cage loved Paris then ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ (and still does), he was feeling oppressed by his personal situation with Goheen).

His departure was entirely characteristic. Having planned first to go to London, where he had been promised a library research job, and been refused a visa because he lacked a working permit, he was at wits end. One night, the night he heard he had been refused a visa, he was to meet a newly-arrived friend of Greg Anderson's, a printer named Ward Richie whom Anderson had asked him to show around Paris. Cage told Richie he wanted to leave Paris, and asked where he would go if he were leaving the city. Richie said Capri. "So after dinner I went to the station and bought a ticket to Capri and left that night." He didn't stop anywhere en route, not even in Rome, "looked neither to left nor right" until he arrived in Capri.

(Insert: While in Paris, he discovered the Russian Orthodox Church and fell in love with its ritual. Ate in Russian restaurants and tearooms, etc)

In Capri, Cage met another young merican named Donald Sample, a poet, whose faculty of self-criticsm was so highly developed that he could no longer write poetry. Cage started painting, and so did Sample. He turned to painting first, because it was less encumbering -- no need for a piano.

North Africa

After a while they left Capri and went to North Africa, where they wandered for several months, settling for the winter in Biskra, on the edge of the desert. (See Silence p. 12-7, 8 for anecdote about taking cheap passage on English freighter). Cage was also doing some experimenting in writing, wrote a fantastic story with an irrational continuity, events following events without recourse to cause and effect.

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* "I've never been able to hum a tune or remember melodies -- I get lost in O Solo Mio - so it was impossible for me to compose spontaneously. Mathematics had always interested me. But I suppose really it was my discovery of Bach, the order in Bach, that led me to try to compose in this way."

** Buhlig kept empasizing relationships in musical composition. He found them lacking in my text pieces, and he referred me to Ebenezer Prout, a musical theorist on harmony and musical form. The end result of this was my development of a system of 25-tone ranges, which I used in a group of songs, and which led Henry Cowell to suggest that I study with Schoenberg. My system was not novel in relation to the music of Webern, who did much the same thing in his Opus 21, but I didn't know about Webern then.

Buhlig sent a couple of Cage's 25-tone pieces (Sonata for Clarinet) to Henry Cowell, who was publishing all the interesting avant garde work in his New Music Editions. Cowell replied that he wouldn't publish the work, because he felt that Cage "hadn't found himself yet as a composer," but that he wanted to perform the piece at one of his concerts of new music. Cage hitchiked in for the performance, and was very disillusioned. His piece was for clarinet. The clarinetist hadn't rehearsed it, or even seen it before that day; he took one look and said he wouldn't play it, advised Cage to write like Mozart.* Cage was so offended that he decided then and there never to rely on conventional musicians, but to train his own. It was at this time, though, that Cowell suggested he should study with Schoenberg -- seeing a relation in his 25-tone system to Schoenberg's 12-tone row.

Cage had met Cowell while in college...

* Cage played it on the piano instead

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Cage - Bio (7)

After the winter in Biskra they went to Majorca, where they found they could rent a castle with servants for $25 a month. The castle had a piano, and Cage began writing music as well as painting. His first attempts at musical composition were made according to a complex mathematical system, and none of these survive. They were short pieces, "which were extremely displeasing to my own ear when I played them."

Cage even tried modern dancing, in a bar in Palma. "My attitude then was that one could do all these things without technical training. I soon found this was not possible in the case of dancing, and I quit as a result -- but it didn't yet occur to me that one had to study music. The difficulty was that I couldn't make a long piece, and that I didn't like the sound of what I was writing."

Cage and Sample left Majorca when the well to their house went dry, and began wandering aimlessly around Europe, from Seville to Berlin. Months later, they came back to Spain for what seemed a sufficiently good reason -- they decided they liked the Spanish cigarettes better than those of any other country. The Depression was setting in about this time, and Sample's money, on which they had been living, was running out. It seemed to be time to go home. They took passage on a freighter from northern Spain to Cuba, then on to Florida, where they managed to buy a Model T Ford. In this, they drove across the country to Pacific Palisades, where Cage's parents were living then. They put up with the elder Cages, and continued writing, painting, and composing. Cage composed then by improvising something on the piano, then writing down what he had played -- a laborious process because he did not know solfege and had to see the position of his fingers on the keyboard to get the notes down. He still had no technique to speak of. He wrote some pieces to go with literary texts -- choruses to The Persians of Aeschylus (of the Greek dramatists, Cage's favorite), and some settings of Gertrude Stein. "Gertrude was just perfect for me -- all those repetitions."

Buhlig

The Cages were buying their house on the installment plan, and they lost it during the Depression. Moved into a small apartment in LA. Cage found employment as a gardener in Santa Monica auto court, for which he and Sample were given quarters rent free in space above the garage. To get money, Cage started giving lectures on modern painting and music. He sold tickets to housewives, door to door, telling them that he didn't know too much about the subject but would look up the answers to any questions they might have. His audiences ranged from ten to thirty people, mostly housewives.

"But the day came when I foresaw that I'd have to give a lecture on Schönberg. I didn't know anything about him, and his music was too difficult for me to play. It was really a disastrous situation." Cage knew that an American pianist named Richard Buhlig had been the first to play Schonberg's Opus 11 (a crucial work). "I decided, absolutely irrationally, that he must live in Los Angeles, so I picked up the phone book and of course, he did. I called him up, told him what I was doing, and asked if he would play the Opus 11 at one of my lectures. He refused. It seemed to me then that the thing to do was to go and see him." Cage hitchiked into LA, found Buhlig's house, and waited outside of it for twelve hours until Buhlig came home (from a Bach Festival). He accosted Buhlig, and repeated his request, and was agin flatly refused. But Buhlig relented enough to invite him inside, and at length agreed to see some of Cage's own work. ** (see Silence, p. 273)

[First Schn work with no key signature, dated 1908 (also called "Drei Klavierstucke")]

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"Buhlig saw my work, and told me I had to learn something about structure. I asked him to teach me composition. He said he had never taught composition, but that he would try to teach me what he knew, and so I started hitchiking in to see him twice a week (see anecdote in Silence about first lesson, coming half hour early etc.) -- "he was really a wonderful, cultivated man, and he taught me a great deal. But he never did play for my lecture. I had to learn the slow movement of Schonberg's Opus 22 and play it myself."

Through his lectures, Cage began to meet some influential people. The Arensbergs. Galka Scheyer, a dynamic woman who taught painting, and who had brought "The Blue Four" (Kandinsky, Marc etc) to America. Cage was accepted into this cosmopolitan circle, and his relationship with Buhlig, Arensberg, Scheyer etc gave him the opportunity of deciding finally what to do -- whether to give up either painting and music and go on with the other. He and Sample had had a show of paintings at Scripps College, a part of Pomona -- mostly "squintings at landscape, rather Van Gogh in feeling, with some architectural paintings and some abstract work -- my work had become abstract just before I stopped painting. Neither Scheyer nor Arensberg were very encouraging about my painting, but Buhlig was rather encouraging about my music. So I made the decision to give up painting and devote myself to music -- the decision I had been unable to make, years before, about architecture."

Xenia Andreyevna Kashevaroff

Cage and Sample were living then above a shop in LA, established by Cage's mother (who was then working for the LA Times and supporting the family) to show and sell the work of local craftsmen. Cage ran the shop, but since few people ever came in he spent most of his time in the back, writing music.

"One day, in walked Xenia. I fell immediately in love with her. I asked if I could help her, but she said no, and left soon afterward. I thought about her for the next two weeks, but couldn't do anything about it. Then she came in again. I knew any sort of subtle approach was doomed, so I asked her to have dinner with me that night. She was rather startled, but she agreed. We had dinner, and afterwards I asked her to marry me. She said she'd have to think about it."

Xenia was one of the daughters of a Russian Orthodox priest in Alaska (Juneau). (Steinbeck knew the girls, and once said the Kashevaroffs came down like a polar ice cap, to lay waste California). They were all beautiful, talented, and highly volatile. Xenia was in art school in LA, interested in crafts. She had been to Reed College, and had a tubercular knee that wouldn't bend. (Note: Cage felt he had to break away from Sample by then, but still felt indebted to him, after living on his money in Europe). While awaiting Xenia's decision, Cage and Sample left LA and went to live in Carmel, so Sample could study photography with Edward Weston.

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*When I studied with Adolph Weiss, I noticed that he had a stack of unperformed music lying around. As a result, I decided that I would consider a piece of music unfinished until it had been performed."

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They had no money at all by this time. They lived in a little cabin in the woods. Cage noticed mushrooms growing all around, wondered if they were edible, went to the library and read a book on mushrooms and found out they were. He and Don lived on mushrooms for a while. After a week or so, people found out about them and they were invited to the Schoeningers for lunch one day. "We really couldn't make it," says Cage. "We were too weak. The Schoeningers learned about this, and brought them food.

Then Cage got a job in the Blue Bird Tearoom, in Carmel, as a dishwasher, and ate steak three times a day for two weeks. He worked fourteen hours a day, got up at 4 A.M. to write music. He was trying to write enough pieces to send to Adolph Weiss, a former pupil of Schoenberg, with whom he had decided that he should study before he studied with Schoenberg, to get a firmer foundation in music. Weiss was in New York. Cage wrote to him, enclosing his work, and got no reply. He decided that he should do what he had done in the case of Buhlig -- go and see him anyway -- and he made plans accordingly. The Carmel crowd gave him a going away party, and also a stack of pre-stamped postcards to tell them how he was getting along -- they were worried about him because he had no money to speak of. The day before he left, he had a letter from Weiss saying he looked forward to working with him. Cage and Sample left next morning, riding freight trains all the way to New York. This was in late spring of 1933.

New York - 1933-1934

Cage took a job first with a drug store advertising campaign, slipping ads under doors in apartments. When the campaign was over, he got a job in the Brooklyn YWCA washing walls, was once accused of peeping in keyholes (see story in Silence p. 269). Took a miserable little room on Hudson Street in the Village, which was so depressing that he used it only to sleep in, never put in any furniture or even had electricity turned on. At this point he presented himself to Weiss, with whom he began studying. Henry Cowell was in New York, too, teaching at the New School and holding seminars on new music. Cowell and Weiss insisted that Cage play bridge with them in the evenings. He was washing walls all day, studying for two hours or so with Weiss, playing bridge at night, and getting up at 4 A.M. to compose. Things improved slightly when he got a job as janitor in a rooming house on MacDougal street, which included use of a piano in the living room. Later, he became a scholarship student at the New School, took all of Cowell's courses. "Through Cowell, I could sense the whole world of the new music. He was a walking encyclopedia of everything and everybody at all interesting in the field. I became aware of George Anthiel, for instance -- oddly enough I didn't like his music at all. Anthiel had always been the bad boy of music, which is what I've been called, too, but he never appealed to me."

Cage stayed in NY for about a year and a half. Weiss was leaving town, and so was Cowell. There was no reason to stay, and Cage had heard that Schoenberg, having come to this country and been offered money to stay out of Philadelphia, had gone to California to teach at USC. Cage drove across the country with Cowell.

Schoenberg and Marriage

Cage took a library research job, working for a lawyer who was promoting his father's inventions. He hated the work, but was good at it - and it gave him some contact with his father for first time (had never had much before --

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"Schoenberg was so clear about music, which made him such a great teacher, but he was also mysterious at the same time."

After meeting Fishinger, Cage said in a 1948 lecture at Vassar, "I was convinced overnight that although 12-tone music was excellent theoretically, in making use of the instruments which had been developed for tonal music, it had continually to be written negatively rather than straight-forwardly: it always had to avoid the harmonic relationships which were natural to tonal instruments, which instruments it did not so much use as usurp; I was convinced that for atonal music new instruments proper to it were required."

"A single sound by itself is neither musical nor not musical. It is simply a sound. And no matter what kind of a sound it is, it can become musical by taking its place in a piece of music...Music now seemed to me to be the organization of sound, organization by any means of any sounds." (from same lecture) ((also mentions Futurist manifesto of 1912 by Russolo called "The Art of Noise"))

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all special occasions suchs going to movie serial on Saturday, July 4 fireworks).

Had been corresponding regularly with Xenia, who finally, despite all family objections, consented to marry him. Xenia arrived by boat from Alaska -- Cage was startled to see that her long straight hair had been cut and curled -- and they drove straight through the night to Yuma, Arizona, so they could be married without the three-day wait.

By this time (1935), Cage was already studying with Schoenberg. He had gone to USC to see him the first time, and had a brief interview. Scheonberg hadn't even seen any of his work. Schoenberg said he wasn't sure Cage could afford his price. "I told him there wasn't any question about that, because I couldn't pay him anything at all. He asked me then whether I was willing to devote my life to music, and I said I was. 'All right,' he said, 'in that case I will teach you free of charge.' (I've tried to repay that debt ever since, by teaching young people who wanted to work with me and couldn't afford to pay free of charge.)

"I studied counterpoint at his home, and attended all his courses at USC and later at UCLA, when he moved there. I also took some courses in harmony, which I hated. We were supposed to write Brahms-like waltzes. I worshipped Schoenberg as though he were a god, but I realized that I had no aptitude for harmony. I tried to explain this to him on drives around town, for which I borrowed Mother's car so I could take him around on errands. He told me that if I didn't master harmony I would simply be beating my head against a wall. I replied that this was what, in that case, I intended to do -- and maybe it's what I've been doing ever since.

"Schoenberg never led me to believe that I communicated anything to him musically. He never praised my compositions, and whenever I criticized anyone else's work in class he held my criticism up to ridicule. He once said to me, 'My purpose in teaching is to make it impossible for you to compose.' And yet I was completely devoted to him. My worship was so extreme that one time, when I got to one of his classes half an hour early and went into the lavatory and found him there, I was really shocked -- it just seemed to me that he was above such things. He was frightfully Germanic. In his house, he wouldn't let his wife knit when he was talking -- it was necessary to listen to every word. (See anecdotes in Silence, p. 93 and p. 261) (also p. 265)

Percussion Music

Cage and Xenia were meeting more and more people through Galka Scheyer -- Noguchi, E.E. Cummings (whose work Cage had always loved; he was hurt when Cummings showed no interest at all in his music). One of their new acquaintances was Oskar von Fischinger, one of the pioneer abstract filmmakers. Galka had suggested that Cage write music for one of his films, and brought them together. Cage actually took a job working for Fischenger, a job that came to a rather abrupt end when Fischenger ignited three months work with his cigar ash, and Cage compounded the disaster by pouring a bucket of water over the equipment. Before this, though, Fischenger had given Cage an idea that had a profound effect on him. Fischenger used to say that every inanimate object had its spirit, which was released when the object made a noise -- stones, wood, etc. This opened up a whole new world of musical possibilities for Cage -- a world that did not depend on harmony for its structure.

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As a result of Fischenger's idea, Cage became interested in percussive music. He needed other people in order to realize his ideas about rhythmic patterns, and Xenia needed something to do, so they went to live with Hazel Dreis, the bookbinder, in her large house. Xenia became a bookbinder (Cage did too), and in the evenings the bookbinders in the house became musicians. They played Cage's new compositions in the living room, which was empty of furniture, and on materials that they had scrounged from junk heaps -- automobile brake drums, spare parts, gongs, etc.

"I had the problem of learning to compose, because at first I had no structure. Schoenberg had impressed on me the function of harmony, for which I had no feeling. He said its purpose was structural, making clear the relations between the parts and the whole. I felt that if there were a fundamental principle underlying structure in musical composition, then there must also be a fundamental structural principle for noises. But at that time I hadn't found the principle, and so I used Schoenberg's other idea that all music is a process of repetition and variation (variation being repetition with some things the same and some things different). I simply used this idea and eliminated variation. Thus I had a plurality of musical motives, set down for example in the form of a circle, with some principle of repetition. My pieces then were written in conventional musical notation, but the sounds were not specified and could be anything -- much as in my recent work.

Cage was very pleased with the results of his new work, and invited people in to hear the concerts. He invited Stokowski, Schoenberg and other musical luminaries, but no one influential ever came. Schoenberg, on hearing about it, said, "Ah, so?" but said he was busy that night. Cage said he would arrange to have it any other night. Schoenberg said he would not be free.

see Silence, p.86

At the same time, Cage had joined a modern dance group at UCLA, improvising on the piano for their rehearsals (Note: Dance the real patron of 20th century music -- has not only accepted but used it). He was asked to do a piece for the swimming team, a sort of aquatic ballet, and through this he discovered the water gong -- a gong dipped into water (so the swimmers can hear it) makes a different sound emerging from or being immersed into water. For the UCLA dance group, he made a piece using toy instruments set up on a card table, their sounds amplified through the public address system -- this composition, performed in Royce Hall in 1935 or 36, was the first Cage work involving electronic elements, and was called Imaginary Landscape No. 1.

Cornish School - 1937

Xenia felt the need for them to break away from Cage's parents, with whom they were living. Cage went to San Francisco, where he was offered five jobs in one day, most of them playing for modern dance groups. He accepted a job teaching at the Cornish School in Seattle.

Cornish went by the idea that in order to study one art you should study all the others too. When Cage got there, he was delighted to find a closet full of percussion instruments that had been left by a German dancer. He immediately set to work organizing a percussion orchestra and giving concerts, and he also wrote letters to composers throughout the country asking them to

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*which Cage used. Included pieces by Johanna Beyer, William Russell, Gerald Strand, Doris Humphrey. When Cage wrote to composers asking them for percussion scores, the most responsive were Henry Cowell and Lou Harrison (with whom he later worked closely). Virgil Thomson did not reply.

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write percussive pieces. The existing percussive music at that time was very rare, although Varese had written Ionization previously. As a result of Cage's letters, his library grew from ten to more than a hundred pieces.* Later, when the German dancer heard Cage was using his instruments and ordered him to put them back in the closet, Cage went around to wealthy people in Seattle and raised $200 to buy new ones.

Cage worked closely with Bonnie Bird, who was teaching modern dance at Cornish -- wrote music for her prgrams. Also gave percussion concerts throughout Northwest -- twelve in all. His work was attracting the attention of a good many artists, and as a result he came to know Mark Tobey and Morris Graves.

Cornish School had a rule that Morris Graves was not to come into it, as a result of his energetic efforts to epater les bourgeois. When Cage announced his first percussion concert, though, Graves managed to get in with two friends, Mrs. Bruceis Beck, a formidable woman who was a powerful force in the school, saw him and gave instructions to several men she knew to eject him if he did anything untoward. Graves had come to mock the proceedings, because he was opposed on principle to the Cornish School; he had brought with him a lorgnette equipped with painted eyes, and a bag of popcorn. During the performance of Cage's Quartet, though, he seemed to be paying very close attention, and during the pause after the very slow, quiet second movement he was heard to say, not irreverantly, "Jesus in the everywhere." Cage feels he was moved by the slow movement, mostly done with gongs. Mrs, Beck took this as a provocation, though, and gave the signal to her male supporters, who moved in and seized Graves and carried him out horizontally. He passed directly beneath Mrs. Beck's large bosom, at which point he said loudly, "Good evening, Mrs Beck." Outside, he remained in the patio and danced to the fast movement of Cage's piece, all alone. As a result, Cage and Graves became fast friends. Graves introduced him to Tobey, who was then not so well known as Graves and often annoyed by what he considered Graves' piracy of his ideas. Also to Malcolm Roberts, another painter. These were the Cage's closest friends during their two years at Cornish. They lived in a small house near the school.

Cage also arranged with Galka Scheyer to send a Klee exhibition to Cornish, and later gave an exhibition of Graves' work-- the series on the Purification of Cardinal Pacelli that was later shown at the MMA. This was before Graves was nationally known. (Note: Friendship with painters important -- painting was talking then, and music listening).

Among Bonnie Bird's students was Merce Cunningham, a young dancer who was "fantastically gifted." Merce had problems with his family in Centralia, Wash. -- they didn't like the idea of his becoming a dancer -- and Cage once telephoned his mother to try to persuade her that this was just what he should do. During Cage's first summer there, Martha Graham came to Mills College, Cunningham went there to study with her, and never returned -- went on to New York as soloist with her company. (Cage had admired Graham for years; when he was staying at Hazel Dreis', all the apprentices saved up money to go and see her, great celebration). Merce was one of Cage's best musicians in the percussion orchestra, but the best of all, he says, was Xenia.

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*Henry Cowell had pub. volume of percussion music in his New Music Editions

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Mills College

The next summer, Cage's second at Cornish, he was invited to Mills College, along with Lou Harrison, to work with one of the three modern dance groups there -- Cage worked with Marian Van Tuyl. Jose Limon was there, but Cage disliked his work intensely, found it "lurid," Moholy-Nagy, Gyorgy Kepes and others of the faculty of the Chicago School of Design were there too, and it was a brilliant summer.

Prepared Piano

Back at Cornish in the fall, Cage was asked by Syvilla Fort, the negro dancer, to compose a piece of music for a dance she had made called Bacchanale. "I admired the dance, but doubted whether I could write anything suitable. I was still writing twelve-tone music for the piano then, and I knew it wouldn't work for her dance. I thought that my percussion music would work, but there was no room in the dance theater for all those instruments on stage. She said to go ahead anyway, even though the performance was only three days off, I worked and worked, without getting anywhere. I decided finally that what was wrong was not me, but the piano. I knew that Henry Cowell had used his hands inside the piano, and had even used a darning egg to slide along the strings. I began trying things inside the piano, too -- magazines, newspapers, pie plates, ashtrays. I noticed that these things changed the sound in the right direction, making it sound percussive, but they bounced around too much. I felt that if I could find some things that would stay in position, this would work. I tried a nail, but it slipped around too. Then I saw that a bolt or a large wood screw, inserted between two strings, was the solution. This made a percussion instrument out of the piano. It changed every aspect of the sound -- timbre, duration, loudness, pitch. My discovery was certainly dependent on the experiments of Cowell, but Cowell had never placed an object between the strings and then played on the keyboard that way. I soon had a whole gamut of sounds, which is what I needed for the dance piece." This was the first piece for prepared piano, and is called Bacchanale.

"The Future of Music: Credo"

Cage was asked to speak to a Seattle women's music appreciation club. His address was called "Listening to Music," and in it he expressed idea that it was not necessary to have a knowledge of structure, etc. in order to enjoy music; music appreciated through the ears, rather than through knowledge of relationships. Speech was fairly well received, and tea and cookies were served.

Soon after this, he gave another lecture before a somewhat more sophisticated audience in Seattle, the Seattle Arts Society. This was in 1937. For this lecture, he wrote his "The Future of Music: Credo," which appears as first chapter in Silence. Important statement.

Xenia

Xenia did no teaching at Cornish. "She cooked beautifully, and we always had a marvellous time together. Her interest was mainly in friends and parties, rather than in art, and I was always trying to get her involved in making something, as I do with everyone I come into contact with. I did succeed finally in getting her to make mobiles. We were critical of Calder's mobiles then, because they didn't really move, they were too heavy. Xenia started making mobiles out of balsa wood and kite paper. They were very beautiful, she was always a remarkably fine craftsman, and she later had a show of them at the Julian Levy gallery in New York. Our room became exhibits of these.

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Another composition done in Seattle about this time was Metamorphoses, a 12-tone piece for piano solo. It consisted of 5 movements, each of which had four motives; a new motive was introduced into each movement and a former one dropped to make way, so that at the end there was nothing in the last movement that had been in the first. "Numbers fascinate me, because I don't really understand them," says Cage. Metamorphoses was the work of one whole year. ~~"Your musical compositions take a long time,~~ "I was concerned then with many different kinds of composition then, but musical composition, unlike painting, often takes a long time, and so you sometimes exhaust the ideas that concerned you in the course of a single work. It was this way with Metamorphoses - I didn't need to do that kind of thing again."

* "Toward A New Music" by Carlos Chavez
** "New Musical Resources" by Henry Cowell

*On WPA job, he was for a while engaged in teaching teachers to work with music, in a camp north of SFrancisco. "The way I taught was to have them take walks in the woods, looking for sounds -- actually using their eyes, not their ears, looking for things they could bring back and make music with."

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Later, Xenia made a number of Duchamp's valises. She had very little compulsion to make works of art, though, and I was constantly pushing her.

"Xenia corresponded perfectly with my notion of beauty. She was very striking. ~~She had~~ Her hair was golden blond, and very long and straight -- I remember how shocked I was when she got off the boat to meet me just before we were married, and I saw that she had cut her hair and curled it. She had great style. Her stiff knee was never a deformity because she transformed it into a way of moving that was personal and very intense. She could transform her whole appearance with costumes, and loved doing it. Her conversation was quick and brilliant. We were very close, and I know that people never mentioned one of us without the other. Our being very close turned into our being very separate, after ten years."

San Francisco

As a result of conversations with Lou Harrison, Chicago School of Design people and others, Cage ~~was~~ became interested in the problem of adding technology to music. Books by Carlos Chavez* and Henry Cowell** formative here. "I was under the impression that everything in art that could be done had already been done, and that my function was as an inventor and research worker, rather than as an artist. This way I was able to rationalize my being in the field at all. But as people whose opinions I valued began to admire my work, I began to think I might be an artist after all. Tobey and Graves were very enthusiastic about Bacchanale, and they were encouraging. Also Lou Harrison, who was writing percussion music with me and was my closest musical associate at the time. Aurelia Henry Rinehart, the president of Mills College, had also been very encouraging, and I felt that with her help it might be possible to persuade someone in the United States to establish a center for experimental music."

Seattle was beginning to seem pretty off in a corner by this time. Cage was not yet thinking about New York, but he wanted to move into a larger arena, and the natural one seemed to be San Francisco. He and Xenia went there in 1940, and moved into a tiny house on Lombard Street. Cage got a job on the WPA, not as a musician because he was not accepted as such, but in the recreation end, working with children. The bureaucratic setup filled him with disgust. He insisted on being given something to do, and was finally sent to a hospital to provide music for the children of visitors, but was not permitted to make any noise for fear of disturbing the patients. He devises rhythmic games for them to play silently.

In addition to sending out letters to colleges, film studios, Bell Labs, Westinghouse, etc. in hopes of backing for Center of Experimental Music, he gave a few concerts with Lou Harrison. After a dual concert at the California Club, in which the audience voted on their favorite pieces which were then recorded (both choices were Harrison's), Cage sent the recording to Edgard Varese. It was called "The First Concert of Organized Sound." (Cage had used the term "Organization of sound" in his Future of Music: Credo; later found that Varese had used the same concept and called it Organized Sound. Cage preferred Varese's wording). Varese wired back, saying "Please desist from using my term organized sound." Varese was in California then, very ill and more or less inactive (Cage says he was ill because no one was interested in his music; became well when they got interested). "Varese saw all these things before I did, and tried for years to get backing from Bell Laboratories and some other places. He too got interested from working with percussion groups."

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Cage - Bio (15)

Rhythmic Structure (1937-1938)

"I was using 12-tone system for concert work, but trying to avoid the sad, depressing quality that most 12-tone music had at that time. I wanted to give it some of the vigor of percussive music. I even tried a collage -- cutting up a score by Cecile Chaminade and pasting it back together again irrationally.

"Schoenberg had stressed the structural function of harmony, with the whole being divisible into parts, and the larger parts divisible into smaller parts, and so on. Since I was dealing in my percussion music with noises, I thought that if I could find the basic principle underlying harmony, then I could ~~adapt this basic principle~~ apply it to a situation in which harmony did not exist. The principle was structure -- the relationship of the parts to the whole. So, I asked myself what is the real nature of sound? ~~I asked.~~ It consists of four elements -- timbre, pitch, duration, loudness. (This idea later became important to the whole music world -- at the time it was important to me because I was trying to find the fundamental structural basis for noises).

"I assumed that if we had sound, we must also have silence. I didn't question the existence of silence then (later, Paul Bowles did question it, and I know now that pure silence doesn't exist). But the only characteristic of both sound and silence that was measurable, was duration. The only characteristic common to both. Thus, any structure for noise must be based on time.

"All classical music theory had been based on pitch (high or low). There was no theory of rhythm. So I decided that I had come upon a structure more basic than the one I had thought was basic. I didn't realize then that it was revolutionary -- it was in agreement with the music of the Orient, although I didn't know that at the time. Balinese and Indian music has a basic rhythmic structure, and so does jazz in a sense. But I didn't learn about Indian music until 1945 or 1946.

"The structure I devised was a whole, with that number of measures that could have a square root, such as 100: 10 x 10. There was to be the same proportion of small parts as large parts. I called it micro-macrocosmic relationship. It was plotted out in advance mathematically. I was perfectly willing to do this because of my work with dancers at the Cornish School. Dance had become independent of music, so that the dance was made first and the dancers would then give the composer their "counts." I was delighted to work within those restrictions.

"What I did was to take ideas such as those I had used involving static motives, circular in nature, and then applied the new principle of rhythmic structure. At this point I saw that the 12-tone theory was not a structure at all, but rather a method which told people how to go from note to note, but not how to break down the whole into parts. I also saw that this is why harmony had been so important to Schoenberg -- he needed it to fall back on. But it seemed to me that harmonic structure was fallacious, according to the nature of the material -- if music were composed of sound and silence, how could a structure be basic that did not apply to silence?

