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(11) Cage - Boza Mansion etc. - his influence

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Morton Feldman - 4/7/78

"You could read Bob right away. He always let you know -- the station came in with perfect clarity. In Jasper's case there was always some static. It tooks years to read Jasper -- years.

"Cy Twombly was very important to all three of them. It was a sort of trilogy, with lots of spinoff in terms of influence. I have a fabulous picture of Cy's, done with encaustic before Jasper used it. There was his whole literary sensibility, his mind, his concentration. Cy should never have left. He went to Rome and married that princess from one of the oldest families, and he got a sort of society painter image, but he's so much better than that. Cy was always so elegant - like Pollock.

"I was close to a lot of older painters, and I had to sort of juggle them against my relationship witn Bob and Jasper and John. We were the same age - no, Jasper was younger. I was close to them for five years. Privately, the older painters were really watching Bob and Jasper. Jasper is another stpry, of course. Hust like his work, he seeps into the crack and before you know it you're saturated. I really didn't know what he'd done until the Jewish Museum show. That was when the competition between them began. Bob appeared at first to be the more dynamic, but that was not the case.

Egan Show - Mortie doesn't remember it well at all. Doesn't know how it came about that he gave a concert. It was ~~the~~ first time he'd played in public, and he was so nervous he had to bring up his own piano. The program was mostly his piano solos, together with a piece he did for two 'cellos called "Extensions" number something.

Feldman: Grew up in Queens, didn't attend college. His father in the clothing business (children's winter wear). He was fortunate in having as his teacher Wallingford Riegger, who really got him started -- Mortie in his teens then. Met Stefan Volpe, a marvelous character who knew Tworkov, the artists, Klee, Bauhaus people. ~~It~~ Met Cage leaving the concert so as not to have to hear Rachmaninoff, after the Webern; went to visit him soon afterward on Monroe Street, and six months later Feldman moved into the same bldg, on second floor. Cage had top floor, and it seemed symbolic -- had a big view, a larger vision.

The homintern? "An interesting question. I would say no. If anybody was writing homosexual music then, mine was certainly more delicate than most... But I don't believe there is such a thing." Cage the great connector, as usual. He knew Tobey and Graves (also homosexual), the Toklas circle in Paris, others out in San Francisco. Wonderful, non-faggoty people. "But I think it just happened that way -- they (i.e., ab-ex) lost, and these other people won. Jack Tworkov was the man...

Sonia Sekula - very beautiful, intelligent, "the first freak I ever met. She looked like Elisabeth Bergner."

"De Kooning always used to attack Mondrian. 'That ascetic bastard,' he'd say. 'What kind of work can you expect from a guy who doesn't fukk?'"

Lots of people came to Monroe Street, John's open house there. Feldman gave a concert, and Georges Anthiel came, the art world came, thanks to Cage. "What a catalyst he is! He was always inviting people. Henry Cowell came for dinner, and brought his own chili in a bowl; John made rice, and

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served cheap wine, which he always called 'rare wine. 'Won't you have some rare wine?'

Mortie living with Jean Hammond then, ahd there were parties at their house too. Tworkov very important. He had a settled family life, and being invited there was very pleasant. He was very alert to Bob's gifts, acted as his champion.

The De Antonio concert in Rockland County, to Mortie, was more exciting than the Town Hall affair. Everybody in the art world went up for it, in spite of terrific rain. He went up with Franz Kline. On the way back, the roof blew off Cage's car as they were crossing the Geo Wash Bridge.

Duchamp - "No one talked about Duchamp then. Bob and Jasper and John are really responsible for Duchamp, I'm convinced of that. They brought to the fore the question, what is art? -- the problem people now associate with Duchamp. Bob confronted it in a purely visual way. His stuff looked beyond belief in the studio. Bed -- when I first saw it, I said 'What do you do with something like that?' The fantastic presence it had on the one hand, and just garbage on the other. You can't imagine what it looked like the first time, in the studio. Like some crazy corpse."

Feldman helped get Jasper into Castelli. Paul Brach told him that Leo was interested in RR (Leo had asked Paul to say so). Mortie brought Leo and Ileana down to Bob's studio, one night, and on the way in they passed Jasper's...

Older Generation

The Surrealist commotion was transmitted through David Hare and Motherwell, "those guys who spoke French." Kiesler a really important influence on many of the younger people; he added tabasco to the scene. His funeral, with Bob doing the tire thing, was like a Fellini movie, almost a travesty.

The Club - "Pavia would always say, 'no fairies and no chess players.' By chess players he meant Communists. But at the same time he was nuts about Jasper's work. Milton Resnick was the prototype of the fifties artist - he wore a cap, and even developed an accent like Bill. De Kooning was to some degree the seminal figure.

Barney Newman - "What a talker. My wife used to get so furious -- I'd go out to buy a bottle of milk, and I'd meet Barney on the stairs (we lived in the same building) and he's start talking, and we'd be there two hours."

Nick Carone - really ran the Stable Gallery (thru Eleanor Ward).

Tomlin- "He was their Cage - a very important bridge to Pollock and Motherwell. He was a marvelously cultured painter."

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Earle Brown - drinks 2/24/78

Earle and Carolyn came to NY from Denver in 1952, Earle to work with Cage on electronic music projects, Carolyn to dance with Merce. Earle had grown up outside of Boston and been a jazz musician - played trumpet in high school band, in army, and afterwards. ~~Then four years~~ In Boston after the war, studying at , he'd read 1949 article in Life that featured work of Pollock, "which was the main thing that changed my life as a composer. I saw the immediacy, the spontaneity of ~~that~~ Pollock' work struck me as having the same kind of openness that jazz had. I wanted to get that quality in my own work." He'd also been studying poetry, especially Rimbaud and the symbolists; Joyce and Stein.

In Denver, he had been teaching Josef Schillinger technique. Carolyn had been planning to write. She'd graduated from Wheaton College (Mass) with a Phi Beta Kappa in philosophy. When John and Merce came through Denver on tour, the four of them just hit it off immediately. There weren't that many people you could talk to about Joyce and Rimbaud then, and all four were sort of amazed to find one another. Earle was writing music in Pollock-like line drawings before he met John.

The Browns took a tiny apartment on Cornelia Street in the Village. It had a bathtub, and Bob Rauschenberg developed some of his blueprints in it -- not many friends had tubs. Carolyn posed for it, lying on paper while Bob placed leaves and twigs and other objects around her, then exposed it with a sunlamp.

Bob and Sue were not living together by then. They seemed very different people, Bob so outgoing and Sue so withdrawn. Bob's was a very sharply defined personality even then. He seemed to the older abstract expressionists quite a brash kid, although it would have been impossible to dislike him. He had a lot of confidence and a lot of ambition; his competetive instinct very strong. And all that incredible virtuosity of conception. (The competitive sense is under cover with both Bob and John Cage, but it's certainly there. John was very intolerant of Bartok, jazz etc.) - But Bob an odd mixture of confidence + vulnerability; always said he was "going to lose all my friends" over new work

"I've always been convinced that John's work and Bob's work were not very alike. Bob is a very subjective artist. He's so spontaneous and adjustable, where John intends not to intend all the time."

Cy Twombly - very interior and quiet, except when he danced, then he was like a Watusi. Loose and easygoing. Sweet nature. Earle hears after all these years in Rome he still can't speak Italian.

Jasper Johns - Met him at the studio of Sari Dienes, in bldg of artists studios corner of 6th Ave and 57th Street (Noguchi, others lived same bldg). It was a big space, which nobody else had then, and there were a lot of gatherings there to which you'd bring food and booze. Bob and John and Merce would go. Earle remembers waiting for Jasper to arrive - Jap was working at the Marboro bookshop on 57th, and he got off at midnight. "Jap was always so ironic, but sparks would fly verbally between him an Bob. They had a very high level of verbal communication - you could feel the vibes." Their breakup: Jasper the one who was really furious; Bob was sad. For years Jap wouldn't enter a room if Bob was in it."

Bob R. looked sort of square in those days. Thin, short hair, suit and tie, wire-rimmed glasses.