"It is a particularly 20th century idea that the material you are dealing with is part and parcel of the nature of the work. I realized that we had not yet applied this truth to music. Harmony relates only to pitch, which

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First Construction (in metal)- for this, Cage made out charts showing permutation of numbers, very elaborate.

For Second Construction he used a fugue-with-rhythmic structure. The fugue is very much opposed to rhythmic structure. Cage thus showed its progressive disintegration during the piece -- opposite of the usual piling up of and gathering of forces towards the end.

What Cage was really doing was rebelling against the traditional Sonata form, with its rigid code of Exposition-Development-Recapitulation. He was enamored of the development, and was taking it further and further into ever more infinite variation, and not coming back for recapitulation. He believes that this is also the historical trend in contemporary Western music, whose roots go back to Beethoven -- Beethoven's sonatas stressed the development, and his developments tended toward greater and greater variation/.

All this work on structure was going on simultaneously with experimentation with new sounds in percussion work, new instruments, etc. Cage was encouraged and influenced in this aspect by two books: New Musical Resources, by Henry Cowell, and Toward A New Music, by Carlos Chavez -- both suggested that technology must now be added to music. Also highly influential were the articles by Edgard Varese, who foresaw and expressed a great many of the ideas that interested Cage, even the idea of electronic music. Cage, who had chosen Schoenberg over Stravinsky (one had to make a choice then), got to noise through Varese, and to his own perticular view about sounds through Fischinger.

Structure as discipline: "I came to see in all this that structure was discipline. Later, I was able to find a principle that was even more basic than structure, underlying it -- the basic principle of discipline itself, which is the act of giving up oneself completely to the act of composing. This is what it made it possible for me to renounce strudture entirely for chance operations..."

"It's funny, I think of myself as an inventor, as one who is capable of inventing new things, the son of an inventor. But later I almost always find that what I think is really original in my work has been done before by someone else."

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does not apply to silence. It was clear that you could have a painting that was not painted all over, and a sculpture with negative volumes -- but this had not been applied to music. It was time for music to discover this. (Cage makes point that at the turn of the century music was doing the talking -- Cubism defended itself in terms of music, being abstract, etc).

Cage still kept the two things separate in his work. He used rhythmic structure in his percussion work (the first piece composed according to this system was First Construction in Metal; he continued using the method for the next 15 years). But he continued to use 12-tone row when composing for tonal instruments. He thought of the prepared piano solely in relation to dance, as being useful when he didn't have a percussion orchestra. At the time, though, "I had a higher regard for my concert percussion music than for the dance music, because the concert work had this rhythmic structure."

Chicago School of Design

After about a year in San Francisco, Cage and Xenia moved back to LA and stayed with his parents for another year. Cage did not work, devoted all his time to trying to get support for his Center for Experimental Music. He wrote letters constantly -- to all universities, to Bell Labs, Westinghouse, to movie studios (which could record sounds on film, before magnetic tape discovered). Found, as Varese had found before him, that no one was interested.

The three exceptions were Mills College, the University of Iowa, and the School of Design in Chicago. Cage could have gone to any one if he'd had foundation support, but he didn't. As an alternative, he accepted Moholy-Nagy's invitation to teach at the School of Design. The salary was small, but Xenia had come into a small inheritance and they decided to accept.

They came to Chicago in 1941. Gretchen Schoeninger was there, married to Alexander Corazzo -- they had fixed up part of an old carriage house on the south side, in a fairly hideous neighborhood. The Cages spent Xenia's inheritance fixing up the other part of the house.

The School of Design was housed in a former bakery, and the classrooms were divided by partitions that didn't reach the ceiling. Moholy told Cage that he couldn't make any noise, must confine his teaching to theory, which he did. He took his collection of percussion instruments (300 or more) to the University of Chicago, where he got a supplementary job accompanying dance classes of Katherine Manning. He rehearsed and trained a group of student percussion players, as he had in Seattle, and soon began looking about for a concert date in Chicago.

He was told that the best possible arrangement would be a concert at the Chicago Arts Club, which had been a lively and forward-looking forum for the arts. The club's new presdient, Mrs. Alfred Shaw, was somewhat hesitant about making decisions, though. She deliberated for some time about the percussion concert, and while she was deliberating "we had many fine parties. People really were loyal to one another in Chicago, they called each other daily and kept in close touch and saw each other all the time. I think maybe this is because the city itself is so hideous, so they band together in self-defense. Anyway, everything seemed to give rise to celebrations. Whenever someone came through on the train, even if they were only staying for six hours, there would be a party. We got to be such

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good friends that it became even more difficult for Mrs Shaw to give the concert. But she finally decided to do it, and the concert took place. I wrote a new piece for the occasion, called Imaginary Landscape No. 3 (Imag. Landscape No. 1, in 1939, used test sounds from radio stucio at Cornish School, which considered radio one of the arts -- first piece using electronic sounds, used with Bonnie Bird's dance of same title; No, 2 also composed at Cornish, but Cage never liked it -- see below).

Imaginary Landscape No. 3 came out of Cage's contact with CBS radio studio in Chicago. Lavinia Schwartz, who held an important position with CBS in Chicago, had introduced Cage to the head of the sound effects dept there, who in turn introduced him to all the radio sound effect devices, "which I naturally approached as things that could be used in music." He was able to use the CBS sound equipment for the Arts Club concert, because the studio and the club were in the same building. Used phonograph records, percussion instruments, and amplified small sounds. Also used a device that had been discovered by the CBS sound effects man, and which was to become a Cage trademark -- a coil of wire introduced into a phonograph cartridge. The sound effects man used it to make thunder, or war sounds. The basic expression of the piece was warlike, reflecting the approach of conflict that was very much in the air at that time.

Cage also composed at this time a piece called March, equally warlike in expression, in which he used large tin cans taken from restaurants. When used as percussion instruments these made "awful sounds." This piece later became Imaginary Landscape No. 2 , when Cage decided that the original was such a poor piece that he chose to destroy it.

This was a sort of finishing up with loud sounds for the time being. Cage had decided that all the large aspects of our society were wrong, and that this would be the last loud piece, it being intended as a criticism of society. "I felt that beauty was an intimate situation between [redacted] a few people, and that for the purpose of beauty, in which I was certainly interested, quietness was necessary." And for this purpose, it now struck him that the prepared piano was the right means.

Columbia Workshop (with Kenneth Patchen)

Lavinia Schwartz put Cage in touch with Davidson Taylor, the musical director of CBS in New York. CBS suggested that he do a program for their 'Columbia Workshop' program, in collaboration with someone of his choice. Cage had been impressed with the work of Kenneth Patchen, went to NY to meet him, and they agreed to collaborate.

Patchen's first play was unacceptable to CBS. He wrote another, called "The City Wears a Slouch Hat," which was acceptable. Basic idea was Christ figure entering the modern city, having various encounters etc. Cage planned first to write a percussion score using sound effects [redacted] exclusively. "I had the idea that for a modern theater piece, I should not use 17th and 18th century musical instruments for sounds, but rather the sounds indiginous to the 20th century situation. As a result, I wrote a score that was just unplayable. I used to go out around Chicago, on streetcars, and just listen, then come back and try to compose what I had heard. For example, I wanted to use the sound of escaping steam, but CBS pointed out to me that it would cost $5 just to make the sound once. One week before the concert I had to

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Varese

Despite brusque telegram about desisting from using term "organized sound," Cage was eager to meet Varese, and called him up soon after arrival in NY. Cage and Xenia went over to call, by invitation. Cage got on fine with Varese, but soon Xenia came up looking very upset, said it was time to go." On street, she said that Mrs. Varese had explained the telegram by saying that Varese didn't want his work to be associated with Cage's, "any more than Picasso would want to be associated with some cartoonist." Later, though, Cage and Varese got to be on very good terms.

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throw away the entire score. After that I stayed up every night writing a new score, using instruments with which I was familiar, plus a few simple sound effects. The composition wasn't finished until the day of the performance, which was on a national hookup."

The radio concert got a great deal of attention, and Cage received a lot of mail, mostly favorable. "So I decided that I was going to be a great success, and because of that I should go to New York." The inheritance was gone by then, and they had no money. But they had met Max Ernst and Peggy Guggenheim in Chicago, and they had said come and live with them in New York. The Cages spent their last few dollars on bus tickets to NY, and arrived with exactly ten cents -- see story of phone call in Silence, p. 12.

New York -

They stayed with Ernst and Peggy G. for about two weeks, in their lovely apartment overlooking the East River, and met a great many people "whose names are written in gold in my memory" -- including Mondrian, Andre Breton, David Hare, Virgil Thomson, Marcel Duchamp, and Gypsy Rose Lee. "I was just flabbergasted by the whole situation -- somebody famous was dropping in every two minutes, it seemed."

Peggy G. was getting ready then to open her Art of This Century Gallery, with the interior by Kiesler. The idea developed that the opening should be celebrated with a concert of Cage's music. At the same time, Cage says he "was pulling every string I could find to get a concert at the Museum of Modern Art. I was hitching my wagon to a star, which was not only Peggy, but certainly the Museum of Modern Art, which from California and Chicago just loomed as the center of the world for me. I didn't ever think of Carnegie Hall, you see, because the conventional musicians had turned me down. Besides which, the musical ideas I was developing seemed to be more related to modern painting than to anything else."

At any rate, when Peggy learned that Cage was planning to give a later concert at the MMA, she was furious. She refused to pay for the transportation of his percussion instruments from Chicago -- which she had agreed to do -- and cancelled his concert at the opening the her gallery. Cage remembers that when he heard this, in her apartment, he burst into tears. He was consoled by Duchamp, who said, in effect, that one shouldn't depend on the Peggy Guggenheims of this world. Cage's relations with Peggy ceased at this point. He says now that he was "probably being blindly ambitious," but it still rankles. Worse still, Peggy told Cage that he and Xenia would have to leave the apartment -- a severe blow, because they had rather thought it a permanent arrangement, and had no money at all. This was in the summer of 1942. The MMA concert was not until the following fall. What to do in the meanwhile?

Merce Cunningham was then at Bennington College, teaching and working with Jean Erdman (Cage had previously urged him to leave Martha Graham and go on his own, and he had acted on the advice). Cunningham asked Cage to write some music for the Cunningham-Erdman dance, Credo In Us. They couldn't pay, but Erdman offered her apartment on Waverley Place for the summer, and they accepted.

"But we still didn't have any money. It was the first time I'd actually been at the point of not having anything, not even a nickel. And because

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of this it became a different problem, somehow -- it liberating was as though I were suddenly free of it. I simply took the attitude that since I had no money, people should give it to me. I wrote to people, and they sent me money -- Lavinia Scwartz was one. I remember being frightfully shocked when John Steinbeck came to town and took us to dinner at '21,' the bill must have come to $100... Anyway, I was able to write the music for Merce and Jean and send it out to them. It was the first time I had used radios in a piece -- it was a kind of satire on American life.

"Meanwhile, the Modern Museum committee had decided to do my program, which was being co-sponsored by the League of Composers. The money for transporting the instruments came through as a result. I trained fifteen players, using a studio that had been lent to me for the purpose, and started rehearsals. I then began living by writing music for modern dancers, charging $5 a minute for it.

"Dad and Mother had moved to New Jersey meanwhile, in connection with one of his inventing projects, and I was able to get some library research work with him from time to time . His work was [redacted] for the government, and it was Top Secret, involving his [redacted] ideas for enabling airplane pilots to see through fog, and as a result of my work for him I was deferred from military service." His father was also involved with a cold remedy he had invented, called Misticold --inhalers, etc. Not making any money, though, because he kept giving inhalers away to friends and acquaintances...

MMA Concert

Given in February 21 1943. Included Cage's Imaginary Landscape No. 3, and Amores, a suite of four movements, in which Cage played two on prepared piano and the other two were performed by Cage, Xenia, and Merce Cunningham. Also included pieces by Amadeon Rodon, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison.

(in rhythmic structure) see p. 21

It was reviewed in Life and Time, so seemed successful to Cage. Afterwards, though, nothing happened. The door to work in radio had been closed previously ~~00~~ Cage had planned to get work writing music for radio drama, using sounds appropriate to the environment a la Columbia Workshop, [redacted] but the mail to CBS on the Workshop program had been adverse and he was not asked to do anything more. From then on, Cage supported himself by writing for dancers and doing library research. Right after the MMA Concert, Cage and Cunningham-Erdman gave dance concert at Chicago Arts Club, but this was not a success either.

Fortunately, Cage's music was in great demand among dancers such as Valerie Bettis, Hanya Holm. In this situation, the dance would be made first, and Cage would go to see it and "measure" it in terms of duration and phraseology, then come home and write the music. "I attempted to fit the music to the dance in terms of expressivity, also." Mostly music for prepared piano, on which Cage concentrating then. Cage also performed it often during recitals, which were usually held at the YMHA or the Humphrey-Weidman theater on 16th St.

Virgil Thomson

Cage wrote a piece for the duo pianists Arthur Fizdale and Robert Gold, who had not yet appeared in public: "A Book of Music for Two Pianos," for two prepared pianos. Was longer than anything he'd done, 30 minutes. He showed the score to Virgil Thomson, whom he had met at Peggy's and with whom he was now on excellent terms. Thomson said it was beautiful, but suggested he

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do something more "muscular." Physical & Cage did:

Thomson was a firm supporter of Cage in those days. He was on committee at MMA that approved the concert, and also the Herald Tribune critic. He got Cage to write one or two articles, but Cage didn't like doing it. "Whenever I had finished a piece of music, the first people to see it would be Lou Harrison and Virgil Thomson." Cage very much enjoyed Thomson's brilliant conversation and friendship.

New School Concert - January 1945

Having written the music for Gold and Fizdale, and having received considerable publicity for MMA concert, Cage decided to give another for the prepared piano. He hired Gold and Fizdale, and gave the concert at the New School for Social Research auditorium. Cage played his own Perilous Night suite (which was written to express his growing scepticism about the presence of beauty in intimate situations). The concert was a dismal flop. Only about 50 people came, and were swallowed in the hall that holds 600. Cage had planned to pay the costs out of receipts from admission. "I lost $600 which I didn't have."

There was a party afterwards at Cage's apartment on Hudson Street, where he and Xenia had moved after leaving Erdman's. Thomson, Paul Bowles, Oliver Smith, John Latouche and others. Thomson left early to write his review, and had the party go to his place to await papers. They came, and Thomson's review was "superb," which somewhat mollified the situation. "All that remained was that I had to scrape together $600, most of which came from Oliver Smith and John Latouche."

Boza Mansion

Xenia and Cage separated finally and were divorced in 1945, after ten years of marriage. Xenia stayed on in Hudson Street, Cage lived briefly in the studio he and Cunningham had been using. Then he found a place on Grand and Monroe streets, a tenement building in which the top floor was in complete disrepair -- windows out, holes in ceiling. Cage told the owner, Boza, that he would work on top floor (under Boza's direction) and fix it up, if he could rent room there. Boza agreed. The top floor was divided into four apartments. Cage fixed it up, with help of $500 from parents -- new windows and ceilings, kitchen, bathroom etc.

Spartan decor - desk, piano, mattress on floor. When room next to it became vacant, Cage took that too (doubling his rent from $25 to $50 a month), and had a view of the river from the Statue of Liberty to the Queensboro Bridge.

Cage knew Lippold, through Merce Cunningham, and admired his work. Lippold always made any place he lived extremely beautiful, a faculty previously exercised for Cage by Xenia; he put the problem of decor in Lippold's hands. Lippold turned it into a magnificent suite. Plants around piano in such a way that it would appear to be floating. Long marble table. Gave Cage the Five Variations within a Sphere. Later on, Cage had Rauschenber White Painting in four panels; rest of his pictures were in kitchen, overflowing into bedroom. "It was a very beautiful place. I was very concerned with my surroundings then, I had a kind of compulsive orderliness -- I couldn't start work in the morning until I'd neatly copied over the previous days sketches." Cage had been buying paintings on the installment plan for some time, despite poverty -- had a Matta drawing, and one of Tobey's first white writing paintings, which he had to sell recently.

/two

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** Note on S & I : Sonatas and Interludes has recapitulation at the end. "I tend, in spite of all my experiments, to keep traditional ideas. It's very curious. I only don't use them when it seems absolutely necessary."

* Tranquillity here is not the Wordsworthian kind -- not being tranquil in a tranquil situation. Rather, the Indian idea that a man who can preserve a basic tranquillity in any situation, no matter how frantic, is truly enlightened.

*** Thomas Mace - wrote in 1676 that purpose of music was 4 reason and sober the mind, &c. See ~~Cage~~ Cage's Vassar lecture, p. 26. (more good stuff)

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Cage - Bio (21)

Sonatas and Interludes

Ananda K. Coomeraswami, called "The Dance of Shiva," which listed the Nine Permanent Emotions of Indian philosophy. These were, four white (the heroic, the mirthful, the wondrous, the erotic), four black (fear, anger, sorrow, disgust/odious), and one emotion without color in between, which was tranquillity. In Indian art, you could have any combination of these emotions, but you always had to have tranquillity.* "When I wrote the Amores, I had the intention of combining the wondrous, the erotic, and tranquillity.*

"While living in the Boza house on the river, I set myself the problem of writing the Sonatas and Interludes, which would be a whole concert in themselves, lasting a full evening, and which would also express all the Permanent Emotions. There are 16 sonatas and 4 interludes, and they go in groups of four, arranged symmetrically. The two sonatas at the end I called The Gemini, and dedicated them to Richard Lippold. **

"I was also very concermed over why one should be writing music in our society, all the time I was writing Sonatas and Interludes. One critic had written that the last movement of my Perilous Night suite sounded like a woodpecker in a church belfry. This disturbed me, because I had poured a great deal of emotion into the piece, and obviously I wasn't communicating this at all. Or, I thought, if I were communicating, then all artists must be speaking a different language, and thus speaking only for themselves. The whole situation struck me more and more as a Tower of Babel."

Along with his feelings of uncertainty about music, Cage was extremely upset over the divorce and life in general. He had been advised to have psychoanalysis, had tried it once and given it up (see story in Silence A-127). But he felt that there were severe problems, and that something should be done about them.

Oriental Philosophy and Zen

Just at this time, a young Indian woman named Gita Sarabhai, from a brilliant and wealthy family, came to New York to study Western music intensively for six months. She elected to study counterpoint with Cage, who told her that he would not charge anything if she would in return teach him about Indian music. "We were together almost daily, often with Lou Harrison. One day, I asked her what her teacher in India had thought was the function of music. She replied that he had said its purpose was 'to sober and quiet the mind, thus rendering it susceptible to divine influences.' I was tremendously struck by this. And by a remarkable coincidence, Lou Harrison, who had been doing research on early English music, came across the same idea expressed by an English composer of the 17th century, expressed in almost the same words. ***

"I decided that this was the proper purpose of music. It also fitted very well with the nine permanent emotions. At the same time, I read Coomeraswami's The Transformation of Nature in Art, and also the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, a very thick book on very thin paper, which was more or less a stenographic report of the sayings of the 19th century Indian who had had an adjuticated vision of God, by his disciple. It was Gita's parting gift to me."

After Gita left, Harrison and Cage spent most evenings reading Oriental and

idea that art imitates nature in her manner of operation (not in her results).

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Anecdote about The Seasons: A musician once came up to Cage and said he had heard the piece four times, and each time it had sounded completely different. The first time, being wholly new, it had sounded like Cage. The second, like Schoenberg. The third, like Beethoven. How should it really be played, in order to be perfect? "Like Mozart," said Cage. (meaning, the only music ever played perfectly is Mozart).

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Cage - Bio (22)

Suzuki

Occidental philosophy. Did a great deal of reading, both Eastern and Western, because of feeling that we are not Orientals and thus can't really accept Oriental teaching as our own. "Eventually, though, I saw so many correspondences that I gave up thinking the Orient was not for us." Read Meister Eckhart.

Cage got to Zen Buddhism at the same time that Dr. D.T. Suzuki came to this country for the first time and began lecturing, first privately and later at Columbia Univ. By this time, Cage felt he was ready to stop "window shopping" among religions and philosophies, and listen to one teacher thoroughly. He went to all Suzuki's lectures, for several years. The class included psychoanalysts, scientists, painters and sculptors, but no other musicians.

(see Silence, p. 262

"I had two purposes in going, one relating to life, the other to music. I went up to Suzuki after one lecture and asked him what he had to say about music. He said he knew nothing about music, and had nothing to say. I asked what he had to say about art, and he said he had nothing to say about art, either. Of course, this may have been just the form of Zen teaching by not answering questions, and making you answer them yourself. At any rate, I got no help from him there, and had to do my own thinking."

Cage feels that Zen was a great help to him in relation to life, though -- that it really took the place of psychoanalysis for him. "I had the impression that I was changing, you might say growing up. I realized that my previous understanding was that of a child."

Cage doesn't want Zen to be blamed for what he's done -- although he feels that Zen made possible everything he has done since then, and that what he has done is essentially different from what he was doing before. He claims that he has no penchant for mystical experience, unlike Lou Harrison, ~~who went deeply into Indian philosophy and had a nervous breakdown as a result~~. Cage took care of him for some time afterward, and this tended to increase his distaste for "the spooky aspects of Oriental philosophy." SUT

"I kept testing everything I was reading in terms of music, because I had the notion that my proper discipline was not spiritual but musical since I had told Schoenberg that I would dedicate myself to music. (See ideas on this in Forerunners of Modern Music, in Silence).

The Seasons

Lincoln Kirstein, whom Cage met at Virgil T's, gave him a commission to write piece for American Ballet Society.* Cage wrote The Seasons, reflecting these Oriental ideas (it was written during the composition of Sonatas and Interludes, which took two years). Seasons was his first piece for an orchestra (abt 40 pieces), and Cage was nervous about the orchestration. Virgil Thompson and Lou Harrison helped him with it.

Seasons was composed in rhythmic structure, but for conventional instruments. Cage wanted to make these conventional sounds seem as fresh to his ear as the invented sounds he had been working with on prepared piano. He began experimenting with "gamuts" of ordinary piano sounds, in series of short pieces -- these gamuts became the material for The Seasons. As result of orchestration by Thompson and Harrison, the gamuts received different coloring than Cage had intended. His nervousness gone now, he went on to the next step, of "making a static gamut of conventional pitches." The first piece done by this means was String Quartet, written in Paris in .

* Kirstein once told Cage he was "the Dutch Cleanser of modern music," whose function was to wash away people's ears. Kirstein never really liked his music. This, according to Cage

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At Black Mountain, in addition to Satie business, Cage wrote his "Suite for Toy Piano"/. This was part of his attempt to make conventional sounds interesting and fresh. It was composed, not on a toy piano, but on the white keys only. An extreme reduction of musical materials, in an effort to make the problem as difficult as possible. By making problem thus difficult, he hoped to arrive at a useful way of working in other pieces -- i.e. hoped to arrive at basic principle. The problem evidently ceased to interest him, though, for he stopped the attempt after this piece.

*This lecture began by discussing paradox of individuality vs. tradition - each artist today works as he sees fit, etc., but public pines for unanimity of opinion that produced a Mozart symphony, Gothic cathedral. Goes on to show that in three of music's four main elements (form, method, materials) individuality is prized and needed, while in the fourth (structure) what's necessary is agreed-on, unanimous ideas. This leads him to state: "In the field of structure, the field of definition of parts and their relation to the whole, there has been only one new idea since Beethoven. And that idea can be perceived in in the work of Anton Webern and Eric Satie. With Beethoven the parts of a composition were defined by means of harmony. With Satie and Webern they are defined by means of time lengths. The question of structure is so basic, and it is so important to be in agreement about it, that one must now ask: Was Beethoven right or, are Webern and Satie right? I answer immediately and uniquivocally, Beethoven was in error, and his influence which has been as extensive as it is lamentable, has been deadening to the art of music." (Bases this "heresy" on fact that only a time-length structure can deal with silence, as one of music's materials/-- silence being "the opposite and therefore the necessary partner of sound.")

"It took a Satie and a Webern to rediscover this musical truth, which by means of musicology, we learn was evident to some musicians of the middle ages, and to all musicians at all times (except those whom we are currently in the process of spoiling) in the orient.". In India, rhythmic structure is called Tala. With us, unfortunately, it is called a new idea."

"...It is interesting to note that harmonic structure in music arises as western materialism arises, disintegrates at the time that materialism comes to be questioned, and that the solution of rhythmic structure, traditional to the Orient, is arrived at by us just at the time that we profoundly sense our need for that other tradition of the Orient: peace of mind, self-knowledge."

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Black Mountain

Cage divided his time more and more between Boza Mansion, into which Sonia Sekula, painter, and Richard Lippold had since moved, and going out on tour with Merce Cunningham and his dancers, who changed from year to year. He invited different composers to write for the company, as well as using his own compositions.

In the course of these tours, they were invited to come to Black Mountain College and give a program during the spring of 1948. (April 3-8) No fee was paid, but they were given board and lodging. The concert was well received, and as a consequence they were invited back that summer to teach, and Cage was asked to give a program that would be a kind of survey of modern music. Because of the difficulty of getting performers, though, Cage decided to present a festival of all the works of Eric Satie, in whom he had become increasingly interested. Cage had known Satie's work for some time, but it had been Virgil Thompson who introduced him to Satie's Socrate, which caused his interest to soar. In preparation for the summer, Cage took the opportunity to get to know his work thoroughly; searched out his scores, which were difficult to find, in second hand music shops etc.

(Note on Satie: Virgil T. once told Cage his music followed French rhythm rather than German, i.e. structure taking place in space larger than a measure instead of heavily accented. When Cage was introduced to Socrate, "I was overwhelmed." He saw that Satie had clearly broken with Beethoven, which in turn had enabled Debussy to do so. Cage never so attracted to Debussy, though. What particularly interested him was the feeling that Satie composed according to a kind of rhythmic structure similar to his own, rather than traditional harmonic structure a la Beethoven. Some years later, when he was continuing his research on Satie in Paris, and found in Satie's notebooks a lot of numbers that resembled the sort of numerical patterns he used to get his own rhythmic structures, he was very excited. He asked Milhaud, who had known Satie, whether the numbers referred to a rhythmic structure. "Oh, no," said Milhaud. "They referred to shopping lists.")

At Black Mountain, Cage gave a series of twenty-five half-hour Satie concerts. When he told the authorities there what he planned to do, they said in that case he would have to give lectures explaining his purpose, because it was not at all clear why the presumed survey of modern music should be devoted wholly to Satie. Cage agreed, and gave short talks before each concert. The talks were well received, and it was agreed that the college would publish them at the end of the summer. In his last lecture, a longer one, "I was led to denounce Beethoven.* Beethoven had such an influence on Western music that there was no getting away from him, until Satie at least. Well, this was rather a shock. Most of the thinking at Black Mountain was Germanic, and several people present, including Paul Goodman, never forgave me for denouncing Beethoven. As a result, the talk was never published." The concerts were a great success, though; towards the end, the whole school was turning out for them. (Note: Cage comes to terms with Beethoven - see Silence, p. 31)

Previously, Albers had asked Cage to recommend someone among the NY painters to come and teach at Black Mtn -- wanted someone who would not teach like Albers. Cage immediately suggested deKooning, who was very poor and not well known at the time. DeKooning came that summer. Among other things,

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Sonatas and Interludes had first complete performance in New York in January, 1949, by Maro Ajamian. It took Cage three hours to prepare the piano, and he had persuaded the Carnegie Recital Hall managers to leave the screws in the piano overnight for the second day's performance. They called him at 5 p.m. on second day to say that someone had gotten into the room where the piano was, and evidently tried to practice; finding the piano cluttered with foreign objects, he had taken them out. Cage raced over, worked furiously to get them back in time for the performance, which he did. But the incident made him realize that he should put the screws into special envelopes, marked, and that he should take more careful measurements that would apply to any piano ("At this time I still hadn't come to the point of view of accepting the differences, and I wanted the prepared piano sounds to be identical each time they were played. My idea was to make people listen in a different way, as they do to unfamiliar sounds -- to get a new quality of listening").

About this time, Cowell's New Music Editions had decided to publish the Sonatas and Interludes, along with a kit containing the necessary screws, bolts, nuts, and bits of weather stripping. Cage went around to a big hardware store in NY, where he found that a lot of the screws he had used were "classical" and out of ~~print~~ production. Consequently, he had to go to dozens of hardware stores looking for second hand screws. He finally found enough for 12 kits, all of which were sold. The original set is now at Peters, the publisher's.

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he did the sets for Satie's play "La Piege de Medusa" which was translated by M.C.Richards (as "The Ruse of Medusa") and performed, with Merce Cunningham dancing in the role of the ~~fmnx~~ monkey.

Paris Again - 1949

Cage had finished the Sonatas and Interludes (dedicated to Maro Ajamian, an Armenian pianist whom Cage had met when she and her sister gave a concert of Hovanness music; she asked Cage for some music, he gave her first four S&I's in 1946). Had performed them on tour throughout the country.

On the money from this tour, plus an $1000 award from the National Acad of Arts and Letters "for having extended the boundaries of musical life" through invention of the prepared piano," he and Merce decided to go to Europe. Contact with Europeans had been severed by the war, and Cage wanted to renew it. He had, from Virgil Thompson, the names of ~~thx~~ two young composers who were apparently the most interesting: Serge Nig and Pierre Boulez. "My interest in going was to make contact with European musicians, see what was going on there, and show them my own work -- a kind of exchange.

Cage applied again for a Guggenheim Fellowship (had done so religiously ever since leaving the West Coast), but having been refused so many times he expected nothing. In Paris, he found a letter awaiting him at the American Express saying he had been awarded a Guggenheim -- "It was apparently the fashion then for composers receiving the Arts and Letters grant to receive the Guggenheim also." He could use it any time he wanted. As he already had money enough for the trip, he decided to wait and use it later.

In Paris, he continued his Satie research (the Black Mtn festival had been such a success that he thought he might put one on in NY, but never did), as well as meeting the young composers and carrying on his own musical composition/ and giving performances with Merce. He also wrote three articles for the Tribune, at Thompson's suggestion, on European music, and some for Musical America. Rather enjoyed writing.

Met Polish composer Andre Panufnik, who told him you could compose any way you liked in Communist countries, so long as you could explain it in terms acceptable to the authorities. "Later he left and went to England, because he got so tired of explaining."

Boulez

Cage was not impressed by Nig, but very much so by Boulez, whose music (2nd piano sonata) made him "tremble in the face of ~~his~~ great complexity" -- "there was no question of its importance." Cage showed Boulez his Sonatas & Interludes, some other works, plus an article he had written for The Tiger's Eye called "Forerunners of Modern Music." Was worried what Boulez would think, and very relieved when he liked it. Boulez introduced Cage to Suzanne Tezenas, a leading patroness of modern music. He met Henri Michaux, Pierre ~~Scaffer~~ Schaffer and other luminaries at her salon, where his S&I's were performed before a distinguished audience with Boulez giving a lecture on his music. "Boulez didn't particularly like the Sonatas and Interludes because of the repetitions in them. Later, I played them at the Conservatoire for a class of ~~Olivier Messiaen~~, who liked the repetitions. Messiaen said that Boulez was 'still in the tunnel.'"

Boulez also introduced Cage to the theater of Antonin Artaud("The Theater

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and Its Double"), one of his great interests. Boulez' other great interests were Mallarme, Debussy, and Stravinsky. "Mine was not Debussy and certainly not Stravinsky, and by that time not even so much Schoenberg as Satie and Webern." (Thus considerable ground for disagreement between them even then; Cage was shocked later, as was everyone else, when Boulez wrote an article soon after Schoenberg's death called "Schoenberg Is Dead" in which he meant really dead).

Note on Webern: Cage had come to Webern before this, although it would seem that Boulez strengthened his influence on Cage. "Webern was enormously important. He wanted to destroy the past and go on to something new, like Satie, something entirely free of the European tradition. He really made the new music possible. The important thing about Webern is that he made it apparent that sound doesn't have just pitch, but all the other characteristics that I talk about. He applied the 12-tone row to all these other characteristics of sound. He is a focal point for almost everything that's going on now." (see Cage's "Forerunners of Modern Music"). "Webern's compositions represent the twelve-note technique in its purest and most concentrated form." (GROVE'S DICTIONARY)
In Paris, Cage finished writing the first movement of his String Quartet, using a static gamut of sounds, fixed with regard to coloration. "I was still involved with expressivity then, with the necessity of saying something. I had in mind to make the piece in four movements expressing the seasons, according to the Indian idea that summer symbolizes preservation, fall - destruction, winter - quiescence, and spring - creation. This is a recurrent idea with me, and it seems so basic that it's on the order of a principle." (Note: Cage says he's planning to use it again in series of prose pieces of which the one on Rauschenberg is the first; R. is winter, David Tudor is spring, Jasper Johns is summer, and Merce is fall).

Performances in Paris
Cage and Merce performed on French radio, in Vieux Colombier Theater, with Merce's dances created for himself and Tanaquil Leclerc and Betty Nichols, two dancers from Ballet Society (which later became City Center) then in Paris: Amores, Suite for Toy Piano, Valentine Out of Season. Vieux Colombier performance was in group program. Later, they put on their own program at the atelier of the painter Jean Helion (who married Peggy Guggenheim and Laurance Vail's daughter Pegeen). Alice B. Toklas came, made comment (ask Merce).

Also in Paris, Cage met Pierre Schaeffer, who invented magnetic tape and music concrete. An engineer, not a musician by training, he told Cage they were "made for each other," got Cage to record sounds of prepared piano, wanted them to work together. Cage not interested.

Continuing his research on Satie, he found piece Cinq Grimaces, which seemed to have the same rhythmic structure that Cage had been using. "I'm sure he found it - at least I'm as sure as I need to be. Satie once said, 'I'm not a composer, I'm a phonometricist.' That is, one who measures sounds. Of course, he went on then to describe how to tell an F sharp from an average sized tenor. My view is that while a remark like that may be very funny, it is also serious. And what's serious in that is the idea of measuring. Satie carried it to absurdity, but the absurdity comes from a serious point." Cage insists that Satie was always basically serious. He also found the Vexations, and came back with a desire to perform it. His view here: "Satie may not have been serious (about playing it 840 times), but we were."

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More Boulez

While in Paris, Cage was instrumental in getting Boulez's music published (it hadn't been previously). When two Paris publishers heard that Cage was taking it to NY to be published, they began vying for it, and Boulez sighed contracts with both Heughel and Amphion. In gratitude, Boulez gave Cage the original ms of his Second Piano Concerto. The celebration lasted all day and night, and Boulez came to see Cage and Merce off on the train to Le Havre the next morning.

New York - Beginnings of Chance Operations

Cage and Boulez corresponded regularly, telling each other their new ideas. Cage decided that one way or another he would bring Boulez to America, and get his Second Piano Concerto performed. He had met William ~~Marcellos~~ Masselos, considered one of the best pianists of the day; Cage proposed to the League of Composers that ~~Marcellos~~ Masselos play the Boulez, and they agreed.

Meanwhile, Cage continued work on the String Quartet, which was finished in the spring of 1950. Then he began the Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra, and also wrote music for Merce's choreography to Sixteen Dances and a Chorus of Three, in which Merce was also using the Nine Permanent Emotions and making a piece to last the whole evening. For this latter, Cage was using his system of gamuts (aggregates) with static (unchanging) orchestration. He had established for this purpose a group of charts, on which single tones, intervals, and aggregates were plotted. "I had been aware for many years of those magic squares (Benjamin Franklin made the biggest, I think) in which, however you add up the numbers in a column, you get the same number. Somehow, I reached the conclusion that I could compose according to moves on the chart, instead of according to my own taste."

In The Forerunners of Modern Music (by which title Cage meant that modern music hadn't happened yet), he had said that structure was mind-controlled, form was heart-controlled, while method could be either planned or improvised -- i.e., a piece for radios could give method up to accident/. Thus the new development he was now reaching had been foreshadowed.

In the Concerto for Prepared Piano, the situation was that of the soloist versus the group. "I let the pianist express the opinion that music should be improvised or felt, while the orchestra expressed only the chart, with no personal taste involved. In the second movement, though, I made large concentric moves on the chart for both pianist and orchestra, with the idea of the pianist beginning to give up the idea of personal taste. The third movement had only one set of moves on the chart for both, and a lot of silences./" Thus the piece itself was a kind of dramatization of Cage's own development. He felt then that it was all right to do this so long as the piece was not being written for someone else, but the question arose, would it work in the piece he was writing for Merce? Cage felt if he could write the piece for Merce entirely according to moves on the chart, and if this was satisfactory to both himself and Merce, then it would work for anything. It was satisfactory to Merce. This opened the door to chance operations... "Until then, my music had been based on the traditional idea that you had to say something. The charts gave me my first indication of the possibility of not saying anything."

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Christian Wolff

On the floor below Merce's studio lived a pianist named Grete Sultan. She had students. One of them, Christian Wolff, wanted to study composition, and she sent him to Cage. So, "one day at the river, there was a knock at the door, and Christian came in. I saw immediately that he was very gifted, and I offered to teach him for nothing -- it was the first opportunity I had had to repay Schoenberg's gesture." Wolff was still in high school then.

"I assumed he would be interested in counterpoint, as I had been. On the contrary, he wasn't at all. I decided it would be foolish to try to teach it to him. Instead, I gave him the exercise of making his own copy of the Webern Symphony Opus 21, and analyzing it. The other exercise I gave him was to take three notes and write a composition using only those three, using my rhythmic structure. He produced a fascinating piece, with enormous variety, nine to twelve minutes in length, with several movements, and no repetitions. It was called Duo for Violins.

Morton Feldman

At about the same time, Cage went to a Philharmonic concert with Virgil Thomson. Mitroupolis was conducting Webern's Opus 21 Symphony, and Thomson, as was his custom with music for which he had no direct feeling, had asked Cage to come along. Cage was so impressed by the performance that he left the hall immediately following it, so as not to hear the Rachmaninoff that followed and thus vitiate the impression of the Webern. In the lobby going out he ran into Morton Feldman, who was leaving at the same time for the same reason. They introduced themselves, "and that began our immediate friendship." Cage showed Feldman the music of Wolff and Boulez. Feldman said it was a mistake to give the Boulez to Marcellos to perform -- the only person to play it was David Tudor. Feldman introduced Cage to Tudor soon afterwards.

Cage, Feldman, Wolff and Tudor saw a great deal of each other from then on. Met nearly every day (Wolff evenings only, as still in school), usually at Cage's place, talked endlessly about the new music. "Things were really popping." Feldman had studied with Wallingford Rieger and Stefan Volpe, Tudor with Volpe -- Cage met Volpe through them. They attended concerts of new music chez Volpe and at the YMHA. Tudor ~~had taught himself French~~ had discovered Boulez' music on his own, had taught himself French in order to read Artaud and Mallarme, as preparation for playing the Boulez Second Piano Sonata, which was at the time considered almost unplayable. When Cage learned of this, he spoke to ~~Marcellos~~ Masselos about it. ~~Marcellos~~ Masselos, who had done nothing about learning the Boulez, said gracefully that in that event Tudor should certainly be the one to play it. Tudor did so, in Sept or Oct of 1950. In preparation, he practiced on the piano in Cage's apartment. Piano was Maro Ajemian's, given in exchange for Cage's whole Satie collection.

Feldman wrote his first graph piece, one evening, in Cage's apartment.* The whole group was there. Feldman did not establish the notes to be played, merely divided the range for each performer into high, middle, and low, and allowed the performer to play whatever notes he liked. Written on graph paper. The idea was greeted with great enthusiasm by Cage et al (Previously, Feldman had written highly chromatic music). ((Feldman worked, and still works, in the family clothing business -- children's winter wear)).

* see Cage's account in program for Sogetsu concerts (Japan)

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Wolff used Cage's rhythmic structure to write a piece vertically, down the paper. It was played horizontally. Excellent means of getting away from habits of work, taste, etc. "Wolff was sceptical of continuity in music, and he brought us all to the realization that continuity was what we were really dealing with, and that it was time to change it. 'No matter what we do,' he said once, 'it always turns into melody.'" (Melody and continuity are synonymous; the musical line, one thing leading to another).

I Ching

Wolff was the son of Kurt Wolff, a distinguished German publisher and refugee from Hitler. Arriving in NY, he had founded Pantheon Press, the first to publish a book of illustrations by Paul Klee, etc. Since Christian was not paying for his lessons, he used to bring expensive books from his father's firm to Cage. "One day he brought me the I Ching, the Book of Changes, the most ancient book in China, which had just been translated into English from the German. The moment I opened the book and saw the chart of hexagrams, to be used for tossing coins or yarrow sticks to decifer oracles, I realized that there was an immediate connection with the charts I had been using on my Concerto for Prepared Piano. Oddly enough, I also remembered that I had seen the same hexagram years before, when Lou Harrison showed it to me in another book about the wisdom of the Orient. It immediately became apparent to me that I could derive a means of composing by using these chance operations. I then sketched out the whole proceedure for The Music of Changes, taking my title from the I Ching. I ran over with my plan to show it to Mortie Feldman, and he said "You've hit it!"

Cage on the group: "We gave each other permission for the very new music we were discovering. It could have been very difficult without this enthusiasm, this saying yes to each other. The criticism that was being made of us then, and is still being made, is that we had renounced all artistic responsibility, and this might have deterred us much more if we hadn't had the benefit of one another's enthusiasm, and of the ideas that kept flying back and forth between us."

Artists - The Club, etc.

Before the I Ching discovery, Robert Motherwell had asked Cage to be an editor of a new magazine called Possibilities. Harold Rosenberg, Mark Rothko, Motherwell and Cage met frequently at the Boza to work out the details. Only one issue was published, but this tended to cement Cage's connection with the avant garde art world -- he had always been interested in painting, though, and kept up with new work.

Motherwell had a kind of atelier-school, composed of other artists who liked working together, in his studio. He invited people in the evenings for lectures. Out of this practice emerged The Club, which started in his studio and later on moved down the street (8th Street) to a large loft rented for the purpose -- also overflowed to the Cedar. Cage gave his Lecture on Nothing at Motherwell's studio, following his practice in lectures of providing not information but an example of his way of working. (Was written in rhytmhic struc)

Cage knew deKooning well, Pollock slightly (Pollock used to complain that Cage didn't value his work enough).

Cage's Lecture on Something was given at The Club on 8th street. The Lecture on Nothing was not really about nothing, but about the tendency of all aspects of musical composition to tend toward nothing. The Lecture on Something was about Morton Feldman. Both were great events.

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* awarded First Prize for Music by the Woodstock Art Film Festival in 1951.

Tudor's role: "The performer's role is different from the composer's. David had to come to ~~xxrms~~ his own terms with the pieces, and his coming to terms opened up new possibilities to me, and vice versa."

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Works of Calder (pre-Music of Changes)
Cage was asked to write music for a film called The Works of Calder, produced by Burgess Meredith. Problem of measurement very much in his head. He went to Calder's studio with a tape machine to get the sounds of studio, for middle section of film. Afterwards, Calder gave him a mobile. "I hadn't been able to get on with any sculpture except Richard Lippold's, because its presence in the room was always terribly distracting for me. I had previously been critical of Calder's things because they didn't move through the full circle, and now I found I couldn't get on with this piece, either. I tried hanging it outdoors, from the roof, but found that this spoiled the view. So it ended up in a box under the bed." When Cage's debt to Feldman, with whom he regularly played blackjack and regularly lost, reached $100, he paid it off with the Calder.

Feldman was living by this time in the Boza Mansion, in room vacated by Sonia Sekula. Lippold there too. Also Ray Brown, who gave Cage a Giacometti drawing. Cage had bought art on time, and owned two Tobeys. People were now coming not only to hear the concerts Cage put on frequently, but to see the paintings. Guston, Kline, others.

Cage went regularly to The Club, once a week.

Music of Changes
Began writing it in the late spring of 1951. As each movement was finished, Cage gave it to David Tudor to perform. Tudor played the first movement at Black Mountain, summer of 1951, also at Univ. of Colorado. Everything in the composition was determined by chance operations, which were used to set the rhythmic structure, the notes, the loudness, the duration, the tempi, etc.

Problem of money arose at the start. Cage knew it would take about nine months to compose the work. He had no job. "My previous formula with regard to money had been to make it when I needed it, and not to bother about it when I didn't. Now I needed it." He spent two days looking for a job, had no luck. So he decided to go ahead anyhow, come what would. He wrote letters to a number of people, offering them shares in a company formed to produce the Music of Changes. Collected a little over $200 this way (has never been able to pay back investors because royalties total only a few dollars). With this, and with the money made on Works of Calder (~~and also deferred Guggenheim?~~), he went ahead with the composition. Ate cheaply, patronizing Jewish delicatessen on Houston Street who made filling dishes out of potatoes. Also made some money from a fashion magazine, which took pictures of its models in Boza -- many people knew about the place by then because of Cage's musical evenings, attended by members of The Club, etc., when his own music and that of Feldman, Wolff, Webern, was played. One fellow composer, Arthur Berger, who had been interested in the prepared piano, came down and went away saying that the music represented an "intellectual zero" -- an opinion shared by many other musicians.

For Music of Changes, Cage used a 12-tone proceedure, rhythmic structures, charts. Decided to give equal value to sound and silence. Thus using almost all his previous discoveries, but subjecting them all to the operation of chance. There were six coin tosses required for each aspect of each musical notation. The number of coin tosses was astronomical -- the piece takes 43 minutes to perform.

"One problem I foresaw: Through chance operations, a situation might arise that would prove to be impossible to perform. So I established

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* Boulez relegates chance to certain parts of structure, in which other parts are controlled not by chance. Chance operations thus, acc. to Cage, "playing a part in a universe that is larger than they."

"In making a piece of music, Boulez is obligated to make it. Whereas in my case, because of the meaning, I don't have to do anything. Everything he does is necessary, everything I do is unnecessary."

(see The New Spirit — introduction)

See p. 33

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that anything could be expressed by one of its parts, or by a fraction." As each part was written, Cage would go to the piano to see if it was possible, and if not, would apply the principle that a thing could be expressed by its segment." Cage, an indifferent pianist, was counting on Tudor's great virtuosity all through the composition of the piece.

Break with Boulez
Cage wrote to Boulez, describing his work on the Music of Changes. Boulez replied, saying that he, too, was using charts, but that he found the use of chance operations such as Cage used unacceptable. He said the charts provided enough of the unknown, and that Cage was going too far. "With that, our correspondence stopped."

Later, according to Cage, Boulez discovered a lost book by Mallarme, his idol, showing that M. had used chance methods. Boulez was forced to accept this in Mallarme, but he argued that Mallarme and he had found the right way of using chance, while Cage was using the wrong way. Boulez' term for his and Mallarme's method was aleatoric. Cage does not use this term, and it is in fact a reflection of the conflict between them. Thus incorrect to speak of Cage's music as aleatoric).*

Cage was shocked by the loss of a friendship over an intellectual matter -- typically French situation.

Cherry Lane Concerts - Winter 1952
Two concerts, presenting work of Feldman, Wolff, Earle Brown (whom Cage had met in Denver during a tour with Merce earlier that season; Brown and his wife, Carolyn, came East largely as result of meeting), and Cage's Music of Changes. Concerts well attended, theater packed both nights. "They were recognized as what they were -- the coming into being of a new type of music." (See favorable review by Virgil Thompson).

Imaginary Landscape No. 4 (for 12 radios)
After finishing the Music of Changes, Cage was on tour with Merce, via buses-trains etc. "I had had for a long time the idea of writing a piece for radios." The New Music Society was planning a large concert, had asked him what he had. Cage suggested radio piece; Peggy Glanville-Hicks, who picked program, delighted. (She was writing favorably about the new music then, esp. Cage's). The circumstances of the tour and the concert date meant that Cage would have to write the piece in transit, which he did. Difficulty of tossing coins in bus stations, etc., also complicated by painful bursitis that developed (doctor in Berkeley prescribed long X*Ray treatments, but the X-ray photos did the trick*; this was the onset of arthritis troubles that have given him much pain ever since). Despite difficulties, Cage finished a four-minute piece for 12 radios in Ithaca, during a stop at Cornell.

Rehearsals for performance were held at Boza, with 12 "Golden Throat" radios lent by manufacturer. Cage, who had never liked the sound of a radio (so that friends turned it off when he came in), delighted to find that now he did.

Concert was given at Macmillan Hall at Columbia Univ. It was a very long program, with work by Virgil T., Antheil's Ballet Mechanique, Wm Russell's March Suite. Cage had warned Peggy G*H that his radio piece might turn out to be rather quiet, and should not be last on program, but she had insisted on putting it there as piece de resistance. Thompson had written a piece for the Tribune shortly before, discussing

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* Cage's idea was that performers would be like "fishermen catching sounds."

** Cage had written some time before this, with Lois Long, a children's book called "The Mud Book" (on making mud pies). During his initiation over Thomson ms., he considered having himself identified on jacket as "John Cage, author of The Mud Book."

"...the first people to explore the medium seriously, and the first people to develop a technique, were the workers at Radiodiffusion Francaise in Paris who call themselves Le Groupe de Recherches de Musique Concrete." Pierre Schaeffer, founder. (from Roger Maren article in Reporter, 10/6/55)

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Cage's chance operations at length, relating them to the work of the action painters, and the huge audience was primed for a sensation a la Cage. The twelve radios were on stage throughout the program, and by midnight, when it came time for Cage's work, nobody had left the hall.

Cage had used the radio dials as fields of operation, to be manipulated according to the decisions of chance. Since the volume dial has to be turned about two thirds of the way on in order to get much sound, "I was prepared to get nothing mush of the time."* As it happened, he got nothing most of the time. There were two men on each radio, and almost no sound was heard throughout. Actually, says Cage, it was "very beautiful -- just a few wisps of sound came through." He says it turned out to be a delicate, evanescent, poetic piece. But the audience was phenomenally disappointed. "It certainly wasn't what Lou Harrison would call a rabble rouser."

Backstage, afterward, Thompson and Cowell looked very glum -- "they gave me no word of cheer or congratulation." Shortly afterward, "Virgil told me I had no right to perform a piece like that in public. So, we had difficulty after that."

Book on Thompson (see also Thomson index)
Back in 1949 or so, Thompson asked Cage to write book on his music. Cage agreed. Thompson often referred to as "American Satie," people didn't know what to make of his music -- thus doubly interesting job for Cage, who felt deeply indebted to Thompson. Cage's method was to go over every piece of music, talk about life etc. Wrote text of first chapter and showed to Thompson, who delighted. Trouble began with second chapter, at which Thompson became annoyed (Cage says because Maurice Grosser objected first). Project abandoned, and friendship suffered. Later, Thompson, who unable to find young composer to do it, offered job to Cage again. Cage agreed, on condition he show nothing until finished. Worked on it for nearly ten years. Job complicated by Thompson's going on composing -- "every time I caught up, he leaped ahead." Cage felt that art and life inextricably twined, so writing also about Cage's life. At some point, tho, he was informed that Kathleen Hoover was writing about the life, he only about the music. She had publisher, Yoseloff, vanity press. Last pages done by Cage in Stony Point, late 1957. Thompson delighted. But when Cage came to see him, it appeared that Kathleen Hoover was going to edit the ms, Cage would have to work with her. He found that impossible, said third party should be found to edit. Herbert Weinstock, at Knopf, was engaged. Cage had no money during this period, got another grant of $500 from Natl Acad through Thompson, also $200 from Musicians Emergency Fund for "people in dire necessity," which had to be repaid. Never received another cent for all work on book. Final version showed that Thompson had re-edited, putting in ideas that were his, not Cage's.** Whole thing rather bitter experience, which made sharp change in friendship -- no more showing each other their new work, exchanging ideas. "Nevertheless, our friendship is basically so strong that every so often one of us makes an effort to recapture it.")

Magnetic Tape
Developed as result of WWII, in Germany. Fidelity was brought to point where suitable for music. This technological advance made it possible for Pierre Schaeffer to establish his Studio d'Essai at the French Radio in Paris (RDF) for creation of music on tape, or what he called Music Concrete.**

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Also composed in 1952: (big year)

Water Music in 1952 - first perf. at New School in May. Was orig. called after the address where played, in this case "66 West 12th". But it uses a lot of water sounds (pouring from pots, whistles blown in water, etc) so came to be called Water Music. Same composing means as used in Music of Changes, but more theatrical -- pots and pans, score like a giant poster visible to audience; the idea of theater coming much more into Cage's head at time. Henry Cowell led discussion after performance. He said that formerly, composers had been concerned with glueing sounds together, but that Cage and his colleagues were "trying to get rid of the glue."

Music for Carillon - for Mary Caroline Richards (pun intended). Composed by taking scraps of paper, folding them, cutting holes with scissors, then using paper as a template, placing it on graph paper. Graph paper itself set up according to rhythmic structure arrived at by chance operations.

4'33" (Silent Piece) - birthday present for Black Mtn. student. Note that title can refer either to space or time (minutes or feet and inches) showing increasing preoccupation with space-time ideas. In the piece for 12 radios, Cage had the idea of making performers like "fishermen catching sounds." Here, he finally accorded full acceptance to his idea that there was no such thing as silence, that silence was merely "sounds not intended," and that it was possible to compose a piece entirely out of such sounds. He had the idea years before (see Vassar lecture), but hesitated to put it into practice. Bob R's White Paintings gave sufficient corroboration to make the idea seem OK. (The white paintings came first). The piece is in three movements; Tudor managed this by closing the cover to the keyboard at the beginning of each movement, opening it at the end. Basic idea is identical with white paintings.

Henry Cowell once suggested, when some musicians had made a silent record and put it in juke boxes so people could buy silence, that Cage sue them on grounds that he had copyright on silence; Cage demurred.

At first performance, in Woodstock, hall open to woods, it actually worked out that the first movement had sound of wind in trees, second had rain falling, third had people starting to talk in audience.

At another performance, Cage's mother explained to her neighbor that the silent piece, which came first on program, was "like a prayer." The second piece on program was Music of Changes, which lasted 40 minutes. The woman turned to Mrs Cage after Music of Changes and said "Good heavens, what a long prayer!"

Seven Haiku Pieces - written according to structure of haiku poems, which consist of 17 sylabbles arranged 5-7-5. For piano (unprepared). Each one dedicated to a friend or someone who had been helpful. First performed at Composers Showcase Concert in NYC in Nov. 17, 1957. Pieces so short that first three weren't noticed at all.

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Schaeffer was not a composer, but he saw tape as a means of making collages in music, i.e. making music in a new field where classical disciplines did not apply, and where training as a musician was unnecessary. Although Cage hadn't quite hit it off with him in Paris, he'd come back with ideas buzzing in his head -- for example, the idea that musical intervals could be measured as spaces, mathematically, which led him to use the space of 2½ cm for a quarter note in Music of Changes. Through developments in his work with Feldman etc he knew more than ever that the thing to do was to make music on magnetic tape -- all their experiments, including chance operations, had been leading in that direction.

As usual, the problem was money. Paul Williams, a student at Black Mtn., had inherited $1 million, and wanted to make it available to people working creatively in the arts. Previously, Cage had tried Rockefeller Foundation, also gone to Columbia and talked to Douglas Moore and Otto Luening, who said to use them as references. Rockefeller Found, response was that they were not involved with music, but if they ever became so, they would certainly not support work "on the fringes of the musical field," but at the center -- such as work of Luening and Ussachevsky! (Later, Luening and Uss. got Rock grant). Also tried Ford and Guggenheim, no soap. M.C. Richards, who now living with David Tudor, interceded with Paul Williams, who was willing. He gave $1000 a month, for period of 18-20 months -- at least $20,000 in all -- to Cage and Tudor and two engineers they had engaged to work with them, in a studio on 8th street.

The work was of three kinds: Work with engineers (Louis & Bebe Barron) in sound studio on 8th Street; prior work on composition itself, done on graph paper with penny-tossing for all details -- a four minute, fifteen second piece took nine months to make, was 196 ms pages long. Cage set up the compositional process, and David Tudor (and Earle Brown) did much of the actual composing -- the question of personal taste was altogether out now, so it didn't matter. There were 8 tracks of tape, and an enormously complicated set of possibilities. (See anecdote in Silence, p. 85)

Williams Mix - Black Mountain Summer 1952
Second work on magnetic tape (first had been Imaginary Landscape No. 5, composed for Jean Erdman who wanted jazz type piece; they took 43 jazz records and fragmented them, put on tape by chance methods).

Composed during summer of 1952 at Black Mountain, when Cage invited down by Lou Harrison, who in charge of music dept then, to teach composition. Cage so concerned with his own work that he decided to teach by the apprentice method, using students to toss coins etc. OK because nobody's personal taste involved. Not a single student accepted. So Cage didn't do any teaching, spent summer working on piece.

A brilliant summer -- see invu on Rauschenberg. Cage read complete translation of Huang Po Doctrine of Universal Mind, his favorite Zen text, aloud one evening. More and more convinced that Zen ideas very close to modern life, particularly current ideas of physics -- Coomeraswami's idea that "art imitates nature in her manner of operation."

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Cage also influenced at this time by Antonin Artaud's book "The Theater and its Double," which was being translated by M.C.Richards.

The "event" itself thus arose naturally as a result of many factors -- the Black Mtn environment, the ~~almost~~ artists all gathered together there, the close feeling that existed between them, the sympathy of ideas. Cage believes that he wrote out the score in a very short time, like an hour, on the day of the performance. David Tudor said it showed how easy it had become to do very complex things. Cage says the idea was "clearly derivatory from Mortie Feldman's concept of graph music, but it was not tied to a beat as Feldman's is." It took about 45 minutes to perform.

The real surprise came a week later, when Cage and Merce went into the oldest synagogue in the U.S., in Newport, R.I., and saw that the seats were placed in such a way that the congregation faced itself around a square, just as the audience at Black Mtn had done for the event.

~~First~~
Boulez Visit

That fall, Boulez came to NY with the Jean-Louis Barrault troupe, for which he was music director. Cage gave him his apartment, stayed in Cunningham studio. This was while they were still in correspondence, although their disagreements had become increasingly evident. At some point during Boulez' visit, Cage took him up to see the Paul Williams in Wellfleet, where, one evening, they had a long, extended argument that "made it clear we were going in different directions." (Cage says now he probably made "an American error" in assuming that the sharp intellectual difference meant a difference in the friendship).