Earle had a 1951 Fort station wagon they'd driven from Denver - only car in

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the crowd. Used it to haul Bob's paintings around - up to Stable Gallery and back again. It was from that first Stable show that Earle and Carolyn bought the black collage with refund from telephone co. Frequently they all get in the station wagon and go to the country - to the Lewis Stevensons' house in Brewster, or to a David Tudor concert in Princeton, etc. Also used to drive up on Sunday nights to see Bob and Jap's new windows at Bonwits and Tiffany's, which were often more far out than anything in the galleries.

Egan Show - It was a great coup for Bob to get in there. Earle remembers seeing Odalisk, and being stunned by the gold-leaf collages.

Most of Earle's and John's and Morton's concerts then were piano only, sometimes several pianos. Usually at Carl Fischer concert hall, across 57th from Carnegie (became Judson). This was where David Tudor introduced to America the music of Stockhausen, Boulez, Berio et al; and that of Brown, Feldman, Woolf.

Input and feedback - the way Bob works and the way Earle works. Feels a great similarity there. The sort of contact that Pollock talked about (see Hess book on him). What John wants to get rid of.

Morton Feldman once accused John of using them to form a school, and John never really forgave him. They were really all different in their approach, never a school at all. Earle didn't share Mortie's view, felt John was mostly supportive. Where they differed was over subjectivity; Earle (and he thinks Bob) want an intensification and transformation of subjectivity, whereas John wants to get rid of it.

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(Earle Brown) Cage - John was fifteen years older than the others, and tremendously supportive. Although he and Earle disagreed, it was awfully helpful to have John on your side. He had more or less lost his contacts in the music world when he went into chance operations about 1950 - they had been good before. They clashed over what Earle considered John's too doctrinaire approach.

The Cage anniversary concert gave John a big psychological lift, and showed Bob's and Jap's generosity.

Gertrude Stein had talked about the importance of "the thing in itself." Brown very struck by that. Then he met John, and learned that Buddhism had also stressed the thing in itself. "Instinct led us to do very different things, but we have the same basic heritage. Joyce's multiple meanings, Mallarmé..."

Earle and Carolyn used to go with John and Merce to play Scrabble with John's parents, who were living uptown then.

Homosexuality - never anything overt between John and Merce; slightly more so with Bob and Jap, especially when drunk. But there were certain currents between the four of them that used to make Earle feel somewhat on the outside sometimes.

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Cage

"John once paid me about the highest compliment I've ever received. It was at Westbeth, there was a party for Merce, and I saw John leaving and ran after him to say goodby, and he said, Bob, there really wouldn't have had to be both of us."

John bought a piece from the Parsons show. A collage, mostly pink and tan, which Bob later repainted all black in his black phase,

Support from John: "I didn't know the way I was thinking was the way to think... The fact that John was so celebratedly intelligent gave me confidence he didn't even know I needed. The whole art world looked up to him then,"

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The Becks (from Cage)

When John and Merce first knew them they lived in an apartment on West End Avenue in the ~~Box~~ 80s or 90s, and people used to go there regularly to attend performances in their living room. John thinks this may be the derivation of the "Living Theater." "Our general impression was that Judith was so melodramatic, whereas the staging, which was so interesting, had to be Julian's."

Their studio was in the same bldg as Merce's, on 14th. Merce had the top floor,

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Boza Apartment (from Junior Harper's Bazaar, June 1946)

"...It had no kitchen and no bathroom. Although one of the most dramatic vistas in New York stretched out in front of the building, there was no way of looking at it from the loft. Today John Cage has a river view framed by two large windows; he cut them through a blank wall. He has a kitchenette; the entrance to his studio is through this compact little comestible workshop. He has a bathroom, and he has a large studio. Its walls are painted white and there are no decorations -- the river scene dwarfs any attempts at hanging pictures. There is a brown-beige studio couch, but no chairs. Cage doesn't like chairs, and his guests like to sit on the straw matting that covers the whole studio floor. There is, of course, a grand piano, replete with the working materials essential to Cage's musical compositions. The general effect, despite the absence of decoration and furniture, is one of utter livability..."

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Sonia Sekula (from Cage)

The daughter of a philatelist, who used to give big parties in an apartment that John thinks was on Park Avenue -- big rooms, and the whole art world of the 1940s, Europeans, VVV magazine people, etc.

Sonia was a painter, and she was in and out of mental hospitals. When she came out her mother usually went in. She'd gone to Sarah Lawrence, where she made the first of many suicide attempts by slashing her wrists.

She had a studio at Grand Street and Monroe in same building as John, in apartment later occupied by Richard Lippold and Ray Johnson. "Once I knocked on her door, and she opened it and said, 'I won't take much time because I know you're very busy."

The story of finding her painting with her toes.

Finally she did commit suicide, in Switzerland.

"What Bob is, what he does, didn't come from anywhere. It all comes out of himself." Cage is much more historically conscious: Two histories --the history outside, music history, and my own history, the history of my personal development in music.

The Conversation

Idea taken from the philosopher George Herbert Mead, that life can be seen as a conversation between the two beings in every person -- one rebellious, the other conservative.

According to Cage, there has always been a conversation between painting and music. Abstract painting used to find its justification in the abstractness of music, used music as an example. For a long time, "painting has been doing the talking, and music has been responding. Now music is talking, and painting will reply in turn."

he came to Vienna, was more admired than Beethoven. Do we really know, in spite of all the books and courses about it, what *music* really is or what we mean, in relation to present-day living and thinking habits, by *music appreciation?* European composers of the younger generation who have learned from John Cage will tell you that Cage's art is "not music but sociology" or, as the eminent young French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez once said to me, Cage has "gone outside the musical continuum."

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shows no awareness that during the last thirty years several of the world's greatest composers have lived within its ever-growing boundaries or that John Cage was born there—in Santa Monica, to be strict.

The event occurred in 1912. Cage has now passed his half-century. He is older than Schubert or Mozart lived to be, as old as Gustav Mahler was when he died. In May, 1958 a twenty-five-year retrospective concert of Cage's compositions was given at Town Hall, New York; the concert was recorded, and the album may be purchased. The musical house of C. F. Peters has issued a seventy-five-page paper-cover booklet an-

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David Tudor (from Cage)

Cage used to do all the music for Merce's dances - not only play it but write it. It was felt that Merce should have other music by different composers. John found a few, including Ben Weber, whose work was too difficult for him to play; in casting about for someone to play it he was led to Tudor, who played it beautifully. When John said "You must like it very much to play it that beautifully," Tudor said, "Oh no, I hate it." Tudor used to mystify them with such statements. Once he said to someone who'd been pestering him with questions, "If you don't know why do you ask?"

In the late 40s, Merce and John went to Paris and John came back with the ms of Boulez's Second Piano Sonata, which he'd been instrumental in getting published in France by saying he would have it published in NY. John had met Feldman by then, and Feldman said the only person to play the Boulez was Tudor. So they met again, and became friends

"The three of us, Feldman and David and I, would have evenings at my house where one of us would leave the room, write something, and then David would play it. Those were as exciting as some of the evenings with Bob and Jap.

"David was a professional organist at the age of twelve. He tried com-

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"What David does now is to invent and design circuitry, and then perform it. It's called composition, but it's not the same as writing music. It's more like indeterminate music, where no piece is ever the same. When David has others playing his 'Rainforest' he calls them all composers."

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a number of years by then (1952), and this had taken the place of psychoanalysis. ("I needed it ~~00~~ it was a kind of therapy").

Black Mountain 'Event'

That summer, Cage organized a kind of "concerted action, with a score, but leaving a great deal of freedom for individual action." The event took place in the main dining room, with the audience seated so that it faced itself. Cage was on a ladder, delivering a lecture. Merce Cunningham was dancing on the stage and in amongst the audience. There were two screens, on which movies and still pictures were projected. David Tudor was playing the piano. M.C. Richards and Charles Olsen took turns reading poetry from another ladder. "I wanted Bob to be involved in it, too. We had his white paintings suspended above the audience, hanging at an angle. And then Bob himself got hold of one of those ancient phonographs with a horn, on which he played old records." Cage does not want to say this was the first Happening -- thinks the Gutai may have been doing things before. Anyway, being first is of no importance. The event was somewhat symbolic -- music becoming theater.

How Cage and R. Differ

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shows no awareness that during the last thirty years several of the world's greatest composers have lived within its ever-growing boundaries or that John Cage was born there—in Santa Monica, to be strict.

The event occurred in 1912. Cage has now passed his half-century. He is older than Schubert or Mozart lived to be, as old as Gustav Mahler was when he died. In May, 1958 a twenty-five-year retrospective concert of Cage's compositions was given at Town Hall, New York; the concert was recorded, and the album may be purchased. The musical house of C. F. Peters has issued a seventy-five-page paper-cover booklet an-

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It was possible to walk from Cage's place on Monroe Street to R's on Fulton, and they saw a lot of each other. It was at Fulton Street that Cage saw Jasper Johns work for first time -- all black drawings of potatoes, but so black it was hard to make them out.

Neither Cage nor R. had any money. They used to buy filling potato dishes at Jewish delicatessen on Houston Street, beer at McSorley's. "We were able to turn not having any money and being hungry into something pleasurable. One of my concerns was to walk from Monroe Street to the Village without ever losing sight of a tree..."

But they also led a rather active social life uptown. Rochelle Rosenthal lived part of the time on lower East Side and rest of time with her family on Central Park South. She gave a lot of parties at the family apartment. Also a couple named Stevenson, who had money and an interest in art but didn't know what to do with it. They gave parties, too -- good food and drink. Later, when R. moved to Pearl, there were a lot of parties there, to which Cage's crowd would come partly to see Bob's paintings; the party always started at Bob's loft, then moved up to Jasper's later to see his work.

~~Advertising work~~
~~Says Bob and Jap took it as a perfectly serious thing to which they gave their best efforts." No attempt to slough it off or do it quickly. Painting was always uppermost, but when they got an in~~

* Cage Manifesto, quoted in Genauer column Dec. 27, 1953 (on White Paintings in Stable show).

"To whom,
No subject
No image
~~No taste~~
~~No object~~
~~No beauty~~
~~No message~~
~~No talent~~
~~No technique (no why)~~
~~No idea~~
~~No intention~~

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"At the same time, I was composing, using chance operations -- tossing coins. Bob tried to tell me that I was doing the wrong thing, that I shouldn't go through the mechanism of tossing coins. It seemed too artificial to him, he thought I should have acted directly. I now see that he was right, and in fact I don't toss coins any more. But he knew it instinctively, while I had to find out. This may have something to do with the difference between music and painting." (When I suggested it might also have to do with the difference in their ages, Cage reluctantly agreed).

R. Works Owned by Cage

The first was a brightly colored painting with collage, from the Betty Parsons show. This was the one R. painted over in Cage's studio on Monroe Street. It had in it the image of a hand, suggestive of palmistry, and other signs of divination. Cage says R. came in one day while he was out - the door being unlocked -- and painted it over in black. "My first reaction was a sense of loss, my second was that I had gained a painting." Association with erased dekooning

After a big show at the Stable, R. gave him an enormous black painting in five panels (at least). Even in the loft on 17th street where ~~Cage~~ Merce was then, it was too big to hang. Besides which, the loft had a bad roof, which leaked, and the painting couldn't be kept dry or free of dirt. He ~~kxxxx~~ gave it back to Bob. (The black painting had originally been in exchange for a large Matta cartoon that Cage and Merce gave Bob to sell, his own work being unsaleable then. Cage and Merce had known the painting generation before that of the abstract expressionists -- the group around Andre Breton -- and had acquired the cartoon at that time).

The Dirt Painting, from ~~R's second~~ Stable. Duval ~~Cage wrote a manifesto about it at the time - gets copy - white painting in black frame~~

Also a drawing on ~~xxx~~ the subject of time -- which brought up subject of the quarrel between them (see below).

friend's house.

What is a "best" composer? Telemann held a higher position in their common community than J. S. Bach. Rossini, when he came to Vienna, was more admired than Beethoven. Do we really know, in spite of all the books and courses about it, what *music* really is or what we mean, in relation to present-day living and thinking habits, by *music appreciation?* European composers of the younger generation who have learned from John Cage will tell you that Cage's art is "not music but sociology" or, as the eminent young French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez once said to me, Cage has "gone outside the musical continuum."

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the guardians of public taste.

Los Angeles is in many ways still a provincial community. Though it has imported art of all sorts in great quantity, it shows no awareness that during the last thirty years several of the world's greatest composers have lived within its ever-growing boundaries or that John Cage was born there—in Santa Monica, to be strict.

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CAGE
Joy and

JOHN CAGE: BUILDER OF NEW MUSIC

The amusing, infuriating composer stretched his and his listeners' imaginations from "prepared piano" to anti-music and to—silent music.

BY PETER B. YATES

EDITOR'S NOTE: As well as hundreds of articles about music, Peter Yates wrote the recently published book, *An Amateur at the Keyboard*, "directed to the Amateur, in the original and live meaning of that word, the lover of his art." A second book, in work, is on Mr. Yates's special enthusiasm: twentieth-century music.

To say that John Cage is the most influential composer, worldwide, since Arnold Schoenberg, is not to say that he is the best. I wouldn't say so myself, though I must confess that the more of his compositions I hear and the more often I hear them, the more I feel my sensibilities settling down into them, as into the familiar chair in a friend's house.

What is a "best" composer? Telemann held a higher position in their common community than J. S. Bach. Rossini, when he came to Vienna, was more admired than Beethoven. Do we really know, in spite of all the books and courses about it, what *music* really is or what we mean, in relation to present-day living and thinking habits, by *music appreciation?* European composers of the younger generation who have learned from John Cage will tell you that Cage's art is "not music but sociology" or, as the eminent young French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez once said to me, Cage has "gone outside the musical continuum."

The name of John Cage is becoming as familiar to the common talk of the present generation as the name of Gertrude Stein was to the preceding generation.

You might say that they were both born publicity-prone. Or that they both worked hard to become so. I doubt that such ambition entered their calculations. Working outside the scope of current appreciation, each entered the public intelligence by saying and doing things that the newspapers recognize as news.

You don't make news by solving problems but by raising them. James Joyce not only raised his problems but solved them, and his solutions have become a part of the aristocratic appreciation of the universities. On that level, Gertrude Stein and John Cage are dismissed as problem-raisers who do not provide solutions. The gift has caused both of them to be loved and envied, however rejected by the guardians of public taste.

Los Angeles is in many ways still a provincial community. Though it has imported art of all sorts in great quantity, it shows no awareness that during the last thirty years several of the world's greatest composers have lived within its ever-growing boundaries or that John Cage was born there—in Santa Monica, to be strict.

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CAGE
Joy and

JOHN CAGE

(Continued from page 225)

of being an influential but esoteric figure on the periphery of musical experience, Cage has become a major presence in the musical scene.

In February of this year Leonard Bernstein guided the New York Philharmonic Orchestra through a program partially given over to the music of Cage and several of his followers, now independently established with their own reputations, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Earle Brown. Disciples, admirers, followers, imitators, miscomprehenders, and perverters of Cage's musical and aesthetic doctrines are active in every country the long way around from San Francisco to Japan.

Even among the more conservative modernists, who adhere to their own usages of the twelve-tone or serial method initiated by the late Arnold Schoenberg, several of Cage's inventions, the percussion orchestra, the prepared piano, and the idea of music by chance, are now accepted musical means.

Using records of the variable frequency curve made by a telephone company for testing its lines Cage composed, directly on a record, the first surviving composition of electronic music, his "Imaginary Landscape #1" in 1939. Another "Imaginary Landscape" is the first known musical composition on tape. Probably the most famous of his "Imaginary Landscapes" is the one for twelve radios and twenty-four performers, one performer for the station dial and one for the volume dial, each following his own score.

The first performance occurred much later in the evening than had been planned; programs had changed and some stations were silent. Unthinking critics haw-hawed that the performance had therefore gone wrong, since everything that was heard was unexpected. Cage was delighted and went on to glorify the failure in his new doctrine of music by chance. Other critics, better equipped with mathematical knowledge than musical imagination, pointed out that this was not pure random chance but only relative chance. Cage disposed of the argument by naming his new doctrine Indeterminacy.

To this one might object that many of his compositions by Indeterminacy are exceedingly determinate. The rules of the game determine the nature of the play and, one might even say, the shape of the end product. All that has been changed is the means of arriving at, and the location or shapeliness of, the shape. Form, in these days, is no longer determined by outline or surface; we understand nuclear structure not by what it looks like, which we guess, but by what it does.