The point of divergence was "my insistence on renouncing control." Boulez refused to go along with that (and it wasn't until he came upon Mallarme's posthumous work, Le Livre, that he would go along with chance in any form). Boulez eventually took up the concept of aleatoric music. Cage says that what Boulez does is to give over certain parts of the composition to chance, in a total situation that is largely characterized by control. Thus essentially different from Cage's.

"Failure" of Williams Mix

Composition of Williams Mix took 9 months. Terrific complexity of process, using 8 tracks of tape (city sounds, country sounds, etc). Cage was "overjoyed", while writing it, with the whole experience -- it seemed like a miraculous kind of control of time. Later, he began to realize that the control wasn't so precise at all. He found, for one thing, that he and Earle Brown disagreed over the length of an inch (story in Silence, p. 85). Later found that the weather served to change the length of the tapes. All attempts at precise synchronization of the 8 tracks of tape proved ~~impossible~~ futile, for various reasons beyond their control.

"Now, the general European attitude in this kind of situation -- the attitude I've often taken myself -- is that you'll do the best you can, and accept whatever imperfections are unavoidable. In this case, though, I began to move away from the whole idea of control, even by chance operations. It was a crossroads for me, and I took our failure to achieve synchronization (ie control over time) as an omen to go toward the unfixed, rather than to change my methods so as to make it fixed. Now of course it's possible to control things much more -- now you have four track machines, for example. ~~But~~

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The crossroads prompted ~~mezto~~ others to go toward complete control by other means, and it prompted still others (who are more numerous now I guess) to go toward both control and no-control."

Theater de Lys - Dec.1953-Jan.1954
One week engagement of Cunningham company, for which Cage managed all details, and had to deal for the first time with unions. This was their annual presentation of new work, which they put on each year in various places -- Grand Street Theater, Hunter, YMHA -- but had been able to make them self-sustaining in past because no unions. ~~Nax~~ This time, although the house was filled every night, there was a loss which the Williams made up.

Williams continued support to the tape project after Williams Mix finished, for nine months more (18 months in all). Project now included Earle Brown, who had come East from Denver (Carolyn joined Merce company). Project also made Suite by Chance by Christian Wolff, ~~xxx~~ Intersection by Feldman, Octet by Earle Brown.

Cage had lectured at the Univ of Illinois in 1953, with great success. Invited back in 1954, he presented a survey of magnetic tape music to date, which included Williams Mix, Octet, Imaginary Landscape No. 5, Suite by Chance. It was received very badly. The audience, expecting Cage to be funny as before, found him deadpan -- as Cage explains it, "I was overcome by the opportunity to present to such a huge audience a ~~xxx~~ cross section of our work, and I didn't want to present my own point of view. I simply gave information, in introducing the works. They didn't very much like it." Cage was accused this time of having no sense of humor. But the performance ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ influenced a group of musicians in San Francisco to begin composing on tape -- see Silence, p. 74.

Williams Mix was not performed in New York until the Town Hall concert in 1958. Cage was invited to submit a work to a tape concert being put on at ModMuseum in 1953; he submitted Wms Mix, but was told by the organizer, Oliver Daniels, that it resembled "a contest in farting." Cage so infuriated by this that he resigned from ACA (Daniels an official of ACA) forthwith (he is now with ASCAP). ~~The Mix~~ The Wms Mix was performed in 1954 at a festival in Donaueschingen, Germany, and in 1955 in San Francisco.

Move to Stony Point
Cage was devoted to his apartment on Monroe, but the bldg was coming down. He scouted the Battery, even looked on the Jersey side of the Hudson overlooking NY. But Paul Williams wanted to establish a community in which he would build the kind of houses he wanted (he was not a licensed architect) -- the Williams, says Cage, were "community-given" -- and the idea arose that they would establish Cage's long dreamed of center for experimental music, with a tape laboratory and a theater for Merce and company. The theater-lab part never materialized, but Cage, David Tudor and MC Richards moved out to Stony Point in the summer of 1954. (Neighbors now include David + Laura Lamont Davenport, violinist with Pro Musica Antiqua)

All lived at first in a big farmhouse. Cage had an attic room, full of wasps, which he learned to live with (Suzuki's lectures, in a sense, could be boiled down to "live and let live").
Move brought many changes - much less meeting new people, more seeing same people (Merce, Bob, Jasper, David). "What I miss are frequent opportunities for conversation." Before this, Cage had break with Feldman, which repaired by then. C.Wolff had gone to Harvard.

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* Music for Piano(Compositional Method)
Marked imperfections on a sheet of paper, tossing coins to determine which ones and how many to use. Drew staves on tracing paper (tossing coins to see which was base, which treble) and placed over first paper. Transcribed marks -- those that fell within staff were made natural, sharp or flat according to more coin tosses, those outside staff were to represrnt noises made on body of piano. Further coin tosses to determine dynamics, duration, etc.
(See also I:6 for origin of method)

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During this same summer (1954) Cage made contact with mushrooms. With David Tudor and MC Richards and David and Karen Weinrib, he was living in the big house and taking all meals together. Only chance for privacy was work in attic and walks in woods. On walks, he noticed the brightly colored mushrooms, remembered his experience years ago in California, and set about to learn about them (see later).

Time-Length Pieces
Started in New York, finished out at Stony Point. Describes how written in lecture 45 For a Speaker, which is one of the pieces. Using chance operations, rhythmic structure still -- but getting further and further away from personal choice. Second set of chance operations to see which imperfections in paper will be sounds, which silences, as further safeguard against getting self into it.

For the first time, he was making a composition that had parts which were not fixed with relation to one another -- has been doing this ever since. The rhythmic structure was too enormous to be finished, so he accepted fact of not finishing it. Major breakthrough with regard to structure in time -- parts not related in time, and four of five have no beginning-middle-end: The whole group includes five pieces (two for piano, one for string player, one for percussion player, and the lecture for speaker); they can all go together; the longest piece sets the time length, and the others can enter in at any point; to go together like parts of a mobile. Cage composing now with stopwatch instead of metronome.

Also at this time, Cage began leaving tempo and dynamics up to the performer (in Music for Piano, 4-19)* -- further step toward indeterminacy. All this was made possible by association with Tudor. Since Music of Changes, in which he still used to go to piano himself from time to time to hear what he'd written, Cage has differed from "normal" composers in that he doesn't hear what he's done until someone performs it first time (Williams Mix first piece of this kind -- Sonatas and Interludes he heard as he composed). Thus, he is extremely curious to hear new work.

A further change was having piano preparations fluid during performance -- instead of preparing mutes beforehand, performer takes them out and puts them in, etc. while playing; performer also can choose which mute (from assigned category) to use.

European Tour - 1954 (Donaueschingen, Cologne, Paris, Brussels, Stockholm, Zurich, Milan, London)
Invited to present music at Donaueschingingen in October, arranged tour to make expenses. Also was asked to speak at Composers' Concourse in London, which decided Cage to write "45' For a Speaker" as time-length piece, to be delivered while Tudor played piano. Planned to write it on boat, but collision with French ship off Long Island changed plans; they flew over via KLM, to Amsterdam. Got to Donau. a week early, were given small room for practice, just big enough for two pianos. Found they couldn't hear a thing. "I put on my thinking cap, and saw that while in a harmonious composition it might be advantageous to have the instruments close together, in this kind of a composition it was a drawback -- confusing. So I decided that during performance the pianos should be as far apart on stage as possible." (principle not generally applicable, he has found -- occasions when it advantageous to be close together).

At dress rehearsal, the man in charge of festival, Heinrich Strobel, was simply furious. He said this music simply could not be presented

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* Previous to this, Stockhausen's method had been total organization of all elements. Klavierstucke XI represanted a sharp break, in its use of chance elements and indeterminacy. Notation is in small groups, all on one big sheet. Performer plays any group that strikes his eye, then goes to any other, but must play each one according to instructions printed at the end of the group he has just played (dynamics etc). When he finds he is playing any one group for the third time, he stops.

Note: Stockhausen also seems influenced by Cage in whole question of electronics. He started with idea that only laboratory-made sounds were valid -- sine waves and white noise. Moved on to become involved with idea of using live performers with electronic tape, in Kontakte. Now, says Cage, he has seen the light and is planning tp make a piece with contact microphones attached to instruments...

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to the public. Very angry 15 minutes, with Strobel demanding cuts and deletions ("We just got along miserably"). Cage finally suggested that they stop talking for half an hour and think. They did so. Afterwards, arrived at solution: To play the program just as Strobel wanted, with cuts, then inform audience that this had been done, and say that anyone who wanted could return after intermission and hear program uncut. Large part of audience did remain, including a Japanese musicologist, Yoshida, who was so interested he changed all his plans so as to follow Cage and Tudor around during their tour (see catalog for Japanese tour).

The Donau. audience was noisy and unfriendly. Prince Furstenberg, who had put up money for festival, was among the noisiest. During performance, a lady tapped him on shoulder and said if he didn't like the music he should go home. "Madam," he said, "Je suis chez moi," and went right on making noise.

Cage was surprised and a little hurt that neither Boulez nor Karlheinz Stockhausen came to the concert, despite the tape music being played, the eight tape machines, all preparations etc. Afterwards, they went on to Cologne for concert there, and met Stockhausen. Stockhausen had emerged since Cage's last European visit in 1949 - had come to Paris , met Boulez, worked with Pierre Schaeffer, returned to Cologne and started producing electronic music (purely electronic, from sine waves to white noise). Cage had a number of evenings with him in Cologne, during which they exchanged information and engaged in controversy. Cage kept getting outside the musical field, regaling him with Zen stories etc., but Stockhausen rather resented this -- Cage agrees that musicians are more locked up in music than other artists are in their art. Cage heard Stockhausen's work on tape there, and formed opinion, which he still has, that he could very easily surprise by doing something totally unforseen; less predictable than Boulez (who in 1949 outlined to Cage his whole life's work). After this visit, Stockhausen wrote his Klavierstuck XI, a famous piece that was indeterminate with regard to performance, which Cage criticizes mercilessly in Silence, p. 35. *

In Paris, Cage and Tudor performed in the Salle Gaveau. Olivier Messaien was there, and very enthusiastic, but not Boulez. Audience extremely noise; Messaien kept shouting for quiet. They played 34'46.776", which they had taken to calling the "whistle piece" because they used in it a huge battery of whistles (easy to get at when fiddling around with piano preparations). The reviews there, and throughout Europe, were generally bad -- idea that they were two clowns, not serious. Most friendly audiences were in Switzerland and Sweden -- also the quietest. Cage believes that as you go north, or up in altitude, you get more seriousness; in Italy, Yugoslavia, and points south, the audiences get noisier and noisier.

All this time, Cage was writing the lecture for London. After being held up by lack of work permits (had to stay on boat from Holland until just before performance), they gave first concert at Composers Concourse -- with Cage delivering lecture and Tudor playing piano piece at same time. "The people were absolutely horrified." Cage found the English incredibly rude, at first -- "they bark at strangers" -- but in spite of hostile reception, they were invited back to perform in the Diaghilev Exhibition in London in December, and found everyone exceptionally cordial.

DeAntonio

Back home in late December, they gave a concert at Carl Fisher Hall

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* Cage wrote Speech for Orient Tour - piece for 5 radios and a person reading the newspaper. Never performed.

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presenting (first time in US) music of Stockhausen, plus the whistle piece. (Had also presented Boulez first time in US).

About this time Cage met Emile DeAntonio and wife Lois Long in Stony Point, through Karen Weinrib. De then heading Rockland Foundation. He persuaded Cage that his music should be given locally in community, so concert was arranged by Foundation at Clarkstown HS in New City. This was intended to be the first engagement of a tour with Merce C. that would go to the Orient. Cage had spent most of the year (1955) xxx getting engagements in India, Ceylon, Bangkok, Indonesia etc, but at the last minute ANTA, which had promised to pay travel expenses, reneged (Actually, ANTA would have sent Cage and Tudor on tour, at urging of Virgil Thomson, but balked at Cunningham; now the situation would be reversed, Cage believes -- critical feeling against Cage has intensified greatly in last year). Tour went to West Coast - first extensive tour with large company. It died there.

Foundation Concert was in Oct. 1955. Night of torrential rains, which washed out roads everywhere. Police warned people not to leave homes. Ten minutes before performance time, only a dozen people had arrived. Cage and De considered cancellation. Half an hour later the hall was full -- mostly people from county, but also a big group from NY, painters, The Club etc. During concert, many people got up to leave, as usual, but found it was raining harder than ever so came back; "it was even worse outside."

Cage kept on writing piano music through 1955 and much of 1956, Gave concert in May 1956 at Fisher Hall presenting new pieces - four groups, played by four pianos. Also very close association with De. "Many things came about through that meeting, because of his energy and liveliness."

Mushrooms etc.
Skunk cabbage poisoning in spring of 1955 (see Silence, p.).

Getting into the woods, for Cage, was "a complete change of experience, like walking from one color into another. I realized immediately that I had had a profound need for this kind of thing. I had ~~always~~ lived in cities mostly, and hated country weekends -- there were always biting insects (unlike city bugs that are interested in getting food, not in biting) and other discomforts. But now I realized that I was starved for the country. Suzuki had said once that he couldn't conceive of anyone's converting to a Zen life in the city -- I had rejected that idea, but now I began to see the truth of it. The experience of the country was mixed with terror, too. I was frightened to death of snakes. As a result I was always looking out and watching, and this tended to make everything more intense. Sometimes I'd spend whole days in the woods... Noticed the mushrooms by their bright colors, and started in right away to learn about them.

The mushroom mystique -- all the things that are interesting about mushrooms. Their colors are attractive, their shapes are endless; varieties almost infinite ("Last summer I saw the birds-nest variety for the first time -- little clusters of cup-shaped mushrooms with tiny eggs inside the cups"); one's whole visual experience enriched; fact that they are edible and delicious; fact that some will kill you, which turns it into a sport (like lion hunting); the time element -- their life is short, they putrefy quickly, so it takes real luck to come upon them at the right moment; each attracts its own variety of insect; the possibility of finding new species ("It's very hard to

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* Jack Lenor Larsen

Summer of 1956, ~~xxxx~~ need to make some money. Karen Kearns, the potter (formerly Karen Weinrib), knew Larsen through her craft work. Larsen was looking for someone to design ads, etc. She suggested Cage. At first, he did odd jobs, but then settled into a regular monthly salary. He sketched ads, carried them through to print stage, did Christmas cards, etc. Took up an enormous amount of time, and lasted about 9 months. Broke up when Larsen went off on a trip to Europe, started sending back instructions to his employees on magnetic tape. "The further away he got, the more dictatorial he became." Cage got mad and quit.

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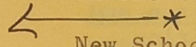
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describe the pleasure of a day spent like that, in the woods, divorced from every other concern, finding mushrooms and then bringing them home and cooking and eating them"); the idea of decay and destruction as their function (see Buddha story in Silence); R. Gordon Wasson's theory that all religions started as mushroom cults; Cage's own observation that "mushroom" and "music" adjoin in dictionary...

Cage was once poisoned severely by eating uncooked mushrooms at the Lippold's place in Vermont, will never eat them raw again.

Cage will not take hallucinatory mushrooms, because "there is something in my character that just won't take dope. I used to drink a good deal, and still would if it weren't bad for me, so there's no logical reason for my attitude in this. I just want to keep things as they are, and if possible clear up what I was born with, rather than change things and then try to clear up what's been changed. (Apropos psychoanalysis: "I think Zen goes further than analysis.") "What I'm interested in is clearing my head up, which is what psychoanalysis is concerned with too. But I think Zen goes further than analysis."

"I was aware that if I approached mushrooms in the spirit of chance operations, I would die shortly. So I decided that I would not approach them in this way, which made my interest in them all the more deeply rooted. It's sort of like that thing in government, what's it called - checks and balances?"



New School for Social Research - 1956-1960

Henry Cowell had been head of music dept here for many years, had been in habit of having Cage take his classes when he was away. It was Cage's own idea that he join the faculty (to make money), and he did so in 1956. Taught once a week, Experimental Music, to class that ranged from three to about eight or nine students -- Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Jackson MacLow (poet - "The Marrying Maiden") were non-musicians; also a film maker, others (but not Dine, Oldenburg, etc).

"My practice in teaching was to introduce them to the point where I was, in composition, following a general musical survey, and then find out where they were, and do what I could to stimulate them to experimental action." Classes consisted mainly of performing student compositions.

Out of these classes came one aspect of the Happenings (the other aspect came out of action painting). Cage considers the Happenings extremely important. "The business of being a music lover, and having it come through the ears with your eyes shut, doesn't interest me any more. I've said that we are going towards theater, because that is closer, it seems to me, to the quality of everyday life. Some of the senses don't bear up under performance conditions -- such as smelling and tasting. But seeing and hearing do. I try to confuse any demarcation between art and everyday life... Now, the trouble with most theater as we know it is that it makes all the elements that appeal to the various senses subservient to the written text. Theater music is therefore usually incidental music. What we want is a kind of theater where all events are equally important, and nothing is subservient/ This is the way in which Merce and I are working in dance -- letting the music and dance live their own lives within the same structure, not making dance dependent on music or vice versa. So, then, I was encouraging these possibilities, and in various ways the students did what they did. The great advantage, for painters, in having some musical ability is being able to perform in time, to take up time. Painters as a rule, working purely in space, don't have much notion as to how to do that. The first Happening by a painter, I think it was Red Grooms, was very, very

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Stable Gallery Show

Shortly before Town Hall concert, Bob, Jap and Dee persuaded Eleanor Ward to have an exhibition of Cage's manuscripts. Johns made selections of those he considered the most interesting visually -- included original pages from Concert for Piano and Orchestra, Water Music. Many of these were sold, requiring Cage to make new drafts after his return from Europe in 1959 -- this in turn helped to persuade him that he needed a publisher.

Note; As an adjunct of his lifelong interest in and practice of typographical work, Cage once made a series of miniature scores for Christmas presents -- on expensive Japanese paper, using different colors for differt tones. The silences were done in gold.

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short. The Happenings are free of a literary text, and that makes them contemporary, and therefore interesting (see note opposite p. 42)

1957

In winter, wrote Winter Music. Single sounds and aggregates. Method: imperfections in paper. According to chance method, any sound could be from one to ten sounds, thus [redacted] moving from chance to indeterminacy. Piece had long silences, up to two minutes. "This caused a great deal of trouble for the audience. Nowadays you can have quite long silences, but at that time it made people awfully restless."

Also began writing Concert for Piano and Orchestra, which not finished until 1958. This was a long, novel-like composition. Cage was poor as usual, mentioned fact to his close friend Elaine de Kooning, who promptly sent him check for $100. He dedicated work to her. [redacted]

Concert was important break with previous methods. Before, Cage had been inclined to narrow the range of focus and then elaborate the details. In this piece he let a great many different things come into the composing. It was a revolt against the single means of composing -- "the only thing I was being consistent to was that I did not need to be consistent". (Says the urge to inconsistency came largely from observation of nature, mushrooms). Method thus became one of motion from one compositional means to another -- 84 in all. Cage very excited about the variety, and in very lively frame of mind throughout.

1958 - TOWN HALL CONCERT

In the midst of this composition, Bob R., Jap, and DeAntonio called to say they wanted to put on a retrospective concert of his work, would foot bill for same and handle all details. Cage pleased but hesitant -- [redacted] didn't want to have to hurry Concert. Also, "I looked back on all my preceding work as not interesting to hear. What interests me is what hasn't been done yet, you see. I didn't think the program would turn out to be very interesting." (He changed this attitude as result of concert). David Tudor undertook to select the program, Bob and Jap handled all details, all Cage had to do was finish Concert. Cage decided he would interview all the musicians personally, see their possibilities, write music accordingly.

He finished piece in good time, with 13 individual parts for musicians plus part for conductor, who was Merce. Also invented new way of conducting, [redacted] which he still uses today -- since music being composed with stopwatches, conductor functions like a clock, arms moving through circle; but an irregular clock, that can speed up or slow down at will- musicians respond thus to tempo changes. (Musicians in Cage concerts are on the honor system, and they don't always play fair -- usually someone who takes the freedom Cage offers for license, go hog wild, like the man in the Town Hall concert who interpolated a part of Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps. Cage feels they do it sometimes as a means of 'showing up' the composer, but end up making fools of themselves. "You can never tell in rehearsal who's going to act like an idiot.")

Singer originally signed for concert was hopeless. Cage heard Arleen Carmen, at sugg. of Tudor, liked her immensely. Was terrified to fire first one (Arleen said, "Just tell her you've found a bird"), so wrote out speech and read it to her over telephone. Soon after, wrote

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"Solo for Voice One" for Aileen, which she sang at Village Vanguard ten days after Town Hall concert.

"As a result of the concert, I am no longer embarrassed about my past work. I find it all interesting, and I feel it should be made available to anyone who wants it."

Darmstadt

Cage and Cunningham at Connecticut College that summer (1958), where Cunningham performed his choreography to Concert, piece called Antic Meet. While there, Cage received letter from Darmstadt, saying that Boulez had cancelled out & in engagement there, so would Cage take his place -- three lectures plus teach a class? Cage said yes. He composed the lectures while at Conn College: (See Composition as Process). First lecture written in same time span as Music of Changes -- chance op. determined lengths of paragraphs -- and was designed to be spoken while Tudor played Music of Changes simultaneously (holes in lecture where music would come through - template idea on transparent plastic). At end of lecture, he asked the question whether one could compose music without writing it down, and answered yes. Since then, La Monte Young, Brecht, and Cage himself have written scores with no musical notation. For lecture no. 3, used Rutgers talk -- all questions.

(Darmstadt lectures and class combined with tour. Merce flew over).

Darmstadt class well attended. Cage and Tudor met a lot of people, and introduced a lot of new ideas, such as transparancies -- sheets of clear plastic to be superimposed over paper, a further step toward indeterminacy. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, a musicologist, served as interpreter in class, and became an ardent devotee of Cage's music and ideals; he later wrote many articles that helped to make Cage's position better known in Europe. Cage's method of notation became known there as "graphism," and was immediately taken up with enthusiasm by many European composers, who began using sketches. Whereas in 1954 Cage and Tudor had been looked upon as clowns, this time they were taken far more seriously; they sparked many new developments, and set off a wave of influence.

(Note: Cage learned about this time from Herman Scherchen, in Switz., that Shoenberg had said Cage was his most brilliant pupil. Acc. to Scherchen, Schoenberg said that Cage was not a composer, but "an inventor of genius." As an inventor's son, Cage took this very happily -- as a kind of vindication. Schoenberg had never led him to believe anything of the kind).

Cage went out daily after mushrooms to supplement the Darmstadt food, which was atrocious. A woman, seeing him come back with an armload, said, "After all, nature is better than art." (Used in Rauschenberg essay, which, incidentally, was composed in same way as Fontana Mix.)

Cologne

Cage and Tudor on TV. Cage proposed that he compose a piece while being interviewed, and that Tudor analyze and perform it -- all within the fifteen minutes of program. This was done a tour de force. Cage wrote composition on coffee table, and the microphone picked up the sounds of the pen, ruler, paper etc. Afterwards, Stockhausen and others all commented on how interesting those sounds had been. Cage thinks this may have planted idea of contact mikes in his head.

Concert for Piano and Orchestra had European premiere in Cologne. Cage worked with musicians individually, as he had in N.Y., and rehearsed them individually. This worked out pretty well. The musicians balked

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* Each performer makes the piece by superimposing transparencies, on which intersecting lines refer to various sound-producing means. This leads to a walk from one place to another. Performer investigates area and uses it accordingly.

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at recording the performance later, though -- didn't at all like the idea of having such freedom. The German musicians union now has a ruling that if the musicians are given any freedom at all, they must be paid double.

In Cologne, Cage met a Korean music student named Nam June Paik, who took to following him around and asking questions. One question was whether Cage intended to be funny in the things he did. Cage's answer: No, he did not set out deliberately to be funny, but when funny things happened he could accept them without difficulty. An example is the whistle piece -- the use of whistles had been intended as a practical necessity, something to make a sound with while hands occupied elsewhere; in performance, the whistles turned out to be hilarious, and this was fine with Cage.

On to Duesseldorf and Stockholm. In Duesseldorf, Cage and Tudor were invited to give concert in Gallery 22. Cage got idea of making a theater piece to go with that particular space. Called it Music Walk. Wrote it in Stockholm, using transparencies(get details)*

Indeterminacy (180 stories)
Lecture for delivery at Brussels Fair, begun in Stockholm hotel room in Sept 1958, a week before delivery. (For circumstances, see Silence, p. 260). Was writing stories up to last minute -- 30 in all for that lecture. The full title (Indeterminacy - New Aspects of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music) referred to new development made possible by use of transparencies; Cage unable to foresee what would take place when performer used these materials to make the piece/. Implicit in this attitude is the Buddhist belief that there is no single center but a multiplicity of centers, and that they are all related, so that no matter what happens there will be relevance. Permitting all these new freedoms, Cage says, "is a faith in all that."

The title was really what Cage was saying, and the stories were an illustration of the idea (not an explanation). Meaning latent in stories. The stories would have a meaning for each person listening to them, but not necessarily the same meaning they had for Cage himself "I had this faith that stories out of my previous experience would be related to one another because I recounted them. Also, I felt that because I was involved with this new aspect of form, the stories would be related to that, too. All things are related, in other words, without our doing anything about it." Interpenetration idea of Buddhist theology.

Cage gave lecture at Fair, without musical accompaniment.

Had little time for sightseeing, because so busy with lecture and with pulling strings to get engagement for Merce and Carolyn. But did get to Soviet pavillion, which was "shocking because it was so unbeautiful," and the US pavilion, which was shocking "because of the emphasis on the frills on top of a higher standard of living that was so much in opposition to the rest of the world."

Fontana Mix
Tour ended with four month visit to Milan, at invitation of composer Luciano Berio, to make a magnetic tape piece (Note: Music politics is a major factor in deciding who has access to tape studios. Stockhausen, who is now in command of the Cologne studio, is said to have excluded Konig from the premises; Cage has never been invited to work in the Columbia-Princeton studio; Cage once suggested that he be put in charge of studio at Univ of Illinois, but they chose Hiller instead -- "There is something in the nature of my work that does not encourage universities").

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Water Walk

Made use of the Fontana Mix transparencies for audio-visual ends. Piece was to involve an emphasis on water, and so Cage selected from props available at TV studio an assortment of things he would like to associate himself with. Included: Bathtub (with water), table holding pressure cooker and burner, siphon, bottle of Campari, bucket of ice, Waring Blendor, bells, another table with five radios, a piano, a tape machine, whistles, party poppers, a large vase of roses, an old fashioned garden sprinkler, and a rubber fish that could flap its tail. The whole piece was set to take place in three minutes, and required a great many actions performed with split-second timing -- hard to do, and required a lot of rehearsal. The fish started off inside piano, on strings, where it flopped its tail and made sounds; was later placed in bathtub where it swam. Vase of roses put in bathtub and watered with can. Ice crushed in blendor, and used to make drink, which he drank. Steam came from pressure cooker, etc etc. Everything used within time.

("That's the trouble with Happenings. People make it too easy on themselves. They tend to get one idea instead of many, and to just spread it out in time. It's a kind of laziness. What makes Water Walk entertaining is that so many things are happening, and so irrationally because of the chance operations, but when it's being done you see how poetic it is.")

See also note opposite p. 47

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Fourth week, Cage did Sounds of Venice, taped while visiting old friend Peggy Guggenheim weekends. He kept going. Interviewed, he was asked whether he wasn't scared to risk his winnings by going on for fifth time. Cage said he was not, because even if he lost, he would be getting more than the equivalent of a Guggenheim fellowship. The questions got tougher, but he answered them all. On the seventh and final week, he was put in an isolation booth (no musical performance possible this time) The question was to name all the genera of white-gilled mushrooms. Cage had expected this, and had memorized the genera of the white gilled, black gilled, and every other species as well. He asked if he could name them alphabetically, and was told he could. Very slowly, being careful about omissions, he began to name them off. He didn't know there was a time limit on his answer, and he was taking plenty of time. After a while he began to be aware that people were getting excited outside, jumping up and down, gesturing at him. He kept on naming the species carefully and slowly. When he named the last one, the audience just exploded. He had done it about a half second under the wire. He won 5 million lire, or about $8,000.

The big win brought new problems. His landlady demanded a quadruple rent increase, to be paid retroactively (Cage had a talk with the woman, and "tried to teach her a little Zen Buddhism" -- didn't pay her any more). Also, the money wasn't money -- it was a bag of gold coins that could not be redeemed at any bank, had to be changed through the black market -- Cage carried the bag around with him, aware that at any moment he could be robbed. The money could not be taken out of the country. Peggy Guggenheim came to the rescue finally, taking the lire (only $6,000 worth, as it turned out) and giving him a check on her NY bank.