"Action painting" or a Calder mobile are examples of determinate form, arrived at by Indeterminacy and continuously fluid. Cage wrote the score which accompanies a well-known documentary film of Calder mobiles. The procedure need not stop there. Indeterminate forms can combine indeterminately with other indeterminate forms. Cage's "Concert for Piano and Orchestra" includes a "'book' containing eighty-four different kinds of composition," which "the pianist is free to play . . . wholly or in part and in any sequence." Similar collections of solos have been written for the orchestral instruments. The conductor may or may not have a score. The piano part or any combination of the instrumental parts may be played separately. The piano part may be played with Cage's noise-composition, "Fontana Mix," made for the Italian Radio. The two, played together very slowly, cross the sound-field of Cage's lecture, also called *Indeterminacy* (Folkways Records), in which he tells ninety stories at the rate of exactly one story a minute, speaking faster or slower as necessary. He has on occasion extended the lecture to one hundred and eighty stories in one hundred and eighty minutes. For Cathy Berberian, vocally gifted wife of the composer Luciano Berio, Cage composed an "Aria," in five languages, with eleven styles of vocal production from coloratura

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soprano to barking dog, to perform with the taped accompaniment of "Fontana Mix" (Time Records). The "Aria" may be performed as a part of the "Concert for Piano and Orchestra," or with the piano part of the "Concert," and the composite in any form may also include "Fontana Mix."

The result of this complex is no more complicated, if listened to quietly and without dismay, than traffic at a busy street corner, where more different things may be expected to be going on at one time than at another; where the volume and direction of the sound alter with each change of lights (marking chronological time, as in Cage's "Concert," instead of metrical time, as in Beethoven), where all events are indeterminate in arrangement but determined by the shape of traffic flow, and the traffic cop knows the score but does not direct it.

Some of these compositions are a type of glorified play, for example, "Cartridge Music." Phonograph needle cartridges are attached (when I saw and heard it) to an overhead boom and to the edge and centre of a table, chosen for the resonance of its vibration when shoved across the floor. (Before dinner that evening, when one of us shoved the dining table at our home, Cage rushed in asking, "What was that beautiful sound?") Cage and his companion of many performances, the pianist David Tudor, each following a different sequence of events by chance, insert Slinkies, pipe cleaners, miniature flags, even a tiny birthday candle which is then lighted, into the needle slots of the cartridges and agitate them, producing noises in the loudspeakers, which accompany the performance with low-frequency sounds culled from Time Records of Cage's music. One watches the actions of the two performers as in other days one watched the actions of the clowns circulating around the three rings of the circus, and the more one relaxes into uninhibited attention the funnier it gets.

Or there is the lecture, "Where Are We Going? And What Are We Doing?" Cage reads one part aloud, accompanied by the three other parts speaking in his voice from loudspeakers. One voice, two voices, three voices, four voices, like a Renaissance motet, each speaking an unrelated text, falling silent, returning, the microsecond differences in speed among the three tape turntables (which can never be totally synchronized) providing the effect of higher and lower polyphonic parts. When you listen, released from preconceptions that *music* must be notes et cetera, you hear it all as music. Did I understand what was being said by two or more voices speaking different texts at the same time? The morning after, I read through the complete lecture and recognized nearly every word of it. Who would expect to do as well after hearing four voices sing a four-part motet?

Cage's writings and lectures are *compositions* in the same understanding as his music, composed by similar means. You can think of them as beautiful or ugly, as meaningful or meaningless, as part-successes or part-failures, reacting to them as you react to any other compositions. So, does it really matter, in the limited musical sense, whether or not you think of Cage as a composer? He is, to put it more exactly, a maker of compositions. His complete writings and lectures are published in the book *Silence* (Wesleyan University Press).

During the thirty years of John Cage's public career his name has seldom been mentioned or his latest performance reviewed in the public prints without accompanying mockery and distortion of the observable facts. His own generation of composers and musicians, with few exceptions, holds him in distaste. In that solemn organ of contemporary compositional theory, *Perspectives of New Music* (I have before me the issue of Spring 1963), published by the Princeton University Press for the Fromm Music Foundation, Cage's name keeps popping up like the Devil in *Punch and Judy*, to be batted down each time by verbal bludgeon or flung brick. The

(Continued on page 228)

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CAGE
Joy and

JOHN CAGE

(Continued from page 227)

rejection culminates in a review of the book, *Silence*. The scholarly reviewer tries his very darndest to be objective, to be accurate, to be amusing but not disrespectful; in the last paragraph he can no longer hold himself:

"In short, something seems to be missing. Mr. Cage is devoted, even dedicated to his art; he has no lack of talent, invention, sense of dramaturgy, care for performance, or musical *joie de vivre*. Perhaps what Mr. Cage's career as a composer lacks is a certain kind of hard work. . . . It is that peculiar labor of art itself, the incredible agony of the real artist in his struggles with lethargy and with misplaced zeal, with despair and with the temptations of his recent successes, *to get better*. . . ."

Thus the one who aspires to art and suffers with his aspiration chides the one to whom the gift comes naturally. When a runner is out in the clear, running ahead of the pack, how is he to get better except by continuing to run at his own pace? I remember Schoenberg telling me, when we were speaking of his "String Trio," that the mark of genius is the ability to complete a whole work rapidly; and he said proudly that he began the "String Trio" on August 20 and completed it September 23, 1946. To a critic who will concede the entire measure of spontaneous ability and then try to qualify it by the need to *get better* you can not explain, by waving the names of Beethoven and Mozart, what Schoenberg meant by "genius," the scope and the capacity, the authority, the pride.

For Cage, as for Igor Stravinsky, the name *Beethoven* symbolizes all that is lumped together in misuse of the word *genius*. By the same false analogy Cage has repeatedly attacked his teacher, Schoenberg. It is not the man he attacks, in reality, but the would-be monopoly principle of the tone-row—a misuse Schoenberg, too, foresaw and attacked as vehemently.

"The twelve-tone row is a method. A method is a control of each single note. . . . There is not enough of nothing in it."
(45′ for a Speaker)

But Schoenberg had written to Rudolf Kolisch in 1932: "I can not warn enough against the over-valuation of these analyses, since they lead only to what I have always fought against—the recognition of how the piece is made; whereas I have always helped my students to recognize—what it is!" *(The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, a catalogue by Josef Rufer.)

The musical growth of John Cage has been as exact, exacting, and creatively logical as that of Beethoven or Schoenberg. Once you have grasped the principle of his method of composition at any point, you can go on from there, by substitution of means and study of the consequences, until you arrive where he is at present—almost, because whenever and wherever you arrive he has already made the next move forward.

Schoenberg said to me of Cage: "He is not a composer, but an inventor—of genius." Having read so far in this article, you may take the qualification as you please. As composer/inventor Cage has written for the Peters booklet an exact technical description of each of his compositions. As musical technician he has analyzed in academic terminology, for publication, Virgil Thomson's complete works.

To summarize: Cage invented the percussion orchestra; though others had played with the idea, he formed the group that gave it a literature. Cage first put to use the variable frequency sound curve, source of subsequent electronic composition. Other composers try to write electronic *music;* Cage composes in the medium for its own sake.

Cage invented the prepared piano, carrying out his belief that when Schoenberg emancipated the dissonance he should have gone farther and emancipated music from its notes. Cage challenged the traditional concept of musical order with his music by chance or random op-

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erations (Indeterminacy), now dignified as *aleatory music* and widely imitated. His "Concert for Piano and Orchestra" and "Atlas Eclipticalis" may be called an anti-music, as a scientist speaks of anti-matter. Adolph Weiss, Henry Cowell, Arnold Schoenberg, Charles Ives, Erik Satie, Virgil Thomson, and Oriental music have contributed materially to these phenomena. Cage is also a superb master of prose, able to move freely in the tradition of Gertrude Stein, a gifted propagandist, and one of the great showmen of his time. He is in each skill an exact craftsman.

When I first knew John Cage he was stubborn, gifted, argumentative. As the gift took hold he became more silent, preoccupied with himself and the growing of his thought. He entered a room like a bodhisattva, floating. After he had studied Zen and learned by it to master himself, he became, as he has remained, the man of the great smile, the outgoing laugh, willing to explain but not, in my recent experience, to argue, tolerant of misconception, self-forgetful and considerate. His feet are now solidly on the ground and around him everyone laughs.