Cage was totally exhausted and in very bad health by then -- bronchitis. He finished up the Fontana Mix and left for home. He had been invited by Fellini to act in La Dolce Vita, but he was too ill and too eager to get home.

1959 - New York

Spent several months regaining his health, which had been somewhat precarious for a long time anyway (on David Tudor's advice, he had gone to an anthroposophical doctor in New York, whom he didn't like, but who made him stop drinking and smoke through a filter; he had also gone to Tudor's aunt Hazel, a chiropractor in New Jersey, who had done wonders for his arthritis and his spine in general -- she had healing hands, he believes. She died some years ago, and he hasn't found another nearby, altho there is a man in Vermont who helps. In 1959, he was put back in shape by Aunt Hazel). He didn't write any more music in 1959.

Spent much time writing out the music for Concert for Piano and Orch. (originals having been sold at Stable), and doing the notes and the typographical arrangement for George Avakian's recording of the 1958 Town Hall Concert. He was also thinking about writing an indeterminate theater piece for 8 people, on the order of the pieces he had done for Italian TV.

He went back to teaching at the New School -- three courses now: Experimental Composition (regulars were Allan Kaprow, Geo Brecht, Jefferson MacLow, Dick Higgins, Al Hansen, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Mildred Fink, and Bob Dunn); a course in the music of Virgil Thomson; and a course in mushrooms, which consisted of five field trips led by Cage, Lois Long, and Guy Nearing. The mushroom course was very popular, drawing up to 40 students (music courses never moren 10-12)

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Four Seasons (1959)

DeAntonio arranged for Cage to collect wild mushrooms for the Four Seasons restaurant. He could write his own ticket on prices, ~~xxx~~ from $25 a pound for Morels, Chantorelles, Sep down to $2 for more common varieties/. This continued for some time. "I considered it a delightful way to make a living, almost too good to be true." The job specified that Cage would provide a variety of mushrooms guaranteed to be safe, but the chef eventually rebelled at [redacted] having to deal with mushrooms he had never seen seen, and Cage was then informed he should supply only the Morel, the Chantorelle and the Sep. This spoiled the whole idea for Cage (who had envisioned his roaming about the country, at Four Seasons expense, finding mushrooms in south during winter months etc), and he said he wouldn't do it any more.

* "It was clear to me that with these materials (indeterminacy, not specifying instruments, etc.) all sorts of activities could come about. The whole situation seemed to be pregnant with possibilities."

[After Venice, Berlin festival: "The Germans were like dogs. They insisted on doing everything over & over again. Even after we rehearsed until they had it perfectly, and then during the performance they did everything wrong.

Critics unanimous in not taking them seriously. Return to 1954 attitude that Cage & Tudor were clowns.]

TV + Radio Appearances

Jan. 1960 on Henry Morgan show - Water Walk.

Garry Moore Show Tales, with Ditto - smashed radios on tape instead of turning them off & on. Nobody noticed shows.

"I've always been surprised those two shows didn't strike the attention of more people in the television industry."

Phoenix Engagement - Feb. 1960

Cunningham Company. Arranged by Bob R. and J. Johns

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Cage wanted to write an indeterminate tape piece - just opposite of what other musicians were doing with tape. He also knew that because he had a limited time to work, he must find a faster means of composing than he had used in Williams Mix.

"When I saw all the equipment in Berio's studio, my fears were multiplied." There was a great deal of equipment, and Cage knew nothing about it; and when Berio and Marino Zuccheri, the engineer, tried to explain it to him, he didn't get their explanations. Besides which, he didn't want to make "Berio's sounds." His solution was a bit of primitive animism -- he drew a picture of the equipment, knobs and all. This worked. When he asked questions then, he could write down the answers on the drawing, next to the appropriate parts.

Regimen was severe. Got to studio at 8 am, worked until midnight, with frequent breaks for coffee, wine, grappa and food. Was staying in rooming house of a Mme Fontana (rooms were dark, cold, and full of furniture), buying wine at shop called Fontana, besides which he liked the sound of Milan's fountains -- hence title of piece. Composing method was transparencies: First he drew biomorphic shapes that could be self-expressive (because people would use them in such a way that any Cage self-expression would disappear); the transparencies were then superimposed on sheets marked with dots, lines, circles etc, each having a specific reference; intersections provided instructions to composer. The same method can be applied to anything else -- Cage used it for essays on Rauschenberg, and Where are we going? , other people are using it now for various things. . Cage also used it to write Aria for Mezzo Soprano for Cathy Berberian, Berio's wife, who sung it on USIS-sponsored Italian tour in January 1959 (Cage-Berio tour).

Laschia o Rodoppola - Jan. 1959

Cage had been invited to appear on this famous quiz program. His turn came up in January. The idea was that if you answered all questions for seven weeks running, you won the pot; at any failure, you took half what you'd won so far. Cage was also asked to perform as a musician on the program. Contestants chose own subject, and Cage chose mushrooms.

First week, he played prepared piano (Amores) while answering all questions. Second time, he wanted to do a theater piece. He has found that TV studios, more than any other place, will get what you want; he made out a list of props and things to do with them, and worked out on graph paper, using transp rencies, a sort of script; the emphasis was on water (Water Walk was title), and props included a bathtub, a rubber fish, a vase of roses. He again answered all questions while performing theater piece.

Third week, music was by Berio, who had become annoyed with Cage for using these quite serious methods for what seemed frivolous ends -- he thought it undignified. Berio wrote a thoroughly frivolous piece. Cage answered all questions again, and was asked to make his own composition for fourth week's program.

Cage was becoming fantastically well known by this time. He was interviewed all the time, photographed, cajoled for autographs etc. The press referred to him as "Frankinstein in bello" (haircut), and he was so popular that crowds followed him in the street. He was given a prize as the most "simpatico" contestant on program, and made a honorary member of the Gruppo Micologico Trento, a local mushroom society. "The people were entranced not only with my answering the questions," he says, "but with the music."

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* Anecdote abt 'Montana Fire'

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Continuing tours with Merce and David Tudor. Transportation, which had been a problem when he first moved to the country (and shared car with several others) was now solved by purchase of a Volkswagen Microbus -- with funds from Italian TV show. Trades it in every year on a new one.

Stories (cont): Kept on writing them. Gave lecture with 90 stories at Teachers College, with Tudor playing piano -- this became Folkways record. Later, gave three-hour lecture at Ann Arbor with 180 stories, and again at Living Theater.

1960 Contact Mikes

At some point, while driving on tour with Tudor, Cage got the idea of doing a piece with contact mikes. First result was Music for Amplified Toy Pianos, premiered at Wesleyan Univ. in Feb 1960 (see catalog). Soon after this came Cartridge Music - also dependent on amplification.

"In the course of doing the work on these pieces, it became clear that electronic circuits do more than make things louder -- they transform sounds in all their characteristics and bring about new sounds, even in the case of sounds that don't need amplification. They introduce distortion, so pronounced that the original spund is no longer recognizable -- thus bringing new sounds into being. This principle of utter translation is part and parcel of our contemporary science and technology, and carries within it the idea of reincarnation."

Everyone else in the field was working toward high fidelity reproduction. Cage and Tudor embraced everything that hi-fi renounces -- feedback, humming, etc --"all that is [redacted] accepted by us in the music."

New principle in Cartridge Music: It [redacted] had become evident that performers could make determinations even in an indeterminate piece. Cage thus became interested in making music that would be indeterminate of itself. "I effected this in the Cartridge Music by having two or more performers whose actions would so interpenetrate one another as to make radical differences" (i.e., since all sounds depended on amplification, what one performer did with the controls could make what the other one did inaudible).

Solo for Voice II

The two most indeterminant and flexible kinds of music, Cage has found, are compositions for stringed instruments and for voice. (Asked once by Stockhausen whether he would write for the singer or write music, Cage unhesitatingly said 'for the singer'). Cage wanted to write an indeterminate piece for voice, one that would include songs and text he could not foresee. [redacted] He made a circle with all vowels and consonants, placed transparency over -- thus got letters for vocalise and music line (see catalog description of Cartridge Music) Cage established that Solo for Voice II could be sung along with any of several other pieces. Was first sung by Cage himself, with Cartridge Music (Cage had sung before, [redacted] in connection with dance accompaniments).

The Marrying Maiden

That summer (1960) Cage wrote music for MacLow's (his student's) play, which was written by chance operations (mostly I Ching). Had decided to make it a tape piece, using sounds from the play itself. Had actors

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Theater Piece - 1960 - Composers Showcase at Circle-in-the-Square
"People could do what I had done in Water Walk and Sounds of Venice. Eight parts, indeterminate. The performance was quite mad."

* It was clear to me that with these materials (indeterminacy, not specifying instruments etc) all sorts of activities could come about. The whole situation seemed to be pregnant with possbilities."

Berlin Festival after Venice - Germans "acted like dolts." Did everything wrong in performance. Critics unanimous in returning to 1954 attitude that Cage and Tudor were clowns.

Cologne - Nam June Paik (Oct. 1960)
First perf. of Cartridge Music. Also a weird event by Nam June Paik, the Korean who had attached himself to Cage on earlier trip. Paik had written something called "In Homage to John Cage." Cage and Tudor sat in front row. Props were an upright piano, the innards of a piano lying on floor, some kitchen equipment, and open window -- "it is hard to describe why his performances are so terrifying; you get the feeling very clearly that anything could happen, even physically dangerous things, so much so that I now suspect I might not go to one of his performances, in the spirit of the I-Ching which teaches that when in danger, beat a retreat!" During performance, Paik played Chopin on upright, broke off weeping, got up and did other things, threw self on piano innards, then came over to Cage in the front row, took off his jacket and slashed his shirt with a long scissor (had originally intended to take off all his clothes and destroy them); then cut off Cage's tie at knot; then brought a bottle of shampoo and poured it over Cage's and Tudor's heads -- turned to Stockhausen at one point and said "Not for you!" After a time Paik suddenly forced his way back through the audience and ran from the room. Everyone sat [redacted] still, stunned, for minutes. Finally the telephone rang. Someone answered. It was Paik, saying the performance was over.

Paik stamps all his communications "Institute for Avant-Garde Hinduism."

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go to a recording studio and give a reading, then used that tape as source of sound -- i.e. the play itself was the source. Composed indeterminately, using transparencies that showed how to cut the tape and re-splice it. "A collage of sounds." Performed at Living Theater on 47 occasions between June 1960 and April 1961.

C.F. Peters

While working on Marrying Maiden, Cage became indignant that "I had this huge amount of music and no publisher." People were always asking for his music and this caused all sorts of complications. He had approached Schirmer's in 1950, and been refused - Schirmer said it would be "nothing but a headache". One day he picked up the phone book, turned to the Yellow Pages, and called Walter Hinrocksen, the president of C.F. Peters Corp. Peters was the publisher of Beethoven, etc., but until then had not tackled experimental music. Cage had lunch with Hinricksen, signed a contract that day. (Now Peters has a big list of modern composers). Foreseeing difficulties in publishing the music, Hinricksen had the good sense to hire Bob Dunn, a brilliant musician and student of Cage's at New School (now running the Judson dance performances) to prepare the catalog, which is invaluable.

In the midst of all this, Merce was invited to perform in the early fall of 1960 at the Berlin Festival. They put together a tour for Merce and Carolyn, with Cage and Tudor music. Appeared at Venice Biennale, in Munich and Cologne. Stayed with Peggy G. in Venice, performed at La Fenice theater: Music Walk with Dancers. *

Wesleyan University

That spring, Cage had had an offer of a fellowship in the Center of Advanced Studies at Wesleyan (where Music for Amplified Toy Piano premiered), for a three-month period of his choice. He had agreed to come after the European tour. Had a good relationship with Richard K. Winslow, Director of Music at Wesleyan, as result of two previous concerts there. "I had always liked Wesleyan, and I liked Winslow very much (see Silence intro, habit of breaking into song). I always had the feeling it was a place where I could work."

Cage went directly to Wesleyan on return from Europe. Quickly made friends with other Fellows at the Center -- principally with Edgar Anderson, of the St. Louis Botannical Gardens, with whom he walked in woods and from whom he learned about trees. Another companion on walks was Norman O. Brown, author of "Life Against Death," who was then teaching in Classics Dept at Wesleyan (now at Univ. of Rochester), and who had sent Cage his book with note saying "this is the hard way to nothing," which upset Cage. They became close friends. Cage really discovered Freud through Brown.

Cage had been invited to Center for 3-month period, and "apparently I didn't do anything to upset them," so was asked to stay out the academic year. Was free to come and go as he pleased, do own work, go off with Merce. Marvellous working atmosphere (see list of work accomplished), marred only by fact that apt was air-cond., windows would not open. Cage was making more money than he'd ever made before. He gave fabulous dinner parties in his rooms, and guests played Hide & Seek and other games in Center. "I've never had so much money in my life." Wesleyan extremely wealthy, and embarrassed about it, and thus on lookout for projects that would restore it to a position of poverty.

Pre-invitation, Winslow had proposed that Wesleyan Univ Press do book of Cage's lectures. He was working on that along with other material.

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While at Wesleyan, Cage kept pointing out his interest in establishing an experimental music center. There was also talk of having Cage join faculty there, but it was rec. for some time to elapse between appl'n to Center and faculty appl'n. Cage has since submitted a detailed proposal for an experimental music center, and was told it is "too personal." Matter unresolved still.

Third Composers Showcase concert - April 1961 at Modern Museum

First NY performance of Cartridge Music.

** Atlas Eclipticalis (cont)

Cage had seen star charts before, and thought about using them. But the charts he had seen were unsatisfactory because there was too much on them, masses of stars. The maps he found in Wesleyan Observatory were from Czechoslovakia, and they were just right -- very large, and with enough space between stars.

He wanted to have a lot of musical material, more than he needed (in line with idea of no beginnings, middles, endings). Decided on four pages of music per instrument. The process was complex in the extreme. Involved the formation of twenty "constellations" of notes spread across the four pages (one constellation has only one star, and is thus a planet) Coin tossing determined how many stars would appear in each constellation, and also how they should be expressed -- i.e. by what durations of sound. When the distribution of the constellations across four pages for each of 86 parts was complete, the musical staff (on transparent plastics) was superimposed on the pages to arrive at the pitches. Excessively high or low pitches were avoided by having staff lines close enough together,

[Cage has intention of writing another star piece some day. Doesn't feel that the wealth of possibilities there has been fully explored].

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Cage - Bio (46)

Pratt Institute 9*

For a lecture at ~~Brandeis Univ.~~, Cage wrote lecture called "Where Are We Goingetc..." , using whole business of interpenetration, superimposition, interruption & "that are part and parcel of our everyday experience." McLuhan's idea - we are living more and more in a sit. where everything happens at once. Cage as usual wanted to give an example of this in lecture, rather than just discuss the idea.

Went right from that lecture into writing of piece on Bob Rauschenberg, at Bob's request. On a night when Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian were supposed to give a concert at Wesleyan, but couldn't get there because of snow, Cage filled in by reading Rauschenberg essay while audience looked at reproductions of his wrk. Then took it down to Front Street for Bob and Jap to read. The response in both places was highly encouraging.

Winslow has asked Cage to conduct a class once a week nominally called Counterpoint, but really advanced composition. Cage took tack that something outside the field of music can teach about music -- all things being related, as in Buddhahood -- and so he told his students to study Marcel Duchamp. Cage bought up all the books he could find on Duchamp, and lent them to students. "As I was explaining to them my Variation I, I saw suddenly that there was a fixedness there, and this made me see how to write Variations II..."

Also asked on two occasions to give humorous talks at Wesleyan. Put on humorous skit making fun of Center -- see copy.

Atlas Eclipticalis

During the winter, Cage had letter from Pierre Mercure, director of Montreal Festivals Society, asking if he would accept a commission for a work for full orchestra, to be performed at the ~~[illegible]~~ International Week of Today's Music in Montreal in August, 1961. Cage accepted.

For some time he'd wanted to make something, using star maps he had seen in the Wesleyan Observatory, in a book called Atlas Coelis. Before this, he had used star charts to write Music for Carillon #4 -- method was to lay transparencies over charts, make quick notations of star positions; the Milky Way was electronic feedback; huge stars were great thudding sounds; smaller stars were sounds of various bells. This piece written quickly, with help of Earle Brown and Toshi Ichiyanagi; could not be performed in Bremen, as scheduled, because Bremen did not have the right equipment, and has thus never been performed anywhere.

Cage began work on Atlas Eclipticalis, using same star charts, for the full 80-piece orchestra -- enormous job.** Wanted to write it in such a way that the Winter Music could be played with it. "I soon realized I had made myself a project too great for the time I had." Was just about to write Montreal saying he couldn't finish in time, when he had letter from Mercure saying he couldn't get the whole orchestra, would have to use a chamber orchestra of 23 instruments -- which solved the dilemma. (Cage already having principle that a whole could be expressed by any of its parts).

Everyone helped on chance operations for Atlas. Even the dancers in Merce's company tossed coins in off moments, during summer in New London (Bob Rauschenberg now doing lighting instead of Cernovich - basically white rather than multicolored). Cage with them in Conn.

Wesleyan Univ at Cambridge Mass / Fall

* Brandeis and Columbia - Princeton are the two main centers of experimental music in U.S.

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Another factor here is that a lot of people now think they are doing what Cage is doing, with the difference that they find it all very easy. When people used to ask Cage whether anybody couldn't do it, he would say yes, but the fact is they aren't. Can no longer say this "because so many people are. And I often don't really like what they're doing. And that's another reason I've withdrawn somewhat from teaching... You see, the whole idea of using chance operations is [redacted] that the field that's now open to us is as big that if we're not careful we'll just go to certain points in it with which we're already familiar. By chance operations, we can get to points with which we are unfamiliar. But that basic desire may be missing in people who use chance because they think it's easy."

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Montreal Festival: Began and ended with Cage reading "Where Are We Going and..etc.", and included performance of Atlas Eclipticalis With Winter Music (Electronic Version) and also Merce's choreographed version of Atlas called Aeon. Others on program included Alwin Nikolais, James Waring (both with dance companies) whose members are mainly former students of Merce), New School students of Cage, La Monte Young, the whole NY avant garde crowd. (La Monte Young had not studied with Cage; had taken classes with Stockhausen in Darmstadt. Cage feels that he "is introducing another step, bringing about a new musical consciousness that is different from what I have done." One of his pieces has a string orchestra holding a perfect fifth for three hours -- to show that a 'perfect fifth' is full of variety etc).

[redacted] Returned to New London from Montreal, then to Edisto Island with [redacted] Johns and Rauschenberg. Then back to Stony Point to finish Atlas. Decided to dedicate each instrumental part to a different person (a friend or someone helpful). Hence 86 dedications, and 86 personal letters to inform friends -- helped break monotony.

Mushroom class continued, but all other New School activities ceased when he went to Wesleyan . Cage has not renewed them, partly at least because "I felt that my influence was not a good one. I had not found a way to express to the students that anything goes only when nothing is taken as the basis. Anything certainly does not go when something is taken as the basis -- Hitler taking world domination as his basis, for example, or the Ku Klux Klan. And so I have put myself in the position of being difficult to get -- even though I had already made the rather serious mistakes of publishing a book, giving lectures, and making my music generally available." -- (Cage somewhat disturbed by the actions of some students; the violence [redacted] creeping in...)

1962

Early in year, received tape of Atlas Eclipticalis from Montreal. He liked it so much he wrote to Leonard Bernstein, saying he finally had a work he thought appropriate to the NYPhilharmonic. Bernstein's asst wrote back saying they were interested, and for Cage to send recording.

Japan Trip - Fall 1962

Arranged by Toshi Ichiyanagi and his wife Yoko Ono, but official host was [redacted] Sogetsu, the School for Flower Arrangement that is really the avant garde center of Japan. Established by Sofu Teshigahara, a rich Japanese; flower arrangement broadly conceived as a fine art. School is on main floor, and basement is given over to avant gardism -- tape studios, Happenings, etc.

Cage and Tudor had engagements on way out at Cornish School in Seattle (saw Morris Graves again), and in Hawaii, where the atmosphere was immensely stimulating and enthusiastic.

In Japan, every minute of their time was programmed. Twelve concerts, interviews daily, photographers all the time. Cage had written Peggy Guggenheim, who flew to Tokyo and joined them there. They all stayed at International House. Teshigahara gave geisha dinners, bought a Shinto service to bring blessings upon the avant garde. Some tourism on the card -- Matsushima (Ah), etc. Called on Suzuki. 5-6 weeks in all.

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* 0'00" (cont)
Score specifies ~~xxxx~~ "Any action which is a fulfillment of an obligation to others, done in a situation of maximum amplification but not bringing about feedback." Its first performance was in Tokyo, and consisted of Cage actually creating the piece, making the decisions, writing the manuscript, with amplification of sounds made in process. Took 45 minutes to do, Says Cage: "It is very hard to draw the line at permissiveness. My directions permit great freedom, but also a refusal to let just anything be done -- this is assured in the phrase about 'fulfillment of an obligation to others.'

** On Mentation (Suzuki)s word).

"I think we've got to free ourselves from that other world of what Suzuki calls 'mentation.' Of course we can never do it altogether, but we can steer in that direction.

"Most people in the arts approach all the arts in such a way that they are blinded by mentation. They tend to see art history as a mainstream, with high points and low points, and certain deviations from the main course. This point of view is completely fallacious, an idea associated entirely with the Renaissance, and it has no relevance to our period. It just allows us to move from one high point to another while avoiding everything in between. I believe we are going now in a multiplicity of directions, ~~xxx~~ that there is no main stream, but only an increasing number of interpenetrations. And I see this not as a matter of transition to some other phase, but as a central point. If we can approach our daily experience in this way, as central points that move out in all directions like the Buddha, then that would be marvellous.

"Of course we probably can't get rid of mentation altogether, and I realize that what I am saying is somewhat illogical. But the image to me is the monk in the Zen text who said, "Now that I am enlightened, I am just as miserable as ever." What he meant, was that he was just as full of mentation as ever. But with a different orientation. He knew about it, and could act accordingly. It's the state of mind that counts."

Cage says that when he went into the woods for the first time, out in Stony Point, what he felt was the "dropping off of mentation." An incredible, freeing experience.

In conclusion: "I think the picture is a messy one. I know that what I want to say is not the same as what I feel and do. For example, I say constantly that there is no failure... So it is all a little illogical."

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While in Japan Cage wrote new piece called 0'00", which he thought of as the third part of a trilogy of which Atlas Eclipticalis was Part I. (The haiku idea expressed in poem Old pond/Frog jumps in/Plop -- new work was the Plop). Also the idea that whatever we do is music. By this time Cage had become interested in G.H. Mead, the philosopher, who reiterated the idea of there being no sense of separation between the self and any other being. 0'66" is this idea carried out in music -- no separation between music and everything else. "I was a little puzzled how to do it. Up until this time, in all my work, measurement was involved. Previously I had taken the work out of meters and into stopwatch time. Now I was taking it into unmeasured time ("We must give up the measurement of time," says Cage, "and live in a climate of inspiration"). It was also a criticism of my own past work, which tried to measure the immeasurable. Now I am saying Stop measuring: Act. Once again, I see that this is not an original thought, but simply a response to the special life situation in which I am."

Giving up idea of Measurement: (See Silence, p.13 for quote)

Also in Japan, Cage wrote articles -- including one on Duchamp. "I've never been kept so busy."

Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts

Before Japan, Cage had become interested in idea of getting Broadway engagement for Merce. Realized that the people around with money now were the painters. On return, went into high gear on Foundation, which had been formed with Cage on Board of Directors that included Johns, . Cage and Johns went around to studios choosing paintings.

The Pop Art show at Janis had taken place while he was away. It was clear that this would figure prominently in Foundation, but Cage was not enthusiastic about it at first -- quite sceptical in fact, (With all my involvement in change, I still like things that are familiar"). Went down to Oldenburg's studio, and thought the stuff perfectly awful in that narrow, dirty room. Finally got his "Funeral Heart," and when they hung it in David Hayes' house "it was suddenly magnificent." "In the process I moved from utter scepticism of that art to complete acceptance of its presence." Now likes work of Rosenquist, Segal, Oldenburg; Warhol moderately; "I have a hard time with Indiana and Lichtenstein." (Resists Tinguely -- the whole idea of European art there, harmonization, control).

Berlin - Jan. 1963

H.H. Stuckenschmidt, a German musicologist and critic involved with mod music since the late 1920s, had put on during the 1961-62 season a lecture series on "Literature in the Age of Technical Science" at the Technical University on Berlin. Now he wanted a similar series on Music in the Age of Technical Science, and asked Cage to come in Jan. 1963 to lecture. All expenses paid. Cage and Tudor went. For the engagement, Cage composed Variations III, a work that continued the idea of 0'00" -- no measurement, no specification of performers, or instruments. Method was to toss down transparent sheets each of which contained an inked circle, and see where they overlapped. The idea of there being no gap between anything. The lecture was thus unprepared (Cage thus moving further and further away from obligation, discipline, "while clinging to the rather flimsy idea of performance") -- see note on Mentation

Berlin performance drew furious reviews - worst ever. Seen as sign of vigor in work.

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* The argument against Cage, says Cage, centers on this point: "Is music separate from all the others arts, sciences, and life going on around us, or is it an activity that is in interpenetration with all other activities?" Schuller, in Zagreb, made point that he was "only a musician," not a philosopher, and would talk only as a musician. Cage insists on non-separation.

This reminded him of an incident after a lecture he made at Yale. Paul Weiss said, "You open every door, but what I'm interested in is which doors you close." Cage says the answer he would give now to that question is, "With every action I take, I close a door."

* Premiere of Variations IV in LA. New work deals not with time, "which I was giving up, but with space. It does not matter what sounds are coming up, what's interesting is where they come from." Method is to get map of performance area, place transparencies over it to give location from which each sound shall issue (not precise location -- anywhere along a line). No specification as to loudness, duration, kind of instrument or noise etc. Use available sound producing means, mainly those having connection with electronic circuits because that is current interest, but including radios, phonographs (and records found in place of performance). Used to Cunningham Field Dances choreography (which has elements of indeterminacy), but can also be done alone. (~~see p 54~~) When phono records are used, the phono is put on a cart and wheeled about to various points, and the sound a needle jumping makes for pleasant, bright atmosphere.

(Ramlow, Beethoven)

Variation IV is samsara, the world of relativity, everyday life.

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Returning from Europe, continued work on Foundation. But unable to secure B'way engagement for Merce.

Spring -- on tour with Merce. Cage-Tudor performance of Atlas Eclipticalis at Tulane in late March. This was in effect a rehearsal for upcoming European tour, with same pieces (also pieces by Wolff and Ichiyanagi -- Zagreb Biennale).

Performance with Tudor at Washington Pop Art Festival.

Zagreb Biennale: Yugos offered only one-way fare, so had to get other engagements -- Vienna, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Essen, etc. Did same program as at Tulane, with Cage conducting.

In Zagreb, the noise produced by the audience was incredible. It was a large audience, altho' the concert began at midnight (perhaps because they hoped the Communist authorities would be sound asleep). The musicians were troublesome, and made fools of themselves, but the audience was making so much noise nobody could have heard anyway. Cage utterly disgusted and dejected -- why bother? He learned during intermission (from a girl who came backstage) that there was a rumor he was going to kill a cat onstage -- basis of rumor was garbled translation of Italian review of a Rzewski performance, which said sound was "like a cat being killed." (Note: Paik). There was applause, very brief, at the end, interrupted when a student jumped on stage with a scroll and pot of paint, wanting Cage to sign his name. Near-riot conditions, as audience flocked up on stage, took away thirty pages of manuscript. USIS disturbed, advised Cage in future to put his best foot forward. Gunther Schuller, who was present, was so indignant that he lectured against Cage and wrote articles in NYTimes decrying fact that Cage "represented" America abroad (not so, says Cage; Elliot Carter, Schuller, and Milton Babbitt are much more performed, but not so much discussed, "I feel because these people are not very interesting"). ((Note: [redacted] Babbitt lectures to the effect that Cage does not exist)). * Panel discussion of musicians was organized in Zagreb, sans Cage, who attended as member of audience; invited several times to defend himself, he finally consented to do so.

Also in Zagreb, Cage had hoped to meet Russians and talk to them, but was disappointed. Those he met in lobby "simply didn't have any conversation," altho there was a common language (French). Russians have no use for Cage music, obviously.

Stockholm: Marvellous concert - Cage very popular, outdrawing opera and medieval concert programs on same evening. Stockholm really swinging anyway -- they have Happenings.

U.S. - Tour to West Coast (Cunningham): UCLA and Berkeley.* Letter from Peter Pesic requesting they play in Long Beach -- discovery that Peter Pesic 14 yrs old, had established society for modern music whose sole purpose was to perform Cage's work -- "I was simply flabbergasted by the brilliance of that kid." Stopover in Malibu while Merce away teaching, and impromptu performance in the Big Sur, where Cage arranged for them to stop over and "sing for supper" en route to Berkeley: Cage read stories one-a-minute as music, Bob R. transformed room of Inn, very exciting.

Lincoln Center: "I think Philharminic Hall is absolutely hideous, an architectural and acoustical disaster." Performance there was a disappointment - Cage feels people couldn't see the stage well or hear the music well. Press treatment of program was "underhanded."