When he travels the university circuit with the Merce Cunningham dance group, of which he is musical director, driving the crowded VW bus weeks at a time, he is not the disconsolate composer dragged from his art, carrying his gloom with him—he inspirits everyone.

The last time he was here with them he said to me: "I have always believed that *time* is the one essential of musical composition. During the last nine months I have been composing without time." We saw the result at the first performance of a new dance composition, "Field Music." Merce Cunningham thought of it, driving one day along the Atlantic coast, watching the swimmers, hearing the incongruous voices of radio speakers and jukeboxes. In the composition, *field* has a double meaning. Instead of duration, metronomic time or clock time, there is a *field*, within which, by Indeterminacy, certain things—indeed a whole repertory of different events, by preparation and by chance—can happen. What comes before or what comes after are no longer determining; at a certain point of arrival in the compositional field one of a number of different things may occur. It sounds simple enough, put that way, and is, in fact, quite scientific; all that is needed is to discover how to do it. John Cage has been working at it.

Granted all the rest, there is still one more stumbling block to be explained, the so-called "Silent Sonata," "4′33″" (four minutes and thirty-three seconds); you can buy the score for fifty cents. It is usually performed at the piano but can be played by any number of instruments, *tacet*, meaning silent. For four minutes and thirty-three seconds the pianist at the piano or the instrumentalists with their instruments remain silent. To indicate the division between each movement and the next the player may do whatever he prefers, when he pleases. The usual action is to raise or lower the lid over the piano keys.

If you judge the worth of a composition, as many do, by the emotion it generates, the "Silent Sonata" is a masterpiece. The audience splutters, laughs, shrieks; others more formidably sit there and hate it. What is it, after all, but the ordinary interval of silence between two compositions at any concert or recital, dramatized, so that instead of passing the time emptily, indifferently, we feel compelled to suffer it—to fill the time up with our own emotions, as we are supposed to be filling a much longer time with Beethoven's emotions whenever we listen to the "Moonlight," the "Pathétique," or the "Appassionata."

I have performed the "Silent Sonata" several times. At one school a group of the piano faculty walked out. The last time I performed it, a virtuoso reading in which, to indicate the start of the tragical last movement, I bowed my head into my hands, the audience sat throughout in complimentary silence and at the end firmly applauded. The "Silent Sonata" has become a classic.

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CAGE
(Joy and revolution)

"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."

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

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

"...our highest business is our daily life."

"I'm not interested in whether any of my works are good or bad." (to R. Kostelanetz)

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

On McLuhan: see Kostelanetz

"We want to stretch their c pacity to be interested in their experiences." (to CT)

Personal desires vs the field situation - p. 5 (theory)
- anarchy now possible in art (not society)

On Pollock's idea of contact: "I would certainly want to eliminate that sort of contact from my work."

No beginnings, middles, and endings - what it means (p. 8)

Piece for twelve radios performed first March 1951.

DeKooning, to Feldman and others in the Cedar: "I've been going to your concerts for ten years, and feeling like an idiot all the time. Like an idiot. But I know in my heart that you can do no wrong."

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engaging both the efforts and the beliefs of this nation, is the last great hope to which we cling in the face of what seems otherwise to be an inevitable gradual worsening and coarsening of our style of life, it is possible that a determined effort to arrest the ecological decay might prove to be its underlying theme. Such an issue, immediate in the experience of all, carries an appeal that might allow vast improvements to be worked in the American environment, both urban and industrial. I cannot estimate the likelihood of such a political awakening, dependent as these matters are on the dice of personality and the outcome of events at home and abroad. But however slim the possibility of bringing such a change, it does at least make the ecological crisis, unquestionably the gravest long-run threat of our times, potentially the source of its greatest short-term promise. □

Cage and the Collage of Noises

Notations
by John Cage.
Something Else, 320 pp., $15.00;
$4.50 (paper)

A Year from Monday:
New Lectures and Writings
by John Cage.
Wesleyan, 167 pp., $7.92;
$1.95 (paper)

Silence: Lectures and Writings
by John Cage.
Wesleyan, 267 pp., $10.00;
MIT, $2.95 (paper)

Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music
by Kathleen Hoover and John Cage.
Yoseloff, 288 pp., $6.00;
Buchet-Chastel, 341 pp., 18 francs

Virgil Thomson

In 1967 John Cage, working at the University of Illinois in Urbana with the engineer-composer Lejaren Hiller, began to plan, design, and move toward the final realization in sound (with visual admixtures) of a work lasting four and a half hours and involving a very large number of mechanical devices controlled by engineers, along with seven harpsichords played by hand. Nearly two years later this work, entitled *HPSCHD* (a six-letter version, suited to computer programming, of the word *harpsichord*) was produced on May 16, 1969 in the university's Assembly Hall, seating 18,000 people.

By this time the work had come to include as sources of sound not only the keyboard instruments of its title (which Cage pronounces *harpsichord*) but also 52 tape machines, 59 power amplifiers, 59 loud-speakers, and 208 computer-generated tapes. The visual contributions to this performance employed 64 slide projectors showing 6,400 slides and 8 moving-picture projectors using 40 cinematographic films, probably silent in view of the general auditory complexities just mentioned.

Richard Kostelanetz, reviewing the event for *The New York Times*, reported further that "flashing on the outside under-walls of the huge double-saucer Assembly Hall . . . were an endless number of slides from 52 projectors" (a part of the 64?). Inside "in the middle of the circular sports arena were suspended several parallel sheets of semi-transparent material, each 100 by 400 feet; and from both sides were projected numerous films and slides whose collaged imagery passed through several sheets. Running around a circular ceiling was a continuous 340-foot screen, and from a hidden point inside were projected slides with imagery as various as outer-space scenes, pages of Mozart music, computer instructions, and nonrepresentational blotches. Beams of light were aimed across the undulated interior roof. In several upper locations mirrored balls were spinning, reflecting dots of light in all directions. . . . The audience," he adds, "milled about the floor while hundreds took seats in the bleachers."

The auditory continuity he describes as "an atonal and structural chaos . . . continually in flux." However, "fading in and out through the mix were snatches of harpsichord music that sounded . . . like Mozart; . . . these came from the seven instrumentalists visible on platforms in the center of the Assembly Hall." The sound appealed to him as in general "rather mellow, except for occasional blasts of ear-piercing feedback that became more frequent toward the end."



Mr. Kostelanetz identifies the aesthetic species to which this work belongs as "that peculiarly contemporary art, the kinetic environment, or an artistically activated enclosed space." Actually this "artistically activated" space is not very different from the Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk*, or music drama (also a mixed-media affair), except for a very modern emphasis on the mechanics of show business. Wagner took these for granted, preferring to use them less as glamor items than for underlining myths and morals. In both cases, I think, the production of ecstasy was the aim; and in both cases surely music (or sound, in any case) was the main merchandise. For Wagner's music is what has survived best out of his whole splendid effort to create a new kind of tragedy. And as for the Cage-Hiller *HPSCHD*, it was already on sale as a musical recording, completely shorn of its visual incidents and compacted down to twenty-one minutes of playing-time, when the great mixed show of it all was put on in Urbana.

In 1937, thirty years before this work was started, Cage had proclaimed his credo regarding the future of music: "I believe that the use of noise to make music will continue and increase until we reach a music produced through the aid of electrical instruments which will make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard." The composer, in these prophesied times, will not limit himself to instruments or concepts based on the overtone series but "will be faced with the entire field of sound." And new methods for composing with this vast vocabulary, he also stated, were already beginning to be developed, methods which were free and forever to remain free, I quote, "from the concept of a fundamental tone."

The idea of making compositions out of noise, that is to say of sounds not responsible to a common fundamental, had been in the air ever since the futurist painter Luigi Russolo in 1913 praised as sources for an "art of noises" "booms, thunderclaps, explosions, clashes, splashes, and roars." Busoni too saw music as moving toward the machine. And Varèse was dreaming of electrical help by 1920 certainly. Also George Antheil, Leo Ornstein, and Darius Milhaud had very early composed passages for non-tonal percussion. Cage, however, when he began to compose in 1933, was virtually alone in following out the futurist noise principle as a career. Others had worked occasionally in that vein, but none other seemed really to believe in it as a destiny or to be able to perfect for its mastery devices for giving it style, structure, and variety. Cage's own music over the last thirty years, though not entirely free of interrelated pitches, has nevertheless followed a straighter line in its evolution toward an art of collage based on nonmusical sounds than that of any other artist of his time. He seems to have known by instinct everything to avoid that might turn him aside from his goal and everything that could be of use toward achieving it. Precious little service, naturally, was to be expected out of music's classical models.