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Cage - Bio (50)

Judson Concerts: Rzewski came to US, saw (as all European do) how little was going on in NY, decided to do something about it. Went to Earle Brown and Charlotte Moorman, who (the latter) showed "a genius for publicity."

Satie's Vexations
James Waring had started a series of performances at the Pocket Theater, for Foundation. Tudor not forthcoming with program. Cage had wanted for years to do Vexations, saw this as chance, Waring agreeable. Fulfillment of obligation to Satie - Cage had to spike rumor that it was a hoax, the piece was his...

Invited musicians, including La Monte Young, who said he'd play but then never appeared at rehearsals (there were two). Rehearsals were used to establish tempos(Cage found that the calculations he had made previously as to time were erronious -- not 12 or 24 hours after all (actually took 18½)) , and to make sure that "the notation should not be any other than Satie provided. I didn't want everyone to play it the same way necessarily, but I did want everyone to play the same notes." Established the little ceremony of three performers -- one to play, one to count, one to achieve inner [redacted] immobility. When Young failed to appear for second rehearsal, it was decided not to list the 6th pianist at all; in Cage absence, someone printed up program listing "Mystery guest star", and Cage made them cross this off every program by hand.

Performance - one of the critics asked to play, but played so badly that no one felt like criticising him. [redacted] "After about an hour and a half, we all realized that something had been set in motion that was far beyond anything any one of us had anticipated. We were in the presence of a work of a religious quality as great as [redacted] any piece of music in history." Cage played five times -- "the only time I felt a complete transparency of being was around four a.m." (no mentation). Cage went out about about 2 a,m. for supper, in Chinatown, and ran into La Monte Young, who explained that he had practiced the music but still felt unprepared, hence had not come to rehearsal. Cage did not sleep-- lay down, but no sleep.

Afterward, Cage put Tudor on plane, came home and slept 14 hours. "When I woke up, I had the same feeling I'd had years ago when I first went into the woods -- the world felt altogether fresh and new to me."

"The critics, who can never stay through to the end of a two-hour concert, stayed through the whole thing. Explain that if you can. The mass media were utterly delighted. Movietone News wanted us to repeat a part of the performance, which we refused to do. Radio Free Europe wanted to broadcast it to Europe. At the end, the whole stage was surrounded by photographers."

Fall Tour: Did Story and Field Dances around country, plus twelve pieces from repertoire. Driving on Penn. Turnpike, they heard the news of Kennedy's assassination, thought it an ugly joke at first. Next day, Cage had telegram from Madison, Wisconsin man asking if he would accept a commission to write a Requiem for Kennedy. Altho deeply moved by event, he will not accept. "I am not given to participating in political actions." Cage refuses to sign all petitions, etc., even when he agrees with sentiments expressed. [redacted] Feels his dedication is to music, doesn't want to do other things that will throw another light on that; also, does not want to make negative actions.

Present Situation (Dec, 1963)
Cage now in a position where his expenses are rather high (he is

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* "But I realize ~~that I called it~~ that a Center for Experimental Music was the wrong thing to call it. I should have called it an Institute for Advanced Musical Studies. If I'd done that it would be in operation right now!"
[See Silence, p. 233]

Marshal McLuhan

Cage's latest enthusiasm -- very excited about him. "He helps me so to pull everything together. All these things are in the wind -- changes of all kinds. It's really the most exciting time to be alive in. McLuhan compares it to the Elizabethan Age at the time of Shakespeare. For example, twenty years ago Varese's Ionization required fifty hours of rehearsal; today it can be put together in 2½ hours, by people who are not specially trained -- they haven't learned to do it, they just know, through these changes in the atmosphere."

(McLuhan's example of NYTimes frontpage as example of non-linear culture refers to state of mind of reader, not method of reading. Ability to acquire a mass of information about a great many subjects whose only relation is that they happened recently -- that's what's new).

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largely supporting his parents, plus ex-wife alimony). As a result, he spends most of his time touring, simply to make the money he has to make. No time to put himself "in the state of emptiness to let ideas come in."

Main hope for the future is the academic world -- "the one world in this country where the arts receive some support." Problem is that Cage still "cannot handle language in such a way as to convince the academic world" that it should support him. Has submitted plan for Experimental Music Center to Wesleyan, and still has hope.* Doesn't want to teach formal classes. Would have parents come and live with him, in comfortable house (present quarters less bearable as time passes). Feels this will come to pass within five years, one way or another, "but I certainly will be happy when the five years are up."

"I have an idea about this. In Japan, in Europe, the support for new art comes from the press and radio, that is, from the mass media, the adult world. Here, the university is the only place that does this sort of thing. Therefore, in this country, art is for the teenager. Any adult who shows an interest in art here is considered somewhat eccentric. Modern painting in America is supported by these few collectors, a small group of people with special interests (of an anal character!), and the very notion of collecting things is not very mature anyway... I don't see anything wrong with art being for teenagers, of course. One reason the influence of American art is so strong throughout the world now is that it has this power of youth behind it. Art that is supported by the adult world has to have a certain bent toward entertainment, toward pleasure, as European art does have; art for students, on the other hand, must have an intellectual basis."

* Essential aspect here is that the students are interested in Cage and his music. His concerts, lectures are mobbed, with many waiting outside to take places of those who leave (see Lippold on iconoclasm).

(Going further)

"I have felt sometimes that I am now somewhat in the situation of Duchamp. But that instead of not doing things, I will keep on doing what I have to do. What I like very much to think about is the final image from the Ox Herd Pictures of Zen Buddhism. (The Ox Herd Pictures teach by illustration instead of by words). The image is of a ~~before this one is of nothing, but the final one is not nothing, but the~~ big fat man ~~(Buddha)~~ with a smile on his face (enlightenment) returning to the village ~~(the world)~~ (society) bearing gifts. He returns without ulterior motive, but he returns. One version ends with nothingness (i.e. Duchamp), the other version is that after nothingness one enters into activity..." {and is just as miserable as before?} {see Silence, p. 193}

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* Although our musician did come to Cage afterwards and "said he was grateful to me because the machine didn't make faces at him like Lennie."

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Philharmonic Concert

After the Thursday night opening concert, there was a definite change in the attitude of the orchestra. The musicians had been respectful and even friendly in rehearsals, thanks in large part to Bernstein's efforts. But at the Friday concert, while Cage was taking his bows, "there was a sound of what I thought was escaping air. I heard the same sound when Mortie and Earle took their bows, and realized that the orchestra had hissed all three of us." Feldman was so hurt by this that he refused to come out again, and had Karlheinz Stockhausen take the applause for him -- a turn that annoyed Bernstein who said it was "entirely too aleatoric."

On Saturday, the order of the pieces was changed, with Cage's put last on program. Bernstein said this was better aesthetically, but the real reason was a feeling that Atlas was driving too may people out who thus had no opportunity to hear Feldman and Brown. Cage didn't mind. At the performance, the musicians behaved abominably. They laughed and talked among themselves during Atlas, played scales or melodies instead of what was written; some tried to smash their microphones and amplifiers (by stamping on them hard), or sang and whistled into mikes, etc. "It was like a Chinese torture to perform with them," says Cage.

Cage was very disheartened by this. "I really don't care so much about the sound of my music as I do about its effect on the people who perform it. And it was making these people act like beasts." Cage spoke to the union representative. Bernstein dressed down the orchestra. As a result, they behaved reasonably on Sunday, although by no means in the way that Cage would have liked or had written.

Cage feels the change in their attitude was caused by reading the critics and listening to friends who had been out front. "You see, we can't hear it on stage, or at least, what we hear is much worse than what you hear out front. The reviews all gave the impression that, at best, this was just a passing fad, and they giggled out the fact that I was booed as the most interesting aspect." Bernstein disagreed, said that Cage had caused the change by stepping up what he called "the fucking feedback." Bernstein was constantly worried about the feedback, kept begging Cage not to turn up the volume.

Cage agrees there may have been a psychological factor in that many musicians felt they were being ill used -- that they might just as well have been playing on sticks of wood instead of violins etc. "They are mistaken, of course. If they had played what was written, they would have been using their own techniques and also some new things." He concludes that the music requires a great deal more preparation if it is ever to be played as written, and that the preparation would have to include a certain knowledge of Cage's ideas, theories, and reasons. But was it a mistake to attempt it in the time given? It was not. Stockhausen's Momenta, announced for this series, was withdrawn because Stockhausen required two weeks rehearsal time. Cage learned, on the other hand, that "even when Atlas is done poorly, it still sounds interesting." (And even a bad performance will help to educate musicians & public to the possibilities).

Toward the Ugly: In the early stages of rehearsal, the contact microphones seemed to be causing all sorts of unforseen problems and delays. Feldman tried to persuade Cage not to use them. "Think how shimmeringly beautiful

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it would sound," he said. "Yes," said Cage,"but think how magnificently ugly it will sound with them on!" Why this reply? Hadn't Cage said, in his 1949 article The Forerunners of Modern Music, that "Normally the choice of sounds is determined by what is pleasing and attractive to the ear: delight in the giving or receiving of pain being an indication of sickness." ? Cage referred me to the interview with Roger Reynolds in his catalog, in which he answered the same question by saying his views had changed: "We do give and receive pain and we might as well recognize the fact." And he added that such self-contradiction doesn't bother him at all.

"We are going on towards violence rather than tenderness, hell rather than heaven, ugly rather than beautiful, impure rather than pure, because by doing these things they become transformed and we become transformed. If we don't do them, nothing changes..."

But why write for conventional musicians at all? "People always used to ask me why I went to all the trouble of changing the sound of a piano. Why not make a new instrument? The answer was always one of practical necessity. Wherever I go there is a piano. And now the application of microphones to instruments in an orchestra is eminently practical. I can now apply amplify any orchestra, and so can anyone else. Things are just going swimmingly in that direction. We're even working on an idea for wireless reproduction of sound from any point in the concert hall...

"If I were moving toward good, toward heaven, I would just multiply the David Tudors and work only with them. I would never again work with union musicians, after my experience in Zagreb and at the Philharmonic. Last night, Robert Morris and David said why not let us do your work purely, as it should be done, in a program at the Guggenheim Museum. I will not refuse this. But I also will not refuse the other, when and if it comes up. I will let circumstances decide. In spite of all the difficulties and obstacles that have always arisen, and which still arise, I am exuberant."

Bernstein's Improvisation: "In our terms, it was a composition by Leonard Bernstein. And many people commented that it resembled that thing of his, West Side Story. His improvisation did not introduce unfamiliar elements, which is what we do, and which is why we don't do improvisations."

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Cage - Theory (3)

Cage was reading Bucky Fuller's new book, and wanted to discuss it. He finds a correspondence between his own ideas, Fuller's, and Marshall MacLuhan's, regarding the new situation in which we now find ourselves. Instead of getting information in the old linear way, from books, we get it all-at-once from other media. The front page of the Times, with "information brushing information" -- this in turn is like Rauschenberg's painting, like Fuller's comprehensive design ideas, and like Cage's music. People always worry that when things change something is being lost, and they might worry now that by getting information in this way we sacrifice depth; Cage disagrees, says nothing is ever lost. "Because the surface is a part of the depth."

I asked whether, by giving up all attempt to create or impose meaning and order upon nature through art, they were not ending with something far inferior to life in complexity. He agreed. "What we do is inferior to life, in complexity and also in method. We can never create anything as interesting as life. But it comes to the ~~purpose~~ function of art, what art should do. Art used to be iconographic, symbolic. Now it isn't. [redacted] I think it would be nice if art could help people to enjoy nature, if the sounds they hear in the concert hall could make them more aware of the sounds they hear on the street, or out in the country, wherever they happen to be. Of course what we do is inferior to life in complexity. ~~But even if we give up the aspiration of the concert hall~~ But this also makes it purer, and hearing it in the special situation of the concert hall may make people aware in a way they would not have been..."

Function of Music: ~~Not for relief~~. The new music has a definite function, which is to increase one's enjoyment of everyday life. Not to create order ("If you go to art to find greater order, then life would have to be a disappointment, wouldn't it?"), but to intensify one's life. In other words, the art-experience in Cage's view should extend beyond the concert hall, and become permanent. "We want to stretch their capacity to be interested in their experiences."

On Judson concerts: Differed from most previous recitals of new music in that the audience was composed largely of music students, whereas ten years ago it would have been composed of painters and sculptors. It often seems to be the case that new art is first appreciated by artists in other fields (Apollinaire was one of the first to appreciate Stravinsky, and Cage to appreciate Rauschenberg). Composers of Cage's generation, as usual, were conspicuously absent.

At the same time, there are more and more composers all over the world who are now doing things Cage's way. "It used to be that people with no talent would say, Can't I do that? It looks so easy -- and I would tell them no, they couldn't, or they would be doing it; the ones who could do it were doing it. Now a great many people are doing it". This does not please Cage greatly. With so many others doing his work, he begins to feel that he's got to find something else to do.

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Cage - ideas (4)

On Power in Musical World: Says that Copland wields far greater power than Virgil Thomson, and one article of Copland's that is not even particularly laudatory has carried much more weight than all of Thomson's many pieces on Cage. Thomson reaches a select, intellectual, New York audience, but Copland's influence is felt throughout the country.

"The power that Leonard Bernstein wields is absolutely fantastic." Cage detests Bernstein's conducting, and finds his penchant for publicity "absolutely shameless." At the same time, he readily admits that when he hears a Bernstein performance on the radio, he often thinks it rather good.

On Self-Expression in Art: All art before the Renaissance, both Oriental and Occidental, has more or less the same basis, which Cage sees best defined in the early English composer's statement about the function of music: To sober and quiet the mind, and thus render it suspectible to divine influences. The Renaissance idea of self-expressive art is really heretical. Cage feels the new music is not really a break, but rather a continuation of the deeper tradition of art. For Cage, 'divine influences' signifies the Zen idea of "waking up to the very life we are living." Thus art should attempt to do from without what psychoanalysis does from within -- open one up to life. Enlightenment. A really useful function.

On Art as Communication: What does the artist communicate? If only his own feelings, then it is of merely clinical, not universal interest.

More on Self-Expression: "Take a ridiculous example, take ~~my Aunt~~ old teacher Fanny Dillon. She ~~wrote~~ wrote music to express her love of birds. What good is that? If you took it really seriously, you would have to go out and hate all enemies of birds -- cats, for example." But doesn't a generalized feeling for birds have some value? "A very limited one. It's really no more than the pursuit of pleasure, and people who pursue pleasure usually find pain." But what about the idea that if an artist expresses himself truly enough, the result is valid for all men -- catharsis, etc. "I would have to be convinced that what he is expressing is universal, and not just personal or clinical." Cage's big question about self-expressive art: What good does it do? (The vestigial Methodist preacher again).

On Leonard Meyer article in Hudson Review: Meyer claims that chance methods can be used in space arts (visual), but not in time arts (performance). "But we live in an age when scientists talk about space-time." Meyer insists on the language and syntax of music. Cage became aware early that musical syntax had been breaking down for the last 150 years -- Wagner, Schoenberg, etc. Endings dissolving. Beethoven's developments (Sonata form) moving toward endless variation, overshadowing exposition and recapitulation.

Still more on self-expression: "I recognized that expression of two kinds, that arising from the personality of the composer and that arising from the nature and the context of the materials was inevitable, but I felt that its emanation was stronger and more sensible when not consciously striven for, but simply allowed to arise naturally." (from 1948 Vassar lecture)

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THE FIELD:

(On differences with Earle Brown):

"He wants to include his own wishes and desires. Well, it's just my own wishes and desires that I want to get away from. I assume, you see, that we are moving from a linear situation, in which cause and effect are related by discrete steps, into a field situation, in which we are ignorant and in which things are not related by discrete steps. Brown's work now is like that of a painter who performs in front of an audience, shaping the result, making contrasts, putting soft against loud, and so forth. He feels this gives him greater freedom. But I say that it limits him. As a conductor, he can make only a limited number of gestures and signs, and the performers can respond to these in a limited number of ways. The result is that Brown's music resembles music we know, and you have only to read the critics to see that they are grateful for this. I see all this taking place within the double limitation I mentioned -- limited gestures, limited responses. But just as I feel that in this new field situation, all sorts of miracles are possible, I also feel that we must not limit ourselves. I want to get out of the circle of my own wishes and desires in order to be able to enter into the field in a way that will be becoming to the field. I've said this over and over again in Silence. And I feel that any loose ends, such as personal desires and wishes in a work controlled by chance operations, are examples of careless work...

"As a conductor Earle can't possibly manage more than fifty signs or gestures. Why accept such limitation now? Why not start with at least ten thousand, as the Chinese say?"

Anarchy :

"I believe that a kind of anarchy is possible now in art, although not in politics. The anarchic moments are the enlivening ones, for everyone, and the controlled ones are the dull ones. As a composer, I am searching for a way to work in which I do not control what I do, even though I have made the decisions that make it possible for me to work in this way."

"I don't want my wishes or desires to interfere with yours, for example." Asked whether he was actually pointing toward a situation in which there would be no artists, because everyone would be an artist, he agreed -- but with the reservation that the artist everyone would become would not be the artist like Earle Brown, or Pollock. On Pollock's idea of contact: "I would certainly want to eliminate that sort of contact from my work." Cage appreciates Pollock's work in the sense that it presented the overall surface, no single center of interest, etc. -- "that was something I could understand and something I could use." But he feels happy about only one or two Pollock paintings; the Pollock signature, unvarying and unvariable, is what bothers him -- the personality of the artist.

"I'd like to say that anything goes. But I am frequently forced to admit that this is not the case."* Things happen that he does not like and can't accept, such as union people using the freedom Cage gives them to do whatever they like. As Cage has said, "My problems are no longer musical, but social."

("Anything does go, but only when nothing is taken as the basis")

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Miscellaneous

Someone called (Nov. 27) from the Philharmonic to say they wanted Cage to apply his compositional methods to the televising of his Atlas Eclipticalis on the Young People's Concerts series. This idea interests him very much, and he will do it. I asked whether this wouldn't involve a vast amount of work -- chance operations being so time consuming. He replied that he had decided long ago that, just as there are different categories of reading, so there would be different categories of writing music; that it should be possible to devise means of writing slowly and also writing quickly.

This first arose when a dancer in Cunningham company asked him to do some music for her, at a time when he was very busy doing Music of Changes. Cage agreed, but didn't have time to use same method. Accordingly, he decided upon the method involving use of imperfections in the paper he was composing on -- first use of this method. The piece was called Music for Piano No.1. Since then he has written 81 such pieces, could write any number of others. (for process, see Silence, p. 57 ff) "Part of my character to feel this way."

TV

Cage has a television set, but no antenna. The reception is so poor that it is very difficult to make out what's happening on the screen. Cage rather likes this, and finds it interesting. The set has an automatic device to turn itself off when he has gone to sleep.

Loud Sounds

A problem with which Cage is now deeply concerned. He feels it has something to do with the climate of violence in which we now live, but says "I would prefer not to be pushed into violence."

At the moment (Dec. 1963) he has no answer to the problem. Until recently, when asked about the loud sounds causing physical pain, etc., he had said that if we hear a loud sound in a concert, then we will be in a better position to admit them into our experience rather than not. It is the responsibility of music to exercise this function, because no other art will (only art concerned with sound). Music can thus prepare us for the very loud sounds that we are certain to be hearing, more and more, in future.

Cage questions the physical pain argument anyway. Says no one's ears have been damaged. He says that at a Japanese airport last year, when a jet plane was backed up very close to the waiting room, all the Japanese present had to cover their ears while he, Cage, could listen to the noise "with enjoyment."

Yet he goes on to say that "there is an element of criminality in all art of this kind" -- this kind being art that goes against what society has decided shall be acceptable. Subversive art.

Cage and Tudor do hear the sounds they make in concert, in rehearsal previous, in empty hall, and thus louder. Ears trained to accept the loud noises, and, Cage claims, to enjoy them.

These are all answers he has made in defense. But he is worried about the whole issue, doesn't know what to say right now.

(After I left, Cage consulted I Ching about problem. "I got perfectly wonderful hexagrams, which told me to continue with what I was doing, to spread joy and even revolution." But advised against doing it alone. Urged him to resolve differences with colleagues, and work together with them -- Cage resolved to do so).

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Cage's own writings become increasingly hermetic (deliberately)

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Marcel Duchamp

Met him first at Peggy Guggenheim's, and even did the music for Duchamp sequence in the Hans Richter composite film "Dreams That Money Can Buy." "But in my world he was a kind of god, like Schoenberg, and to be friendly with him was like trespassing. I've always regretted that I never got to know him better."

Cage asked Duchamp once about his having stopped work -- asked whether he had ever been influenced by Oriental thought. Duchamp said no. "I got no support from him at all, but I have always used his work as a kind of corroboration of what I'm doing" (as in discussion of ox herding pictures -- Duchamp is the first version ending: The circle of nothingness).

Duchamp wrote a piece of music by chance operations in 1912 -- pulling notes from a hat and making a continuity that way. Cage wants to perform it some time (it has been performed only once, in Japan). When he asked Duchamp about it, Duchamp said, "Apparently I was fifty years ahead of my time." Note also: The Standard Stoppages -- Cage finds that marvellous.

From Cage's 26 Statements Re Duchamp (written 1962, Japan): "...We have no further use for the functional, the beautiful, or for whether or not something is true." Also quotes Duchamp statement that "Tools that are no good require more skill."

Irritation in New Art

Stein's idea was that all new art was irritating, and that when it became pleasing it ceased to be useful. Cage himself has never been worried about falling into the trap of being irritating for the sake of being irritating. "But whenever I've found that what I'm doing has become pleasing, even to one person, I have redoubled my efforts to find the next step after that." Asked whether he would now be bothered if the prepared piano music were being played (he agrees it would be very pleasing to most people), he said, "Not at all. I have my life, and it has its life."

Cage is able to equate Stein's "irritation" idea with the medieval function of music "to sober and quiet the mind etc" -- irritation is thus the intensification of one's awareness that makes us notice.

Jazz

William Russell, in late 40s, introduced Cage to Boogie, which he liked. "I thought that was quite nice, but I liked Russell's own music better." Heard jazz in Chicago, and a little when came to NY. "I found the rhythmic structure of jazz not as interesting as my own rhythmic structure, and I never liked the political picture of jazz at all -- everybody being very law-abiding so that one person can be free" (likes best the final chorus where everyone improvises). "I also disliked the regular beat. Over the years people kept telling me I was missing something, and that I should at least hear someone like Ornette Coleman. When I did hear Ornette Coleman, I thought his music was too loud. It was different from my loudness -- it's loud constantly.

Records

"Music has to do with things not being fixed -- that's really how it differs from painting, or did differ until Rauschenberg and others showed that painting didn't have to be fixed either. Records deny that."

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Alan Watts

Respects him very much, likes fact that "he's free of that soupy quality that can enter into Oriental studies." But also finds that he simply does not have modern taste, and doesn't understand music. Watts walked out of Cage concert, his argument being that you can hear that sort of thing without going to the concert hall (Cage knows this, but insists that it's the state of mind with which you hear it in concert hall that makes the difference). Cage says that when Watts read his book, Silence, he became respectful -- thus indicating that he is moved only by words.

The New Spirit

"I really mean what I'm doing, you see. Which is to say, I try to search out the meaning of what is being done, and then do it. Music is a time art, thus of the essence is the question of beginnings, middles and endings. Now, what is the meaning of that? I sometimes say that formerly, it was like owning your own home. It implied a certain security -- that traditional ABA movement, the sonata movement, the symphony movement. You started somewhere, and then you went out, and then you came home again, but you were different [illegible]. I don't think we mean that any more. I think that what we mean now is that there are no beginnings, no middles and no endings. And what does having no beginnings, middles and endings mean? It means simply that we are never away from the complete fulfillment of our desires."

This ties in with Buddhism, and the whole idea of interpenetrations and reincarnations. "Reincarnations are literally possible now in music. We know that. Anything can be transformed into sound, reborn as sound -- as in the idea for the PanAm building, people walking into the lobby can cross an electric eye and their passage can become sound. We know now that any kind of information can be translated into any other kind of information. And everything is information. (See Silence, p. 46 - Suzuki)

Electronic Music

"The problem now is how to make electronic music really lively. Pure electronic music is stone dead. Even Stockhausen, who started with the idea that it was only legitimate to make it from sine waves and white noise, is now trying to combine electronic with live performers.* And he's talking about using contact microphones...."

Toward Theater (see Silence, p. 31, for anecdote of piano tuner)

"That's what I mean by lively electronic music. What could be more theatrical than Atlas? The title refers to the great circle of the sun, and lo and behold what do we have but a mechanical conductor that describes one complete circle? My feeling now is that even in a poor performance, even when the musicians don't do what they're supposed to do, something of the piece comes through. Even if no one played what was written, the electronic circuits remain. And even if the musicians don't plug in their microphones, the visual aspect is still there — the conductor describing its circle. And so all is not lost."

Cage Music Reflecting Cage Taste?

"I admit this. But people who see that, and focus on it to the exclusion of everything else in the music, are not moving in the new direction. They are still tied to the Renaissance idea of the artist, self-expression, and the rest. The point is that we are moving in the other direction, to a point where the artist will be much less well known than he is today."

* which Cage doesn't like because the tape sound always seems to overwhelm the live performers, make them subordinate.

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Reviews

Time (Feb.22, 1943), MMA concert. Quotes Cage: "People may leave my concerts thinking they have heard 'noise,' but will then hear unsuspected beauty in their everyday life. This music has a therepeutic value for city dwellers."

HTrib (April 6, 1944 - Denby) on Cage-Cunningham concert at Humphrey Weidman Studio theater on 16th street: Concert "was of great esthetic elegance" (Cunningham's first solo recital, had been with Graham before).

HTrib (Jan.26,1948 - Berger) on Composers Forum recital at McMillan Theater. Cage Sonatas and Interludes "indescribably lovely, fresh sounds, conceived with the refined and subtilized Eastern sense of timbre."

Peggy Glanville Hicks (Sept. 1948 on Musical America) on prepared piano. "...a disembodied sound without association, without precedented timbre or form, without aesthetic antecedent... he has abstracted each element with which he works, stripping sound of associations -- instrumental, aesthetic, or even...emotional -- until one receives the impression that all legitimate musical elements are present only in their chemically pure state... Here and there straight piano tones will be left 'unprepared,' and these emerge from the thuddy texture like gongs in their shattering limpid elegance." "His music is chamber music par excellence."

HTrib (Jan 13, 1949 - Berger) on Sonatas and Interludes, heard at Carnegie Recital Hall. "Elegance and gentleness characterized the sounds of his 'prepared piano', as Maro Ajemian played the sixteen sonatas and four interludes."

HTrib (May 1951) on piece for twelve RCA "Goldenthroat" radios, premiere at McMillin Theater, New Music Society concert: ",,, Mr. Cage earnestly conducting an ensemble of some of our finest musicians in a series of embarrassing silences...The word 'Korea' recurred, and applause greeted bits of a Mozart Violin Sonata." (Berger)

NYTimes (May 16, 1958) on Town Hall Anniversary concert: Gingerly treatment, saying little. Refers to Williams Mix which "lasted only three minutes, and because it was so brief was thoroughly entertaining."

NYTimes (April 26, 1959) on premiere of Fontana Mix at Village Gate: Noises included "lions roaring, canvas ripping, pigs grunting, dogs barking, air bubbling up through water, crashing furniture, airplane motors, riveting, police whistles and Bronx cheers."

June 1963 (Gunther Schuller on Zagreb Music Biennale): "John Cage ... was unquestionably the most talked-about figure at the Biennale. Following the pattern of most contemporary music festivals, Mr. Cage and his followers represented 'American music' to the average Biennale visitor. This was doubly unfortunate since obviously the spectrum of American music could hardly be represented by any one composer, least of all Mr. Cage, and since his presentations were, in any case, largely misunderstood."

Note: See summary by Peter Yates in Location, p. 80-81.

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Critical Comment

Aaron Copland

"...one of the curiosities of the younger generation: the music of John Cage." Says he stems from percussion experiments of Varese and Cowell in the twenties, "much to the surprise of many of us who had thought the percussion period in modern music was definitely over...Fascinating as it is, I fear that Cage's music has more originality of sound than substance." (NYTimes Sunday mag, March 14, 1948).

"I would not think you could find a copy of Cage in Europe. There is something about him that I connect with California, where he comes from. They try everything in California -- and Cage is like that. He is really interested in the experimental attitude, not in creating great, eternal masterpieces, but in amusing himself on the highest level with new notions concerning music... I think the more different the music he writes, the more enchanted he is." (Music and Musicians, Dec. 1960).

Henry Cowell

"When I first met John Cage about 1932, he was writing strange little piano pieces with an unusual sense of the sound interest created by odd tonal combinations. Then as now the music showed little desire to move about actively; it rather depended on very slight and subtle changes for its elaboration."

Says Schoenberg "felt that Cage was more interested in his philosophy than in acquiring his techniques."

"To John Cage, a brief series of sounds, or even a single combination of them, has come to seem complete in itself, and to constitute an audible 'event'... Each 'event' is an aggregate of materials of sound that cohere, making a tiny world of their own, much as physical elements find themselves joined together in a meteorite. A work of Cage's, therefore, might well be likened to a shower of meteors of sound."

On Radio piece: "...the hour was later than anticipated before the work's turn came on the program, so that the 'instruments' were unable to capture programs diversified enough to present a really interesting specific result...One aspect of the work's failure to communicate must be laid frankly at the composer's door: his ever-present interest in the most delicately minute distinctions and gradations led him to admit too many low amplitude dynamics, through setting their range too low to begin with, so that many parts could not be heard at all as far away as the audience."

"The compositions of Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, Pierre Boulez and John Cage vary widely in style, but a common philosophy unites them: a concentration upon unfamiliar relationships of space and time, and sound and silence, rather than on new melodies and chords, and a conviction that all musical relationships, whether arrived at by chance or by design, have potential value and are worth examination."

"Mozart is said to have composed a set of contra-dances in which dice are thrown to determine the order in which measures are to appear...Charles Ives wants performers to feel free to make certain kinds of changes in his music, under some circumstances..."

(over)

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Cowell (cont)

"John Cage speaks for all these young men when he voices enthusiasm over freeing musical continuity from 'individual taste and memory,' and from 'the literature and traditions of art'...However...in spite of his best efforts to the contrary, Cage has not succeeded in eliminating his highly refined and individual taste from the music derived from the I-Ching."

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Virgil Thomson - reviews etc

HTrib, May 6 1951: "Modernism is not yet reactionary, though it has become academic..." Refers to New Music Society concert forthcoming, with Cage piece for twelve radios: "...Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters and Max Ernst have all worked in this manner...His gamut consists of clear stations, fuzzy stations, static and silence."

From "The Art of Judging Music", writing about Cage program for prepared piano at New School on Jan. 21, 1945, with Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale (Perilous Night, A Book of Music for Two Pianos, Three Dances) -- speaks of Cage's "genius as a musician" and says:

"The effect in general is slightly reminiscent, on first hearing, of the Balinese gemelang orchestra, though the interior structure of Mr. Cage's music is not Oriental at all. His work attaches itself, in fact, to two different traditions of Western modernism. One is the percussive experiments begun by Marinetti's Futurist Noisemakers and continued in the music of Edgar Varese, Henry Cowell, and George Antheil...The other is, curiously enough, the atonal music of Arnold Schoenberg and his school.

"Mr. Cage has carried Schoenberg's twelve-tone harmonic maneuvers to their logical conclusion...He substitutes for the classical chromatic scale a gamut of pings, plucks and delicate thuds that is both varied and expressive and that is different in each piece. By thus getting rid, at the beginning, of the constricting element in atonal ~~music~~ writing -- which is the necessity of taking constant care to avoid making classical harmony with a standardized palette of instrumental sounds and pitches that exists primarily for the purpose of producing such harmony -- Mr. Cage has been free to develop the rhythmic element of composition, which is the weakest element in the Schonbergian style, to a point of sophistication unmatched in the technique of any living composer... His work represents...not only the most advanced methods now in use anywhere but original musical expression of the very highest poetic quality." (Thomson says also that until a rhythmic structure comparable to Schonberg's tonal one is developed, the Schonberg system will remain "a fecund but insupportable heresy").

The Score, June 1955: (Cites Arthur Berger's comment that prepared piano is a conception not dissimilar to that of one-man bands of jazz world -- N.B. also Thomson's statement that p.p. sound was "a ping, qualified by a thud". Likens chance operations to collage, use of found materials by artists. Goes on to say): "...let no one think his 'Music of Changes' is wholly a matter of hazard. The sounds of it, many of them quite complex, are carefully chosen, invented by him. And their composition in time is no less carefully worked out. Chance is involved only in their succession. And that chance is regulated by a game of such complexity that the laws of probability make continued variation virtually inevitable. Thus, in Cage's hands, the use of chance in composition gives a result not unlike that of a kaleidescope...all the patterns turn out to be interesting, an arabesque is achieved. In the hands of his pupils and protégés the result is not always so distinguished, simply because the musical materials employed are less carefully chosen."

"..!Abstraction'in art is nothing more than the avoidance of a clear and necessary attachment to subject matter. It is even a salutary element in art because it clears the mind of sex and sentiment. Only briefly, however. Because the human mind can always find ways of getting these things into the picture...abstract movements invariably end by attaching to themselves an intense feeling about the one thing that is consistent throughout their works, namely, a method of composition. The composition, or the method of composition, becomes the 'subject,' in the long run, of all abstract art.

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Thomson reviews (cont)

"This has happened to the music of John Cage and his followers...I am sure that Cage's work is abstract, in any contemporary meaning of the term. I am also convinced that its workmanship is of the best...Myself I find it only natural that music, usually, in our time, a good quarter century behind the visual arts, should have finally acquired its own 'abstractionist' pressure group."

Sat. Review, June 1960: (reviewing 25th Anniversary Album) Says Cage's Six Short Inventions for Seven Instruments "already have the sweet cheerfulness, humor, liveliness and refinement that characterize Cage," and "also show the beginnings of his preoccupation with arithmetical structure."
On Imag Landscape No. 1: "...the sounds lack charm (as all electronically produced sounds do), and technologically the work is primitive. But for its time, ten years before tape, it is remarkable."
On Sonatas and Interludes: "...delightful, varied, sprightly, recalling in both sound and shape the Esercizi (or Sonatas) for harpsichord by Domenico Scarlatti. But in spite of the great mastery evident, they do tend to wear down the ear with their repetitions and with the monotony of the pings and thuds."
On Concerto for Piano and Orchestra: "//. a jolly row and a good show. What with the same man playing two tubas at once, a trombone player using only his instrument's mouthpiece, a violinist sawing away across his knees, and the soloist David Tudor crawling around on the floor and thumping his piano from below, for all the world like a 1905 motorist, the Town Hall spectacle, as you can imagine, was one of cartoon comedy."
The general effect, says Thomson, is varied and sophisticated -- "It is humane, civilized, and sumptuous. And if the general effect is that of an orchestra just having fun, it is doubtful whether any orchestra ever before had so much fun or gave such joyful hilarity to its listeners...And if these(sounds)express through their choice the gaity and sweetness of Cage's temperament and through their manipulation his high capacity for inventing games, this composer can be said here to have, like many another, expressed himself. The whole album is like that -- pure Cage...The music is the man. And the man is a California Western, optimistic, full of laughter and some tenderness, devoted to success and to what he calls 'nature.'"

Yale Review, 1961: Cage showed Europeans "the use of random choices in music, a device that has led them out of the impasse of complexity presented by planned multiple-row composition." In the 1940s, European masters Milhaud, Hindemith, Krenek and Schönberg were all teaching in America, "But none of their pupils, save Cage, who had worked with Schönberg, proved ready to cope on equality with the new musical energies that had burst out in Europe after the war under the leadership of Pierre Boulez."

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Virgil Thomson Jan. 6, 1964 CH 3-3700

Is Cage really a musician? "Oh, yes, definitely. He has a good ear. You have to follow your main sensory path, and with him it's certainly the ear."

Thomson gives Cage full credit for development of chance in music. "He did that before anybody else, and he's influenced the whole left wing in music. He got onto chance, hazard, before anyone else, because he realized before anyone else did that, considering the enormous complexity of total sērialization, you could get much the same results by using chance methods."

"His father was a practical inventor, and John has always felt that innovation is the highest form of art, and discovery a proof of genius."

"He's anti-academic, not anti-intellectual. By no means anti-intellectual. Why, everything he does is arrived at by intellection. It's mind-control he's against, not mind. And he's always been much too intelligent for the academics, anyway. He has real precision of mind. The academics have that in the physical sciences and in mathematics, but when they come to aesthetics they tend to get vague and subjective. Cage doesn't. He can run circles around Milton Babbitt. And he's vastly more important. He has more talent, more influence, more power, more students, even, than Babbitt. Look at the whole group of people who've come out of Cage -- directly. Nobody comes out of Babbitt that way."

The rebuff by Europe: "From the time he taught school out in Seattle, it was a rising career. In San Francisco, in Chicago, and then when he came on to New York he was definitely immortalizing. And then he went to Europe, and showed them over there what he was doing with chance. The Europeans were profoundly influenced. But they couldn't take leadership by an American, and Cage wanted to be the leader, all right. They just couldn't let him supply the gas and run the boat, too -- they had to run the boat. And so they found all sorts of ways not to give him credit. It was after that that John came back and went to the country and started looking for mushrooms. He was deeply hurt." (Thomson says that Boulez is the real source of anti-Cage maneuvers in Europe). "The Europeans had to keep control. And now, if Cage can go on to something else, some new field of innovation, and leave them all in stale pastures, so much the better."

Friendship: "John and I have always been friends in a very real sense, but we're also enemies. He could never understand why I wasn't as far out as he was. He felt that, since I was bright, and gifted, and had done things he liked, then why the hell wasn't I? And did my not being so far out imply a possible error on his part?" Main factor in relationship was the book/ Thomson tells story very differently: Cage begged to write book; did three chapters, which Thomson found so unfriendly in tone ("He referred to me only as 'Mr. Thomson'") that he refused to have anything more to do with it; later, when Kathleen Hoover felt unqualified to analyze music, gave job to Cage again; didn't change any opinions, but insisted on good grammer; changes by Knopf editor angered Cage; "and our friendship has never been quite the same since."

"Cage is a California nut, you see. He's all [redacted] those other things, too -- he's a brilliant, gifted musician and a fine composer and a highly intelligent man, but he's also a California nut. He's narrowly sectarian in outlook, though not in mind. It's like being the head of

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some small church that tells you this is how Jesus really was. And you simply have to be as far out as he is to have him accept you. Look at Merce Cunningham. John's made him stay far out. Merce could have been enormously successful in anything, even in musical comedy...

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Morton Feldman - 337 Lexington Ave. MU 5-0841

"The days - those were really the days. I'm 38 years old, but I feel like an old man because of those days!"... What we learned was that there are no catastrophes!"

No problem at all resisting Cage's ideas. All four working in complete freedom. Background important: "You have no idea how straight-laced everything was in music. God, listen, think of the number of painters since Piero della Francesca who have been absolutely first rate -- hundreds! And then think of the number of composers in the same period -- you can count them on your fingers. Just to change one little thing was a major life's work. But John changed everything. We got out of that straightjacket entirely, and it made everything much more simple in one way and probably a lot harder in other ways. We were all looking for structures for sounds..."

Freedom -- the seagull anecdote. Walking on East River Drive, Cage saw hundreds of gulls flying, exclaimed on how free they were; Feldman said no, "they're all just looking for bits of food." For Feldman, this indicates the greater degree of freedom that Cage has always had. "I'm chained, I'm tied to tradition in all sorts of ways, but John's never been chained. I have never wanted to give up my own taste that completely, give up all control -- he's gone much further than anyone."

Feldman says the musical world is now in great transition. The Cage-Feldman-Wolff-Brown school is becoming dominant. Heavy politics involved.

Cage and Feldman broke over Boulez invitation to participate in Paris concert series. Feldman takes blame, says Cage tried consistently for a reconciliation.

Boulez recently told Feldman, speaking of Cage: "I love his mind, but I don't like what it thinks." Feldman says that in any musical conversation now, no matter who's talking -- Lukas Foss, Boulez, Stockhausen, anyone -- Cage keeps coming into the conversation. His position seems to be that of the great innovator, the one who made everything possible, the [redacted] voice crying in the wilderness -- "John prepared the audience. While the rest of us were in our Manhattan monastery, he was going out, appearing on TV, lecturing, making tours."

Influence - Feldman says Cage made it possible for him to accept extraneous noise in a performance, and all other composers too. Largely result of silent piece, which Feldman heard in Woodstock.

DeKooning - very important in 40s and 50s for Cage. Used to go to all the concerts. Once said, to Feldman and others in The Cedar, "I've been going to your concerts for ten years, and feeling like an idiot all that time. Like an idiot. But I know in my heart that you can do no wrong."

Motherwell used to say, of Cage, "He always makes me feel as though I'm in church, listening to a sermon."

Loud sounds - Cage very struck by passage in Gertrude Stein where she talks about the necessity of new art being irritating. "He may be looking for an irritating art, irritating to him even. But the loud sounds are a real problem. He's gone beyond theater now, into something else. Sound is the big thing now, and everything else is accessory to it. And he's worried, because he's been getting it from everybody on account of the loud sounds that hurt people's ears."

Quoting de Kooning: "My friends are all either dead or famous."

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Cage could go so deeply into chance operations "because he was more free than the rest of us," less chained by tradition. "Whether because he had less to lose by it, or more, I wouldn't know."

Self-expression - Feldman agrees that the more Cage tries to push himself out of the music, the more Cage it begomes.

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Earle Brown

Twenty years younger than Cage. When they met, in Denver in 1951, Brown knew little about Cage and hadn't liked the one Cage record he'd heard. They discovered each other thru mutual interest in music of Webern. Cunningham teaching master class in Denver, which Carolyn took.

Brown was already deeply involved in his own attempt to loosen up compositional techniques. "We were both fed up with 19th century technique." Brown had been hit very hard by the example of Pollock -- the hottest thing going in art then -- wanted to find out how to do that in music. Says that when someone asked Pollock, "is anything all right, then?" Pollock replied, "No -- not when you lose contact." This, Brown feels, is the real key issue, and the issue that really separated him from Cage. He wants to go through his personal taste and into something wider, transforming his material by the intensity of his contact and involvement with it (also Rauschenberg's way). Cage wants to eliminate personal taste entirely.

Whole notion of chance in art is very tricky. Not really chance -- more a question of setting in motion something that will produce unforseeable results. But someone has to decide to set that something in motion. Brown complains that Cage sets it in motion, then cuts it off by taking every sort of pain to eliminate himself. Not real freedom: in a really indeterminate situation, the self would be free to enter in too. "I think you should be able to toss a coin if you want to, and then say now I'm going to use a beautiful F sharp..." Must be willing to chuck the system, in other words -- which Cage is never willing to do. Brown says that Cage is doctrinaire about chance; has made it into a system that is as rigid as the 12-tone system of Schoenberg. "Schoenberg and those people said you had to use the twelve tones because that was the only way to compose rationally; Cage says you have to use chance because that's the only way to compose irrationally." Cage and Brown have had many arguments over this, and one climactic one a few years ago; they remain good friends, but no longer discuss music much. "We are very different musically."

"John is really the most extraordinary person I've ever come across - musically, philosophically, psychologically, and every other way." Brown feels he is definitely a musician -- highly gifted pianist, brilliant theorist, although he tends to play down his musical gifts as part of the myth. But Brown does agree that he could just as well have been anything else -- woodcarver, philosopher, anything. Basically, he is a terrific moralist -- a lot of the preacher left in him.

Cage didn't really influence Brown-Feldman-Wolff, except by encouraging them to follow their own direction, which was not the popular one at all. (Cage himself had been at one time the golden boy of modern music, after prepared piano invention; then chose to go into chance, and lost all backing from establishment). But Cage has directly influenced an even younger generation, through his classes at New School. Ironically enough, he has recoiled from some of the results of his own influence here -- the wildness and total freedom and near-violence of the Happenings seems like "irresponsibility" to Cage, who hates physical violence. "John is so involved with not telling people what to do, or what not to do, and yet he's always telling musicians that something they do isn't what he meant at all. That just doesn't go. If a musician is told he can play any note or any rhythm, he ought to be able to. If Cage says that something is

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not what he meant, then he must have meant something else, and if so why didn't he write it?"

Brown is not involved with chance, himself. "That's one trouble -- we're all spoken of together as the Cage school, and as being involved with chance music. It's true I've fooled around with random number tables in some early compositions, but chance isn't what interests me. I'm more interested in spontaneity, and in getting the individual performer really involved..."

Brown makes distinction between chance methods in composition -- such as Cage used most directly in The Music of Changes -- and the kind of chance that leaves a certain degree of latitude to the performer, who thus becomes an element in the composition (indeterminacy) Brown and Feldman did the latter before Cage began to compose on graph paper, without specific notation, so performer could play notes he wanted. The thing is to get the performer so deeply involved in the musical experience that he doesn't just play some old cliche, or just his own favorite notes, etc. Cage always used to write down every single note.

The whole business of chance-indeterminacy-spontaneity-freedom comes down from Mallarme, Dadaists, Joyce, Stein etc. It all hooks up philosophically. 19th century artists really thought there was one perfect way to do things, just as others thought society was perfectible. But 20th century science showed that the world was relativistic, philosophy that truth was indeterminate, etc. And art, as always, reflected the breakdown of rational-moral-religious order and sought new freedom in the endless continuum of life itself. Brown, who was being influenced by the visual arts long before he met any artists or knew anyone who even talked about them, was struggling to do something in music that would be related to the mobiles of Calder, which were continuously valid though hardly ever the same, and also to the now-moment involvement of Pollock. Mobility and contact were the two goals for his own music. But the whole business of spontaneity and freedom and breaking free of 19th century shackles was very much in the air, and Cage was very much a carrier: He had been in direct contact with the surrealists Breton and Ernst, with Duchamp, etc. His intelligence was so powerful and so lucid that he seemed to focus in his own person this whole tendency in modern art, and he was thus extraordinarily stimulating to others who had the same ideas. The pity is that he has become doctrinaire about the very concept of freedom (according to Brown).

Today, the American musical establishment is just beginning to accept these ideas as valid musically. But ironically, the establishment accepts them from European musicians who have themselves been influenced by Cage and his group. The Europeans are invited to teach here, to write articles for US quarterlies, and when they do they talk about Cage, Feldman, and Brown, -- who are never invited to do either. Bernstein is doing all three at Philharmonic Hall on one program, billed as "chance music." Not nearly enough rehearsal time (as result of which Brown may withdraw his piece). "Far-out night at Philharmonic Hall" -- a crust of bread thrown to the kooks.

(he did!)

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Claverly 18
Cambridge 38, Mass. UN 4-0012
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Christian Wolff - 12/27/63

Recalls going to see Cage first time on Monroe Street, picking his way through dingy halls with laundry, children crying etc., thinking "this is pretty awful," finding Cage on top floor (nobody had names on door). Formal "study" with him lasted only about four weeks, after which they both realized Wolff didn't need discipline at all; after that it was simply a question of bringing his work to discuss.

Says Cage never dominated the group at Boza, "but whenever anybody did anything they brought it to him." Disagrees that it was necessary to share Cage's views on everything.

Increase of interest in Cage's work lately due to records and publicity. Students can't help being interested. "There is no musical avant garde apart from John. He's what keeps music interesting."

Wolff himself doesn't use chance methods (that great myth); his music tends more to be indeterminate with respect to performance.

Agrees that personal taste is very much a part of Cage's music.

"When you don't like something of John's, you usually blame it on the performance."

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David Tudor - 12/23/63 HA 9-4522
HA 9-9286

"I remember when John was writing the Music of Changes, he asked me how many arms I had, and without thinking much about it I said, 'Sixteen.' He took me seriously. Later I saw what he meant -- he wanted to know how many actions I could perform simultaneously. There was so much superimposition and overlapping in the piece..."

(Tudor's preparation for playing this kind of music is mainly a question of working out exercises to get him into physical shape for whatever he has to do).

Confirms that Cage lacks musical power of kind that Boulez and Stockhausen wield. But response has been getting much more enthusiastic during last five years -- country finally catching up.

How Cage's music differs from that of followers: "The main difference, I think, is in the use of silence. With the others, possibly excepting Christian Wolff, silence is just a hole in the piece, part of the texture, but with John it's much more than that. In spite of all the talk and discussion about silence, John is still the only one who really uses it that way."

On Playing Cage's music: "The music is very different from other composers'. When I'm performing it I feel more free, and at the same time more intensely aware."

Loud sounds: Tudor not at all bothered by them, feels that are simply in the nature of the work. Says they come about entirely by inadvertance, nobody makes them loud on purpose; it's just that in using the equipment the way they do, allowing for distortion, feedback and everything else, now and then the equipment is going to produce a very loud sound. Tudor says that it's the unfamiliarity of the loud sounds, and the fact that they usually arise out of quiet situations and are not prepared for, explains why they upset people-- i.e. the noise itself isn't that loud.

Note: Tudor says that there has been violence in Cage's work ever since his meeting with Boulez (whose work is extremely violent).

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Merce Cunningham - 1/8/64 61 W. 14, AL 5-7240

Changing attitude: "Everybody knows everything these days, it's not just confined to New York any more. Wherever we go, people know about us. They used to snicker a good deal during performances, but now they don't do that so much."

Graham: "Her ideas really didn't interest me, I just wasn't in tune with them, although of course I respect her enormously. I would have left in any case." Also had offers from Agnes deMille for musical comedy, but that didn't interest him very much either -- although he was in one deMille musical that closed out of town.

Cage at Cornish School: "He was like he is now -- full of life, full of ideas. I remember the first time I saw him I thought he was a student, he looked too young to be anything else. Once, when Bonnie Bird went to New York, he took over her class in composition, and he taught us more in two weeks than we'd learned in the whole year."

Cage and Academics: Set a lot of them on their ear, because he starts from an entirely different point of view, and many of them can't make the jump. "He didn't just break a few of the rules, he broke all of them."

Cage and Music World: "They used to think he was just a joke. They no longer do. A lot of this is due to those European tours with David Tudor, and a lot of is due to his having a publisher, so that the music is available. John makes everything funny, you see, and that used to get on some people's nerves. He was on some television program once, and he was doing that piece where he pours water in the piano and things like that. The producer got worried. He asked John, 'Is it all right if people laugh?' John said it was fine with him. 'I prefer laughter to tears," he said."

"Bernstein has always had great difficulty with John, because he just can't get around him. Things have gone too far now, and it's no longer possible to ignore what John is doing, and Bernstein doesn't understand it. Not that he couldn't understand it if he tried..."

Choreography & Methods: "In the forties, most dance ideas were based on the business of Theme and Variations. We never did that. From the beginning, we always worked with time structures -- we'd agree on a certain structure in time, and then John would go off and do the music and I would go off and make the dance. Over the years this has become freer and freer (Story, with Ichiyanagi music, differs each performance, with Cunningham telling dancers just beforehand how long it will be; Field Dances uses different set, costumes each time). "The time structure is the only agreement between us now -- we agree that a dertain piece will last a certain time on a particular night."

Music and dance are entirely separate and independent, "not dependent on each other." Cage-Cunningham were the first to do this, although others are doing it now (James Waring, Judson dancers). Cunningham once tried it with the Ballet Society, Tanaquil LeClerc (before that became City Center Ballet); "the dancers were very disturbed by it at first, but they caught on and did it beautifully." Cunningham discovered a chapter in Kurt Sachs' "World History of Dance" in which Sachs said there was reason to believe that in primitive tribal dances the dance was separte from rhythm, and that the tradition of interdependence is something we have invented.

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(Cunningham- cont.)m

Loud sounds: "They don't ~~xxxxxxxx~~ disturb me." Incident of radio interview, window falling suddenly, everyone jumped out of seat except Cage-Cunningham-Tudor. Once, on tour, a local reviewer wrote that "at times the sounds almost exceeded the threshold of pain." When read to David Tudor, he looked up in surprise and said, "Oh, I thought we had!"

Future Plans: "I want to make some pieces using more people. ~~Not~~ I don't mean a larger company, but I'd like to do something involving a greater density — one to twelve instead of one to eight." (Cunningham's dancers don't all do the same thing, so density would not just be a matter of greater numbers -- rather, greater complexity of movement. Tried this at Berkeley last summer, when he had forty students, and was pleased with results).

"I also have in mind to do a long, long piece, lasting four hours or so. The audience wouldn't have to stay through the whole thing, obviously, and the idea would be that not everyone in the audience would have to see the same thing. It would be like the circus, with three rings. Of course it ~~xxxxx~~ couldn't be given in a theater -- but I like the idea of performing in other ~~xxxx~~ situations."

Cunniggham says he hopes to go further in the direction of indeterminate performance, spontaneous movement. Problem of dancers running into each other is serious, although so far this hasn't happened. "I'm working on that, and I have some ideas."

As to Cage and Tudor, who provide the music on tour, it is becoming increasingly apparent that increasing calls on their time will necessitate changes. "It's no longer necessary for John to go with us every time. There are beginning to be musicians who can play these things, you see. A few years ago there was no one except John and David who could do it, and there is still no one who can do it as well as David. But more and more musicians are becoming interested, they want to learn, and more and more are doing so."

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Aaron Copland 1/8/64 914-PEekskill 9-0639

"It's difficult for me to think of John as a fellow musician, because it would never have occurred to me to use music for some of the ends he's used it for."*

Copland points out that there is some degree of chance in all musical composition, simply because of the performance aspect. "Whenever a piece of mine is being done, somebody says 'Good luck' to me beforehand." But the idea of giving up control is "very hard for someone of my generation to accept." The sense of making something solid, the satisfaction of "triumph" that comes after composition, is something Copland would miss too much.

Copland once invited Cage to lecture at Tanglewood. Cage gave the "Indeterminacy" lecture, reading stories one-a-minute, and had musicians do one or two of his things. Afterwards, the Boston Philharmonic musicians came up to Copland, and "they were really incensed. They wanted to know what all that had to do with what they were doing. I would imagine most musicians would have that attitude toward his work."

Copland believes that Cage's work with chance operations influenced the European composers, who got it from Cage. Although he sees a certain element of faddishness in chance, Copland also says: "Music is in a period of complete revolution, and the music we'll have fifty years from now won't be like the music we've known."

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* Copland really breaks with Cage on this point -- feels music should be music, not religion or philosophy or anything that goes beyond purely musical ends. He felt that Cage's early work was music, but what he's been doing in recent years isn't -- although he says he doesn't really know much about Cage's recent work, "partly because it's not easy to hear it, and partly because it goes beyond any conception of music I have."

"I always connect John with California. They have all those little sects out there, and it doesn't matter if there are only ten other people who believe what you believe..."

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Edgard Varese - 1/14/64 (check quotes)

"I first heard about Cage in 1936. I was dining with Richard Buhlig in Los Angeles, and I saw some paintings on the wall that I thought were very good. Who did them? I asked. Buhlig said they were done by a young man named John Cage, 'but it's funny,' Buhlig said, 'he wants to be a musician, and is studying with Schoenberg.'"

On Cage: "I like and admire him. He has a charming, warming personality, and, what is quite rare in our profession, is very generous toward his colleagues. He is very talented, imaginative, and he has done fine and original work. I confess that sometimes I don't agree with his views -- I consider his interest in chance derivative of the Dada movement forty years before -- but Cage is not a copyist. I xx admire his gift for stirring people up."

On Cage's lack of status: "The people who do have positions in the music world usually aren't doing anything very original."

Satie: Varese knew Satie well, says works like Vexations were not meant to be taken seriously. Vexations was "a joke." Says Cage and Satie xxxx not at all alike in temperament. Satie very much "a Norman," rather stolid in many ways despite his joking.

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Mary Caroline Richards -12/11/63

John's several moods -- acceptance (but don't be misled - he doesn't accept everything by any means), goading (even John doesn't always quite know about the humorous element), defiance ("You won't understand this, so listen anyway"), anger (can be ferocious).

Black Mountain 'event' - Cage wore a dark suit and tie, concert formal - "all his things have style, he's never been a garret type." This made it even more shocking to some, including the other member of the music faculty, a harpsichordist who played conventional Bach.

"I feel that John is an inspired person, whose ideas don't come from just thinking about them. He makes himself open to everything, and so he is very much in touch with the forces that are at work in the modern world, and mainly interested in what is contemporary. He never goes back, with him it's always necessary to move on to the next good thing.

Artaud - preaching the need for more powerful images, images so powerful that the mind can't deal with them, and which will therefore have the effect of opening up the soul to direct experience -- illuminating experience. What Cage is trying also to do. (MC read in Jean-Louis Barrault's "A Life in the Theater" that Artaud was one of the five great critics in history; having fancied herself as an authority, and never heard of Artaud, she was intrigued; she mentioned Artaud to David Tudor, her husband at the time, whereupon he went into another room and returned with a typescript of Artaud's "The Theater and Its Double." He had copied it himself, in toto, after learning enough French to dig into it so that he could more fully understand the music of Boulez' Second Piano Sonata -- Boulez had been reading Artaud while he composed the piece).

Self-expression - MC advises caution. Says that in one sense it can be argued that Cage does express himself even in the most indeterminate music (by pushing himself so far away, he expresses that aspect of his personality), but this requires careful definition of self and expression.

The Land - Cage was very funny when they first moved out. He responded to the country with astonishment and wonder, " as though no one had ever seen these things before."

Chance operations - MC tried using them at one point, under Cage's tutelage -- coin tossing and I-Ching, to write poems. "The results were interesting, but I didn't keep it up. I don't need that, really."

Money - Cage has a very healthy attitude towards it. "When he doesn't have any, he does what's necessary -- he borrows it, he comes and asks if you can feed him, he does what a poor man has to do, and it doesn't bother him. When he does have it, he spends it like a king, he asks you to share it with him -- he has absolutely no tension about it."