The ultimate aim was to produce a homogenized chaos that would carry no program, no plot, no reminders of the history of beauty, and no personal statement. Nowadays, of course, we can recognize in such an ideal the whole effort of pop art. But I do not think that pop art's obvious jokes and facile sentiments were a major motive. I think Cage wanted, had always wanted, to save music from itself by removing its narcotic qualities and its personalized pretentiousness, as well as all identifiable structure and rhetoric. In this regard his aim has been close to that of Erik Satie, whose music he adores. But its consistent pursuit presents a story so utterly American, even West Coast American, that this Frenchman from Normandy with a Scottish mother, though he might well have delighted in Cage's salt-sprayed humor, would have lacked sympathy, I suspect, for his doctrinaire determination.

John Cage is a Californian born in Los Angeles in 1912, whose father had come there from Tennessee. A lanky redhead with white skin that freckles, a constant walker, a woodsman, and a tinkerer, he has all the tough qualities of the traditional mountaineer submissive to no authorities academic or federal. He had good lessons in piano playing and in composition, the latter from Arnold Schoenberg among others.

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Teaching during the late 1930s at the Cornish School in Seattle, he made friendships in the Northwest that stimulated his take-off as a composer toward East Asian art principles. The painter Morris Graves, the composer Lou Harrison, and the dancer Merce Cunningham all came into his life at this time; and so did the young Russian woman from Alaska whom he married.

He also conducted percussion concerts and composed percussion works. His *Construction in Metals*, of 1939, for bells, thundersheets, gongs, anvils, automobile-brake drums, and similar metallic objects, is organized rhythmically after the Indian *tala*, in which the whole has as many parts as each section has small parts; and in Cage these parts, large and small, are related to each other in lengths of time as square and square root. In 1938 he also began to "prepare" pianos by inserting coins, bits of rubber or wood, bolts, and other small objects between the strings at nodal points, producing a gamut of delicate twangs, pings, and thuds that constitutes for each piece its vocabulary.

At this time, and for the next decade, Cage's music continued to be organized for phraseology and length after the square-and-square-root principle. Its melodic structure, if one may use this term for music so far removed from modes and scales, is expressive, in the Indian manner, of "permanent" emotions (heroic, erotic, and so forth) though in some cases he does not hesitate, as in *Amores* (1943), to describe things personally experienced, in this case a lovers' triangle. But his melody remains aware of Schoenberg's teaching about tetrachordal structure, and it also observes a serial integrity. Since music without a thoroughbass can seek no structure for harmony, and since Cage's orientalizing proclivities inclined his expression toward "permanent" emotions, as opposed to those which by their progress and change might suggest a beginning, a middle, and an ending, he had available to him no structural device save what he could invent through rhythm.

Now rhythm, being the free, the spontaneous, the uncontrolled element in Schoenberg's music and in that of his Viennese companion-pupils Berg and Webern, appealed strongly to Cage's inventive mind as a domain offering a chance for innovation. The Schoenberg school had made few serious attempts to solve problems of structure; they had remained hung up, as we say, on their twelve-tone row, which by abolishing the consonance-dissonance antithesis had relieved them of an age-old problem in harmony. The fact that in doing so it had also abolished the scalar hierarchies, previously the source of all harmony-based form, led them to substitute for harmonic structure an interior cohesion achieved through canonic applications of the twelve-tone row, but not to any original efforts at all regarding organic form. Rhythm they never considered for this role, since rhythm, in the European tradition, had long before been judged a contributory element, not a basic one like melody or harmony. And besides, the Germanic practice, in which they had all grown up, had lost its rhythmic vitality after Beethoven's death, and no longer distinguished with any rigor between rhythms of length and rhythms of stress, as Beethoven and his predecessors had done to so remarkable a result.

What the Schoenberg school actually used as a substitute for structure was the evocation of certain kinds of emotional drama familiar to them from the Romantic masters. This is why their music, though radical in its interval relations, is on the inside just good old Vienna. Even Italians like Luigi Dallapiccola and Frenchmen like Pierre Boulez, who took up the twelve-tone method after World War II, being not attached atavistically to Vienna, could not hold their works together without a libretto. Their best ones are operas, oratorios, cantatas. And their only substitute for organic structure was the *sérialisme intégral* actually achieved by Boulez in a few works, a complete organization into rows of all the variables—of tones, lengths, heights, timbres, loudnesses, and methods of instrumental attack. The result was so complex to compose, to play, and above all to follow that little effort was made to continue the practice.

The experiment had its effect on Cage, all the same, almost the only direct musical influence one can find since his early lessons with Cowell and Schoenberg and his percussion-orchestra experiments with Lou Harrison. For Cage, like everybody else, was deeply impressed by Pierre Boulez, both the music and the mentality of the man. Knowing well that twelve-tone music lacked both rhythm and structure, Cage had early aspired in his works for percussion groups and for prepared piano to supply both. Whether he had ever thought to serialize the rhythmic element I do not know; he may have considered his *tala* structure more effective. But he was impressed by the Boulez achievement in total control, and Boulez in return was not without respect for Cage's forcefulness.

At this point—we are now in the late 1940s—Cage sailed off toward the conquest of Europe. But Europe by this time was in the hands of its own youth-centered power group. Boulez in France, Karlheinz Stockhausen in Germany, a henchman or so in Belgium and Italy, were beginning to be a tight little club. They ran a modernist festival at Donau-Eschingen and a concert series in Paris, dispensed patronage and commissions through the German radio, and influenced publishers. Cage, always pushing, assumed his right to parity in the European councils. He can be overbearing, I know, and maybe was. I do not know what confrontations occurred; but he came back chastened, retired to his backwoods modern cabin up-country from Nyack, became a searcher after mushrooms, found solace in Zen Buddhism.

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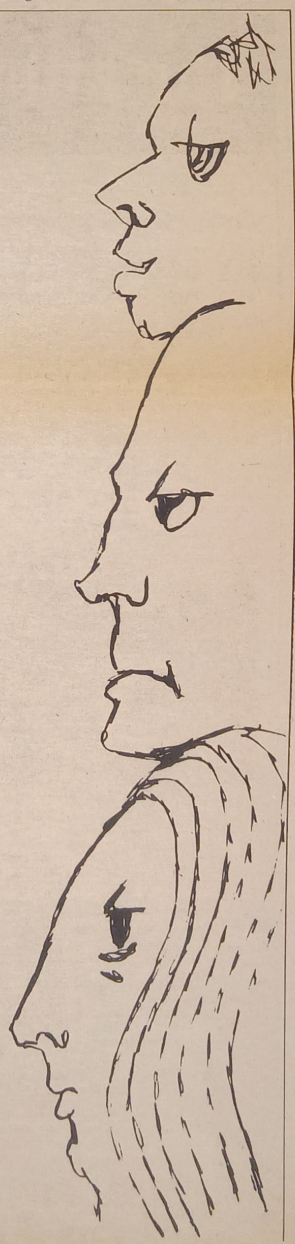
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By 1951 he had come up with another novelty, one that was to sweep through Europe, the Americas, and Japan without bringing him any personal credit. I refer to the aleatory method of composition, in which the variables so strictly controlled by Boulez through serial procedures were subjected, all of them, to games of chance. We may suppose, I think, that between a numerically integrated work of sound and one showing arrangements and orders that reflect only hazard, there is not of necessity much recognizable difference. A similar degree of complexity is bound to be present, provided the variable elements are sufficiently numerous and the game of chance used to control them is sufficiently complex to avoid the monotony of a "run." If John Cage was not the first aleatory composer, he may still have been the first to hit upon the aleatory idea. It fits with his modest but perfectly real mathematical understanding, with his addiction to things oriental (in this case to the Chinese I-Ching Book of Changes, where he found the dice-game he still uses), with the Zen Buddhist principle that nothing really has to make sense (since opposites can be viewed as identical), and above all with his need at that particular time for a novelty.