"John wants you to share his interests. He calls me a musical backslider because I haven't been going to his concerts lately -- I'm just not interested in electricity -- and he can never quite reconcile himself to the idea that I won't eat his mushrooms (result of traumatic poisoning with hellebore).

Success? Cage ambivalent here. "I tease John by telling him he wants to make revolution a branch of the state. He wants to go on overthrowing things, and at the same time he wants to be subsidized.

(see over)

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M.C. Richards (excerpts from her ~~book~~ unpublished book)

"Cage is a mycologist, as well as a composer...His approach to music is like his approach to nature. He starts with a feeling for what is there, and listens musically. His personal delight in the world of ~~unexpected~~ uncomposed sound~~s~~ casts a kind of net into the environment, and he is continually emitting cries of astonishment and joy at the riches of the waters and the good chance of his catch."

"The problem his music raises, he has said, is 'how to be free without being foolish.'"

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Lois Long - 12/11/63

Attributes falling away of support by other musicians, artists, at least partly to fact that Cage "isn't doing anything now. He has to spend all his time travelling and performing in order to make enough money."

Wesleyan came close to establishing Experimental Music Center, but then built a law school instead. Cage had planned elaborately, gotten Bucky Fuller to agree to build a structure, etc. Great disappointment.

But says Cage is never really depressed about these failures. "He gets cross, not depressed."

Cage doesn't talk Zen all the time any more, as he used to. For a while, "he couldn't talk to you without telling a Zen story or asking a koan or something."

Cage spends almost all his evenings with LL when he's home. He never works in the evening. They have dinner, go to movies, or look at television, in which Cage is fascinated. Her set ~~is~~ has good reception.

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Henry Cowell - 12/16/63 at 545 West 111th St.

Says Cage first came to him at age 16, in San Francisco. (1932) Cowell found quickly that his student, unlike everyone else, "seemed to think that music was something that didn't have to congeal. I recommended him to Schoenberg who was delighted with him and who felt about him much the same way I did. Schoenberg found him an extraordinary person, but one who would never be able to learn the technique of music, so it was better not to force him, but to let him go his own way." Says Schoenberg did not think of Cage as a good student, but rather an extraordinary and highly inventive person.

"My other best student was George Gershwin, who wasn't much concered with music history either. Gershwin did it by ear, and got it about 93% right. John was always mainly interested in the science of sound..."

Cowell had been doing a lot of work on the strings of the piano, using his fingers mostly. When Cage heard he was giving that up, he protested. Cowell said he was for Cage to carry on the idea. Cage did, and made the prepared piano -- which Cowell agrees was a new idea, whole new world of sound. ("Today everybody would accept the prepared piano. They'd have no trouble at all with that. But you can't even hear it any more").

During WWII, Cowell was in O.W.I. He sent a recording of Cage's prepared piano music to Java, and received delighted reply: "We didn't know any Americans were influenced by our music."

On self-expression in Cage: "What happens is that a human being has to decide what goes into the chances. It's really a limited operation. Nobody could do it better -- I mean nobody could do so well in trying to get outside his own taste and expression. But being human, expression enters into it."

Silence: Cage once explained it to Cowell as "as though you came upon a star in space." He also felt that silence gives people the opportunity of turning inward.

Irritations: "I've met a lot of people, but never anyone who had such a faculty for annoying others." Is this ever deliberate? "I do think that when he thinks of an idea that is certain to annoy, he is pleased. But he he never starts out with that in mind.

"A great many people really don't know about the fine things he's done, though, because of this faculty for annoying them, I remember a speech he made at Juillard, which he worked out by chance methods -- there were twelve points, and chance determined the order they came in. The first thing that came up was a dramatic pause. The second was a very difficult paragraph of logic, and so forth. I've never seen a group of students so angry as they were afterward. Some of them really wanted to beat him up.

Mrs. Cowell added here that they have been many times put in the position of being somewhere after Cage has come and gone, and having to deal with the anger. "In Woodstock, after the concert with the silent piece, it was all anyone talked about for a year afterward. And the moment John was mentioned their voices would go up an octave." Irritation usually increased after he's gone, because his presence is so disarming. "He puts people's backs up and yet he's so winning," said Cowell.

What causes the extreme irritation? "WE must have been asked that question forty times, and I still don't know the answer. But I think it may have something to do with the nature of musical performance. Music is always passing by, you can't ever get a grip on it the way you can with the visual arts, and so you don't get used to new work so easily."

Radios Piece: Cowell went down to hear rehearsals in early afternoon, found it ~~quite extraordinarily interesting~~ "quite extraordinarily interesting." Done late at night, "it was a perfect frost."

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Cage Influence: "It's a very powerful influence on a very small circle. He is 'papa' for half a dozen musicians here in New York, and that's fine. Personally, I have felt that John has done wonders with these things, that he's been much more interesting than the peoplexx who've gone along with him. He's also made more fuss and trouble xxxx here than anyone else. So that the two composers you hear talked about most are John and Elliot Carter, our best 12-tone conservative. But he's not really exerting a very wide influence now. He certainly has had a tremendous influence on musical history, but right now his music is mainly something to talk about. You know, if someone writes a nice symphony, and calls it a symphony, and people go and hear it and like it, there just isn't much you can say. But there's always something to say about John. It's a philosophy, really -- people don't like the music much."

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Richard Lippold - 12/20/63

Met Cage through Cunningham in 40s. Early bond languished when Cage started inviting people to apartment on Monroe street evenings for "what could only be called lectures. It was never conversation of any kind, and real conversation between us has been impossible since then."

Says Cage tends to be uncharitable in moving from one group of friends -- one in-group -- to the next; he can drop people and ideas quite summarily. He is phenomenally charming, but if you don't happen to share his views he just isn't interested.

"It was impossible to resist his views. He made you read Ramakrishna, or whatever he happened to be absorbed with at the time -- you simply couldn't carry on a conversation with him if you hadn't read it. A lot of people were so put off by having John push Zen at them in conversation that they were predisposed to dislike his Music of Changes, which he felt was so close to Zen."

* Cage once told Lippold that he wanted to always to be young. (Crucial point here -- perennial avant gardism is perennial youth-ism?). And the young have always responded naturally to Cage, because of his iconoclasm. College students are iconoclastic, in sense of overthrowing established values; so, when Cage dethrones Beethoven, they are delighted.

Music: Cage's differs from that of his followers, who do things stylistically and systematically but without his underlying artistry. Cage an artist in spite of himself, making choices (example of film they made jointly, using I-Ching; the book said it should be seven minutes; the film came out at ten minutes, and Cage liked it so well he said they'd leave it at that length, in spite of I-Ching).

Cage told Lippold that he had once been deeply disillusioned by the mind and its reasons, and that this had turned him toward Oriental thought. "It often seems to me that John has been living his life in reverse. He has the most brilliant intellect of any man I've ever met, and for years now he's been trying to do away with it. Once he said to me, 'Richard you have a beautiful mind, but it's time you threw it away.' To me, that's just like saying Richard, you make beautiful sculpture, why not cut off your hands? I feel very sad about John sometimes. Why doesn't he just have a lobotomy then, if he wants to be without memory or thoughts of any kind?"

"Having come all this way to arrive at nothing, it seems to me that now he'll just have to come out again, into the world. It's all that's left."

Incident of Alan Watts walking out of a Cage concert, saying this was not to be connected in any way with Zen, was "boudoir music." (Watts is said to have recanted since? Original attack was in NYPost). Acc. to Lippold, Cage was very distressed by this. Lippold asked him some time afterwards what he was interested in then (post-Zen), abd Cage said "Anarchy."

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Robert Motherwell - 1/10/64 SA 2-0018

Met Cage in 1940s, hasn't seen much of him ~~lxx~~ in recent years. They never became close friends. "I think my painting was too husky for him. He really liked work by people like Lippold and Tobey and Graves."

"You have to remember that in those days there was only a very small group of people interested in modern art, fifty to a hundred. John did the primary thing of making himself part of our milieu."

"From the very beginning I felt, without question, that he was absolutely authentic. He had that dedication, that purity. And of course he was always so engaging. It was a personal ~~xx~~ feeling, that didn't have much to do with his ideas..."

At the same time, Motherwell says he always felt that Cage wasn't part of the real world. "There's not enough of the peasant in him. He'd probably consider it vulgar to try to create a masterpiece."

Motherwell stopped going to his concerts years ago, in anger. "He's really just spitting in people's faces now. It's a kind of paranoia, this pushing an absurd premise to its logical conclusion. To push a ~~xxxxxx~~ realistic premise to its conclusion is genius... He's just not in the real world, in spite of his beautiful mind. It's a mind that's in constant flight from something" (would explain his constant avant-gardism). "And there's something wrong about the fact that musicians don't come to his concerts. I'd hate it if my audience was composed of musicians..."

The Club

Idea took shape in the forties, in East Hampton. Motherwell, Rothko, David Hare, Baziotes, and Clyfford Still started talking about starting a school of modern art, which didn't exist at that time outside of Hans Hoffmann's classes. They took a big loft on 10th street, and each one taught one day a week. There were a lot of artists in New York then, few of whom knew ~~xxxx~~ any of the others, so it was decided to have Friday evening lectures at the loft. Admission was 25¢, and the invited speaker was given a bottle of any liquor he specified. The daytime school never had more than 20 students, but the Friday evenings drew more and more people each week, until by spring there were 200 or more. This became a ritual — artists would no more pass up the Friday evenings than the people of another world would pass up Monday night at the opera. The next year, when Baziotes, Styll, Rothko and David Hare gave up teaching, another group took over the loft and kept up the Friday evenings, and made the place into a club with tables and cafeteria. This lasted for nearly ten years, during which New York painting became the dominant international style.

Now no longer necessary. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ "Everyone is ransacking the world for young talent now. Young painters don't have to band together to say, Look, I'm here too, and this is what I think. But in those days art had no commodity status."

Today, thanks largely to the activity of the Museum of Mod Art (which applied all the techniques of art history and scholarship to works of contemporary art), America has gone painting crazy. Remarkable -- English-speaking people have never before been particularly visual. Another factor is that US universities all teach both art appreciation and practice. This is a permanent development, Motherwell feels - - Americans are painting-crazy just as Italians are opera crazy, Germans music crazy, French food-and-wine crazy.

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Minna Daniel (Lederman) - 1/2/64

Early work shows lyrical quality now absent - Wonderful Widow, etc.

25 Annniversary Concert: Painters put pressure on their galleries to buy boxes; terrific loyalty of painting world; very few musicians present.

Attitude of music world changing now. Before, most musicians took line that Cage was just not to be taken seriously (Milton Babbitt still takes this line; recently told Minna Daniel that "Cage just doesn't exist"). But in last five years (i.e., since book)"his ideas have started to bother them more." Leonard Meyer article in Hudson Review a factor -- reaches academic level, shows how Cage's chance business has been used by painters with great success, and can't be dismissed (I would say Cage's own book the real influence).

At the same time, Cage recently told Minna Daniel he was distressed because he was getting more attacks lately from the musical world. Minna explains this by saying that Cage really wants power, mainly as a means of helping Merce (who, many feel, has suffered from too close association with Cage; Cage got him to leave Graham, and this earned for him the permanent enmity of John Martin of NYT).

Cage has always promoted new artists, who have often gone on to become highly successful while Cage himself just went on to the next thing. Cage expects Feldman to have this kind of success, because his work is so beautiful.

Aaron Copland, back from Japan, said "Everyone asked me, 'Where ees John Cage?'" Cage went over later (not helped by State Dept.) and was received sensationally. The Japanese accept him more than anyone else, perhaps because they can accept noise more easily.

Thomson relationship is complex. Virgil has both helped and exploited Cage. Could have helped him a lot more at crucial moments. Some feeling of threat perhaps.

Look up Stravinsky quote in one of books with Craft -- about Cage being unique. Cage himself always says he prefers to be thought of as an inventor -- leaving up in the air the whole question Is It Music?

Note: Music politics is now somewhat abated in fervor. Movement of "consolidation" afoot (Arthur Berger, whom Cage abominates), with marriage of neo-classicism and 12-tone school (Stravinsky's about-face). But 12-tone composition is still the official avant-garde school. As far as the public is concerned, "music" still means 19th century works, with a smattering of early Stravinsky (Petrouchka, Firebird) and even less early Schoenberg (Pierrot Lunaire). Contenporary works almost never get performed except in universities, etc. Record companies are starting to do new work, though, and situation may be changing. Bernstein's avant-garde series at Philharmonic is indicative of pressure building up -- he had to do this, although it looks as though he plans to treat Cage et al frivolously.

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Karlheinz Stockhausen (age 35)

Brushes off indebtedness to Cage. Says he was one of the people in the present period who understood the new musical continuity that was emerging.

Cage is talked about a great deal in Europe -- as much as ever. But it is his ideas rather than his music that is discussed. Many haven't even heard the music, but know his ideas).

No indeterminacy in Stockhausen's work -- everything written down, total control. Not even familiar with recent Cage music, feedback and distortion etc. No theory on function of music. Like other composers, respects Cage but doesn't want to be tagged with his "influence."

Lecture-Concert at Hunter College Playhouse on evening January 6, 1964: "The Development of Musical Form Since 1951" (concert filled hall to overflowing, with hundreds turned away; musical and art elite in evidence -- Bernstein and Lukas Foss, Selz-Seitz, etc.)

"If there has been any development since 1951, it has been a development from form to the activity of forming." What counts today is "the constant birth of something." Noted that in his own case, "a form was found for each composition" which could not and should not be repeated.

Before Kontakte, Stockhausen suggested that audience listen with eyes closed -- "I have had unique experiences -- inner experiences -- when I close my eyes." No Cage-theater experience here. Total control.

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Igor Stravinsky

From Expositions and Developments (1962):

"The unique example of Dada in music is John Cage."

"I regard Mr. Cage as a distinctly American phenomenon..But whatever the American attributes Mr. Cage may exemplify, I believe them to be responsible to a profound extent for his extraordinary success in Europe... Is it only that Mr. Cage does things Europeans dare not do and that he does them naturally and innocently, and not as self-conscious stunts? Whatever the answers, no slight of hand, no trapdoors are ever discovered in his performances; in other words, no 'tradition' at all, and not only no Bach and no Beethoven, but also no Schoenberg and no Webern either. This is impressive, and no wonder the man on your left keeps saying 'sehr interessant.'"

"I have enjoyed many things Mr. Cage has done, and always when he is performed side by side with the young earnests, his personality engages and his wit triumphs; he may bore and frustrate but he never puts me in a dudgeon as they do."

"My temperament and Mr. Cage's are hopelessly mis-cage-nated, and his performances are often, to me, the frustration of time itself."

From Table Talk, forthcoming book, quoted in Feb. 1964 Show:

"...the Sixties are the Aleatoric Age. And the nature of aleatoric music allows for the possibility that selected parts or even all of it will not be performed. Add to this the fact that in these do-it-yourself days less and less frequently is music actually written out or, for that matter, composed. Mr. Cage's most delectable (and technically his most competent) composition to date is undoubtedly the silent piece "4'33'', and we may expect his example to be followed by more and more silent pieces by younger composers who doubtless will experiment with more and more varied and interesting combinations to produce their silences...And soon we will settle down to an academicism of silence."

Stravinsky on harmony: (from Location, p. 78)

"Harmony, a doctrine dealing with chords and chordal relations, has had a brilliant but short history...Today harmonic novelty is at an end. As a means of musical construction, harmony offers no further resources in which to inquire and from which to seek profit. The contemporary ear and brain require a completely different approach to music."

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Roger Maren (On electronic music: Reporter, Mar 6, 1958)

"There is no reason to assume a lack of humanity or sensitivity because the means are mechanical and electronic. If one considers the scrape of horsehair on gut, the opening and closing of valves, the complex lever movement, and all the plumbing that is necessarily in operation during the performance of a Beethoven piano concerto, there can be little argument about this."

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John Cage - 107 Bank Street, 1/19/73 989-7132

As Toiny Castelli remarked the other day, he has one of the great faces (heads) of our time. The long flowing brown hair and white beard make him look, not older exactly, but more benign, wiser. The basement room at Bank Street is lined with cardboard boxes - his files, which he has brought together from various places and is putting in order. A life in order. Chessboard on the table - John is studying with Bobby Fischer's teacher, who told him yesterdday that he had improved "fifty per cent. Isn't that marvelous?"

"One thing is that I've been sixty for two years. I was born in September, so in seventy-two I turned sixty in September, but people began celebrating it in January. So that all of seventy-two I was considered to be sixty. And naturally I'll be sixty all of seventy-three."

How does it feel? "Well, it has more pains in it. As you get older you get new pains, and you have less energy and so on. I used to wake up in the morning and be full of energy and then I would decline slowly, whereas now I wake up stupid, and it seems to take an inordinately long time before I begin to have any energy, and then I go down hill more quickly."

"The first celebration, in January 1972, was in Berlin. An art gallery there, the Kleber, ran I don't know how many concerts, there must have been fifteen concerts of my music. Mostly recent work - of the last 25 years.

"I was touring in Europe for a great part of last year. I toured for four months with David Tudor and then for two months with Merce. And I had already been in Berlin in January for this gallery thing. I had thought that being done by artists, it would not be done in very good musical style but it was very well done and the musicians were serious.

"Then I was next in Berlin in June, when David and Tudor and I did a program together. I chanted and David did his electronic music. We did a performance of "Mureau," which is a combination of "music" and "Thoreau." It's a word I made up. I chanted that and David performed "Rainforest." (Chanting is texts from Thoreau, fragmented according to instructions from I Ching. "That will be in my next book* which comes out in April."). That was our second visit to Berlin. Then we came back in July for a large and beautiful performance of 'HPSCHD.' In Illinois we had had seven harpsichords; in Berlin we had four, maybe five. And fifty-two tape machines. It was done in the big Berlin Philharmonie, which is out in a vacant lot near the Museum of Modern Art. Some of that modern architecture in Berlin -- one of the buildings has been called the "Drunken Octopus." They're round, and they're sort of experimental architecturally, so they look a little wild. And when you're in this hall of the Philharmonie it's as though you had the audience all around you, but it's asymmetrical and a little wild. Well, they thought that I would like that architecture, and when I saw it in May or June I said that what I really liked was not the hall but the lobby outside. The lobby was marvelous. It had many levels for the people to come out on, and we were able to put the tape machines and loudspeakers on different levels. Then, we ran in the hall itself -- you know HPSCHD itself is made up of a good deal of Mozart and then goes on from there through the history of European music. In HPSCHD you have, in the solos, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Schonberg, and Busoni, and then Hiller and Ives -- I wrote HPSCH with Lejaren Hiller. Ives' music was to have been in it, but his music was copyrighted in 1950, and after I'd already put Ives in

* "M" - Title from I Ching; both music & mushrooms.

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it, his publisher refused to let me use it. So I found some Busoni, some passages that were very Ivesian, and I cut out with a razor blade all the Ives ~~xxxxxxxx~~ and I inlaid into my transparencies the Busoni. So, anyway, we had the HPSCHD in the lobby, and then inside we had a perfectly conventional program of music of all these composers and a few others thrown in like Scribin. You could leave the lobby and go into the concert hall and hear the music un-fragmented. That hall was often well-attended and the lobby was too. You could be in the lobby for a while and then go right back into the 19th century. It was a very pleasant situation, and most people were pleased with it, and I think the reviews were good.

"There was a great rash of performances in Europe as a result of my being sixty. It began with a festival in Bremen, in May; David Tudor and I opened that festival and also closed it. There were also special performances in Bonn, and London, Basel, the Hague, Pamplona. Then we joined the Cunningham Dance Company in Shiraz, in Persia, the first week of September. September 5th was my birthday, and we gave a performance that night, music and dance, and, you know that part of Canfield where the dancers all form a circle; well, Merce arranged it that evening, so that -- I was sitting at the side of the stage withDavid Tudor and Gordon Mumma, doing the music, and Merce arranged it so the dancers came over and surrounded me and said 'Happy Birthday.' Then after the performance we went back to the hotel, which had a lovely pool with fountains in it, and a beautiful garden, and they had arranged a supper there, with a birthday cake, and as I recall, the icing had pomegranite seeds in it.

"That's a delightful place. Both Merce and I gave university talks and answred questions in Shiraz. Then from Shiraz we went to Venice, and in Venice there was also a symposium where I was obliged to answer questions. One of the questions was 'Why do you go a country which has such bad politics as Persia.' And I said, 'Well, you have to remember what country I come from.'"

"Merce is doing new things for the Brooklyn season, I think, but I don't keep close tabs. One of the things that has changed in art, I think, over the last 25 years, is that we used to keep rather close tabs on one another, and we don't any longer. I don't know whether that's a result of inclination, or whether we're just too busy to keep up."

Tully Concert

Dennis Russell Davies wanted it to be a retrospective -- early and late and some pieces in between. "We talked for what was really a very short time, and agreed on the program. It begins with Music for Wind Instruments, which I wrote in Seattle in the late thirties; it was to have been played in Seattle after I finished it at the University of Washington, but they found the first and third movements too difficult so they only played the middle one. And until now, I have never heard the piece. I chose it largely because I've always wanted to hear it -- it has been played elsewhere but I've never been around to hear it. There's another piece of mine that I've never h ard that's being played at the concert at Columbia in March - it's Five Songs for a Contralto with words by EE Cummings; it was while I was writing that in Pacific Palisades, California, that my grandmother came into the room and interrupted me and asked whether I was ready for the second coming of the Lord. I said I presumed to be ready. If I'd said I was ready she would have been furious, and if I'd said I wasn't, she would have undertaken to ready me, and that would have taken too long and interrupted my work."

~~Also on the program is Music for Wind Instruments~~ "27'10.554" For A String Player. "It's being conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, which is

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unusual because you don't ordinarily see five people being conducted. He says it's very difficult to conduct, and that it should be used at Juilliard examinations in conducting. It changes meter continuously, which is rather rare in my music. But this is a very early piece. Actually a twelve-tone piece. But not a conventional twelve-tone piece -- it sounds energetic rather than sad.

"Then comes a piece which is called 27'10.554" for a Percussionist. The title is written this way so as to make ambiguous whether it's time or space. With my music on magnetic tape you can see that you can't tell whether it's time or space because seconds are also inches." Also on program because John wanted to hear it. But Davies had two percussion players. So John divided piece into two parts, superimposed them, and actually made a new piece which should properly be called 15'11.704" For Two Percussion Players. "But I can't change the program because it's already been printed. I asked Merce this morning whether I ought to make an announcement, to explain why two people came out and played for a lesser length of time than the program said. And we both decided that it would be more confusing if I clarified it."

"The next piece is a piece that's frequently played now, and that's Concert for Piano and Orchestra. That was first done at Town Hall, and Merce conducted, and it's been done here and there a good deal. And then there's an intermission and then comes Cheap Imitation.

(Notes, p. 39)

Cheap Imitation - "In the late forties, Merce made a dance called Idyllic Song, which went with the first movement of Eric Satie's Socrate. I liked that so much, and I liked the music so much, that I said that if he would finish the second and third movements I would finish the two-piano arrangements for each. It wasn't until the summer of 1969 that Merce finally said -- altho I tried to persuade him all down those years to continue that choreography -- that he said he would, and so I said I would continue the two-piano arrangement. I had been for the previous two years at the Univ. of Illinois, where I had met a good young composer named Arthur Maddox; and I was so busy with other things that I arranged with him to continue the two-piano arrangement, and I would supervise it and so forth. Which is what happened. So that later that fall of 1969, at Davis, where I was composer-in-residence, I finished the arrangement and at that late date write to Eschiv, in Paris, to get permission to make the arrangement, which was already made. And they promptly refused me. We then pulled every string we could think of to make them agree, but they wouldn't be budged. I don't know why they were so adamant. They didn't even want to see the arrangement. It's a perfectly faithful arrangement in every way, and very beautiful. Anyway, this brings us to December, 1969, and Merce was to open in Brooklyn with the company, doing the new work, in January. So I said not to worry, that I would make a piece that kept the phraseology and the rhythm in detail, but that changed everything else. I told Merce I would call it Cheap Imitation, and Merce said then he would call the dance Second Hand. The reason I called it Cheap Imitation was in imitation of Satie's titles. That is, wherever I could imitate Satie, I did. One of his titles that I was thinking of -- rather late in his life a publisher commissioned him to do three pieces, and he wrote them, and gave them the title of Three Flabby Preludes For A Dog. The publisher refused to publish them with that title. So Satie made one change - the title became Three Genuine Flabby Preludes For A Dog, and then they were published. So altho this being the other side of the coin, cheap being the reverse of genuine, I think it's still in the same world.

(Q: Fragmented?)

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"So, I composed it with the I Ching, you know, with respect to those seven modes and twelve transpositions, asking the I Ching which mode and which transposition, and was able to write quite quickly. And then in the course of playing the piece, which I did quite a lot while we were touring, I became so fond of it that I decided to orchestrate it. It took me two years. The details are legion. The number of pages exceeds 3000. There are 95 parts, and each part has the whole melody, in small notes above, and then below, in larger notes, are the parts that particular instrument plays. All the parts are different. So what you have is no counterpoint, no harmony, all you have is this melody which changes color. You get the melody when you have 24 performers, which is what we're having at Alice Tully Hall. But you could change the color by adding another instrument, and it would keep on changing, and always be different, up to 95 which is the maximum. I've never heard it with anything more than 24. It turns out to be socially a very difficult problem." Simple piece, but one that requires much rehearsal; several times in past, musicians have failed to learn their parts and piece has been withdrawn from program of a concert. Davies has been warned - that six rehearsals needed after people know their parts. But oboist dropped out to go to hospital, replaced by new one who didn't even come to first rehearsal. Musicians all very conscientious, but no time when all 24 could be got together until this week, and only four rehearsals will be held. "It's the state of our society. Whether it will sound well or not I don't know. The piece is really for orchestra without conductor. There's no score. Everybody has the total melody in his part. If they would listen, they should be able to do it, but they're not used to listening. They're used to following the dictates of the conductor. One problem is that you're dealing with musical habits that are being changed, with this piece. As one of the Dutch musicians put it to me, 'To play your music you have to change your mind with regard to music itself. How can you expect 96 people to do that?' My reply is that we are not merely 96 but nearly 4 billion, and if we don't change our minds quickly -- we may ruin the whole globe."

"I don't see how it could be what it might be" on Sunday. Even tho good musicians and conscientous, they're not in a situation to do it right.

How does he feel about hearing early music now? Was afraid he might feel ashamed of wind instrument piece, that it might seen dated and slight, "but I found it interesting enough. It has a certain energy -- that energy we spoke of earlier."

Present Work - getting papers in order. "It got so that I couldn't find anything. I'm also giving everything I can away. I've given all my mushroom books to the Univ of California at Santa Cruz, and I'm hoping that Northwestern Univ will take all the music material. They have the Moldenhauer Collection, which is the greatest collection of musical manuscripts of all time, and if they take the manuscripts that made my book on notation that will help the Foundation for Performance Arts. Then all my papers that have to do with my writing -- not music but words -- are being accepted by the Wesleyan Univ Library. I hope to add to the Northwestern thing, if they take it, my whole collection of programs of music criticism - four boxes of it over there."

Still feels that since so many others are composing in new ways now he doesn't have to do it any more. "I think my energies are best used if I'm doing something that at least I think no one else is doing. I've never thought that two people should do the same thing. I think the musical scene today is excellent. There's so much activity, and people are being informed about it. And there's such great variety of kinds of music. It's really a lively musical scene."

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Still keeping diary on how to save the world. "But I must say, this last year I've begun to feel sceptical, and even unnaturally pessimistic. When I told Jasper Johns that I was feeling slightly pessimistic he roared with joy, and said 'At last!'

But doesn't musical scene sound hopeful note? "Yes, but I think the great freedom of the arts in the United States is simply proves that the government doesn't take art seriously. If they took art seriously, they would clamp down on us immediately."

Not totally hopeless on turning sixty. "I'm inherently optimistic. I'm completely untrained as a pessimist."

Cage - "HPSCHD" (Cage-Lejaren Hiller)

Performed first at Assembly Hall at Univ. of Illinois, Urbaba campus, on May 16 1969. Vast circular sports arena. Sound from 58 amplified channels, each with its own loudspeaker mounted high up. 51 channels contained computer-generated music, in which "It was insured that no order can be perceived" (acc. to Cage colleage Ben Johnston). Also seven amplified harpsichords - three playing fixed versions of Mozart's "Introduction to the Composition of Waltzes by Means of Dice," in which the performer is allowed to play sections in any order he wishes; three different versions of the fragments, two of which incorporated other passages from Mozart; two more harpsichordists, Neely Bruce and Yuji Takahashi, playing different collages of harpsichord music from Mozart to the present, while David Tudor played "computer print-out for twelve-tone gamut." The seventh harpsichordist, Philip Corner, had permission to play any Mozart he wished, and inaddition to playing his own solo each harpsichordist "is free to play any of the others."

Films, slides, and lights projected on screens. Audience milled around the floor - the seven instrumentalists were on raised platforms. Cage described it as "an extremely complec interpenetration of an unknowable number of centers." Also as "a political art which is not about politics but political itself.

Cage sought out Hiller, who pioneered computer-assisted composition, as collaborator.