According to Gilbert Chase in *America's Music*, Cage first started using chance in connection with thematic invention for getting from one note to the next. Then at each small structural division chance was also used to determine whether the tempo should be changed. This was in a work for prepared piano called *Music of Changes*. But inevitably, with chance involved in the tempo changes, hence in the over-all timings, "it was not possible," says Cage, "to know the total time-length until the final chance operation, the last toss of coins affecting the rate of tempo, had been made." And since the work's length could not be decided in advance, the square-and-square-root structural proportions could not be used. Therefore structure, for the first time in Cage's experience of it, became as indeterminate an element in composition as texture; both shape and meaning disappeared; and composition became in Cage's words "an activity characterized by process and essentially purposeless." He has not fully explained, however, just how in choosing by chance his musical materials he arrives at the ones to be processed through the dice-game, though there is no question of his "inventing" these materials. He does not; he "finds" them through objective, impersonal procedures.

And so it came about that after Schoenberg had dissolved all harmonic tensions by assuming dissonance and consonance to be the same, and Boulez had through his *sérialisme intégral* removed seemingly all freedom, all elements of choice from composition beyond the original selection of materials themselves and their initial order of appearance, Cage had now made music completely free, or "indeterminate," an achievement he was especially pleased with because it eliminated from any piece both the history of music and the personality of the composer. And such personal elements as were in danger of governing the choice of materials he has endeavored to obviate by treating imperfections in the paper and similar accidents as real notes. His subsequent elaborations of indeterminacy for working with electronic tape, though ingenious, are merely developments of the aleatory or impersonal principle. And thus we arrive with *HPSCHD*, the harpsichord piece of 1969, at an effect of total chaos, completely homogenized save for occasional shrieks of feedback.

Let me trace again the surprisingly straight line of Cage's growth in artistry. His father, for whom he had deep respect, was an inventor; not a rich one, for he lacked business sense, but a fecund one. And his inventor's view of novelty as all-important has been John's view of music ever since I first knew him at thirty, in 1943. He prizes innovation above all other qualities—a weighting of the values which gives to all of his judgments an authoritarian, almost a commercial aspect, as of a one-way tunnel leading only to the gadget-fair.

He has, I know, felt warmly toward certain works and composers, including myself, and especially toward Satie; but he has never really accepted for his own all of music, as the greater masters living and dead have done. Stravinsky's distrust of Wagner, almost anybody's suspicion of Brahms, or Schoenberg's utter impatience about Kurt Weill—aside from such minor irritations, generally composers have considered the history of music as leading up to them. But Cage has no such view. He thinks of himself, on the contrary, as music's corrective, as a prophet denouncing the whole of Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe, with its incorrigible respect for beauty and distinction, and dissolving all that in an ocean of electronic availabilities.

Electronic because those are what is around these days. He knows the sound of any loud-speaker, through which all this must come, to be essentially ugly (he has said so), and he probably knows that the presence of Mozart in *HPSCHD* gives to that work a neoclassical aspect definitely embarrassing. But the enormity of his transgression in both cases humanizes after all the overweening ambition. It is not the first time that an artist has fancied himself as destroying the past, and then found himself using it.

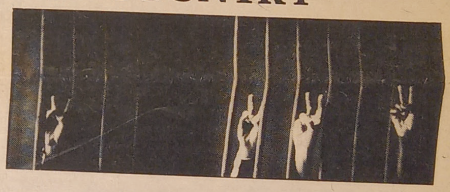
Actually Cage is less a destroyer than a typical California creator. Like many another West Coast artist—Gertrude Stein, for example—he selects his materials casually and then with great care arranges them into patterns of hidden symmetry. The difference between such artists and their European counterparts lies not in occult balances, which have been standard in Europe ever since Japan was revealed to them in the 1850s, but in the casual choice of materials. That Europe will have none of. From Bach and Mozart

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through Debussy and Stravinsky to Boulez and Berio and Xenakis, just as from Chaucer through Byron to Proust and Joyce, or from Giotto through Picasso, forms themselves, the words, the colors, the sounds, the scales, the melodies are ever precious, the psychic themes adventurous and terrible. Their treatment may be comical or tragic, sometimes both; but the matter must be noble no matter how ingenious the design.

Cage would say of all that, "just more post-Renaissance imitation of nature." He believes, or pretends to believe, that the artist, instead of copying nature's forms, should follow her ways of behavior. As to what these ways are, unless he believes them to be really without pattern, I cannot imagine. A man as well read as he must know that neither biological forms nor crystal shapes are matters of chance, also that animals and plants are as ruthless about seizing food and holding a place in the sun as any European artist ever was.

The truth is that Cage's mind is narrow. Were it broader his remarks might carry less weight. And his music might not exist at all. For with him the original gift, the musical ear, is not a remarkable one. Neither did he ever quite master the classical elements, harmony and counterpoint—a failure that has lead him at times into faulty harmonic analysis. His skill at rhythmic analysis and rhythmic construction is very great, one of the finest I have known. And his literary facility is considerable.



One book, called *Silence*, contains most of the best among his writings on musical aesthetics. *A Week from Monday* is a joke-book, the clownings of a professional celebrity who has admired Gertrude Stein and played chess with Marcel Duchamp. *Notations* is a collection of reproduced musical manuscripts from 261 composers, some laid out in staves and measures, many in the mechanical-drawing style or the multitudinous chicken tracks that are the individual shorthands, no two alike, of today's musical inventors. The aim of this vastly revealing book, with its gamut of personalities and handwritings, was to raise money through the publication and eventual direct sale of these gift manuscripts for the benefit of a foundation through which Cage aids musicians, dancers, and other artists congenial to his tastes. In *Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music* (the biographical part is by Kathleen O'Donnell Hoover) my works, every scrap of them up to 1959, have all been analyzed with care and described, as often as not, with love. There is some frankly expressed petulance too, and a sincere regret that my career has not followed an undeviating modernism. The catalogue of my music—complete, detailed, and accurate—is a bibliographic triumph. For Cage is at all times a precision worker.

He is also a major musical force and a leader among us. This leadership is not merely a matter of position and precept; it is also kept up by mammoth shows like *HPSCHD* and the one produced in 1966 at New York's Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory and entitled modestly Variation VII. Nobody else among the far-outs can lay hands on so much expense money or has the persistence to carry through such detailed projects in score-planning and in electronic manipulation. Nobody, perhaps, except Iannis Xenakis, who works by a mathematics of probabilities. All this assiduity at the service of music's physical aggrandizement I find more admirable for pains taken than for its ability to hold my attention. Lasting for twenty-one minutes or four and more hours, the Cage works have some intrinsic interest and much charm, but after a few minutes very little urgency. They do not seem to have been designed for holding attention, and generally speaking they do not hold it. Constructed not for having a beginning, a middle, and an ending but for being all middle, all ambiance, all media-massage, they turn out easy to taste and quick to satisfy.

A lack of urgency has been characteristic of Cage's music from the beginning. The instrumental sounds, whether altered or normal, are charming at the outset and agreeably varied from one piece to another, even in such delicate gradings of variety as from one piano preparation to another. But whenever I have played his recorded works for students I have found that no matter what their length they exhaust themselves in about two minutes, say four at most. By that time we have all got the sound of it and made some guess at the "permanent" emotion expressed. And there is no need for going on with it, since we know that it will not be going any deeper into an emotion already depicted as static. Nor will it be following nature's way by developing an organic structure. For if the mind that created it, though powerful and sometimes original, is nevertheless a narrow one, the music itself, for all its jollity, liveliness, and good humor, is emotionally shallow.

It is at its best, I think, when accompanying Merce Cunningham's dance spectacles. These could as well, I fancy, do without music at all, so delicious are they to watch. And Cage's music for them is never an intrusion, but just right—cheerful, thin, up-to-the-minute in style. The last of his big machines I have listened to (I avoid those that employ amplification) is the Concert for Piano and Orchestra, of 1958. This, heard live, is all of precious materials, since its sounds come from classical instruments, themselves the product of evolution and of careful manufacture. And though the composer has tried hard to remove

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their dignity—playing trombones without their bells, putting one tuba's bell inside another's, sawing away at a viola placed across the knees for greater purchase—the fact remains that even treated rudely these instruments give a more elegant sound than electric buzzers and automobile-brake bands, or even than tom-toms and temple-blocks. As for the spectacle of David Tudor crawling around among the pedals of his pianoforte in order to knock on the sounding-board from below, that too was diverting to watch, though the knocking was not loud enough to be funny. All in all the visual show added so much to the whole that when, again for students, I played the recording of this piece (made in the hall itself at Cage's twenty-fifth-anniversary concert), we were all disappointed, I think, at its puny and inconsequential sound.

In the long run nonclassical sound-sources, especially the synthetic ones, are as great a hazard to music as industrially processed foods can be to gastronomy (not to speak of nutrition). And Cage's compositions, in the days when he used to play or conduct them *live*, were far more agreeable to the ear than the electronically generated ones which dominate his later production. Even those earlier ones conceived for direct audition are less likely nowadays to turn up in the concert hall than they are in the form of recordings. So that the whole of his repertory (saving the famous *4′ 33″* of silence) tends to be sicklied over with the monochrome of transmitted sound. And this is a misfortune for us all, since much of his work is inspired by the joy of cooking up a piece out of fresh sounds.

The trouble with loud-speakers is as follows. Their transmission of familiar music performed on familiar instruments can be highly resembling, even deceptively so, provided the acoustical size of the original combo is appropriate to that of the room in which it is being heard. This lifelikeness diminishes with large amplification or diminution, as with an opera or symphony cut down to bedroom size or a harpsichord solo piped into a theater. Now any resemblances to an original, as with photography, for example, depend for their vivacity on the receptor's acquaintance with the original or with its kind. Faults of transmission can therefore be forgiven in return for the delights of recognition. But when the source is unfamiliar no comparison is at hand. How can we know what a sound electronically designed would resemble if we heard it pure? We cannot, of course, since it does not exist until transmitted. A flavor of the canned is built into it.

And what is this canned taste? In music it is a diminution of the parasitic noises that condition every instrument's timbre, the scratching of resin on a fiddle string, the thump of a piano-key hitting bottom, the clatter of a flute's finger-mechanism, a slight excess of breath-intake, the buzzing of a reed. I know that these things get picked up too, often in exaggerated form, so exaggerated in fact that they are on the whole better kept out of a recording. But the effort to do this does neutralize a bit the timbre of any instrument or voice. Just as oil painting done by artificial light tends to lose frankness of color and to wear a slight veil of mystery, so does any musical sound transmitted by loud-speaker lose some of its delight for the ear. And when that sound is one for which no compensatory acquaintance exists with any original, a whole range of musical creation (that of today's far-outs, for instance) gets drowned in a sea of similarity.

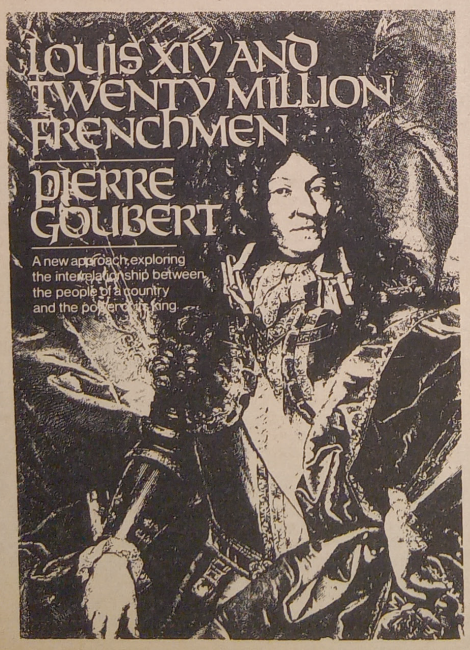
Many of America's far-outs (old masters Foss, Babbitt, and Luening among them) have endeavored to liven up the deadness of speaker-transmission by combining tape-music with that of a live orchestra. Even Varèse, in *Deserts*, tried it once. John Cage, so far, has seemingly abstained from this apologetic stance. For even in *HPSCHD*, with all that went on together in that monster auditorium, I judge there is little likelihood of the seven harpsichords' not having also undergone amplification.

The gramophone, as a preserver of standard music, pop or classical, has ever been an instrument of culture. Because the record collectors complete their listening experiences through attendance at musical occasions. This was demonstrated in the early 1940s at Columbia University's Institute of Social Research. Radio, it was also determined there, led culturally nowhere, since persons whose musical experience began with that medium rarely proceeded to make acquaintance with the real thing. Considering today's immersion of everybody everywhere in transmitted sound, and especially of the young in high amplification, there seems little chance that any music not transmitted and amplified will long survive outside its present classical habitats—which is to say, opera houses, concert halls, conservatoires, studios, and certain low dives where jazz is played, maybe too in mountaineer heights far from Nashville, and a few churches. Unless, of course, the young, today so hooked on amplification, should suddenly say to rock itself, "Good-by."

But for now the troubled waves are like a sea; and whether the youths and maidens gather 300,000 strong in fields near Woodstock, New York, merely to be together while rock artists, even amplified, cannot combat the distances, or whether they mill around inside an auditorium built for a mere 18,000 souls while a thoroughly prepared electronic happening (accompanied by visuals and swirling lights) is served up, along with allusions to Mozart, under the highest academic auspices and the authorship of two famous masters, for the life of me, I cannot see much difference, though Woodstock, by report, was far more fun.

Both, however, are thoroughly contemporary in feeling. And either or both may mean, like any children's crusade, that we have come to the end of that line. Also that the Vietnam war, by ending, might change all sorts of things. Could it send John Cage back to making music, turn him aside from the messianic hope of giving birth to a new age? Destroying the past is a losing game; the past cannot be destroyed; it merely fades. And moving into a higher age by playing with mechanical toys is a child's game. New ages in art come slowly, silently, unsuspected. And publicity can bring only death to a real messiah. My instinct is to believe that whatever may be valid for the future of music or [illegible] art (and *as* an art is the only way I can conceive it) must be taking place underground. Today's prophetic ones, I truly believe, either lie hidden, or else

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stand around so innocently that none can see them. Otherwise someone would for certain betray them, and the price-controlling powers would shoot them down. I cannot see today's mass-conscious celebrities as anything but a danger to art, whatever in their youthful years they may have left behind for us that is authentic and fine.

Music has its fashion industry and its novelty trade. And John Cage, as a composer, seems today's leader in novelty-fashions, at least for America. From modest musical beginnings, through ambition, perseverance, and brains, he has built up a mastery over modern materials, their choice, their cutting and piecing, their sewing into garments of any length and for many occasions. And he has exploited that mastery, at first as a one-man shop, later as an enterprise employing many helpers, always as a business internationally reputable, and essentially a novelty business. None other on that level, or in America, is so sound. Rivalries, if any, will come from Europe, from that same post-Renaissance Europe he has so long despised and feared. Boulez, for the moment, is not a danger, being chiefly occupied with conducting. But Stockhausen has novelty ideas. And Xenakis, with a higher mathematical training (for that is a requisite now in musical engineering) might well be about to take over the intellectual leadership.

European far-outs are a team and a cartel, as Cage learned more than twenty years ago. No American composer knows any such solidarity. The best substitutes we can mobilize are foundation support, ever capricious; a university position, where everybody is underpaid, oververbalized, and living in fear of the students; or a celebrity situation, in which one can have anything, but only so long as the distribution industry permits and the press finds one diverting. In the contrary eventuality death, with burial in an unmarked grave, comes quickly, for unlike Europe, we have no immortality machine.

Perhaps John Cage, with his inventor's ingenuity, should try building us one. And I don't mean the kind that destroys itself, such as the artist Jean Tinguely used to construct. Nor yet the kind that Cage has so often assembled of late years, designed to destroy, with luck, the history of music. I mean something that might relieve today's composers from the awful chore of following "nature's ways" and give them building-blocks again for constructing musical houses that might, by standing up alone, tempt us to walk in and out of them.

But Cage's aim with music, like Samson's in the pagan temple, has long been clearly destructive. Can he really pull the whole thing down around him? You never know. He might just! And in that way himself reach immortality. But his would be no standard immortality of structured works and humane thoughts. It would be more like a current event, "Sorcerer's apprentice sets off H-bomb in Lincoln Center."

It could happen, though. For Cage, like Samson, is a strong one; and he has helpers. They admire what he does and, what is far more dangerous, believe what he says. The young, moreover, seem to be yearning nowadays after a messiah. And a musical one might be the likeliest for them to

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follow. Indeed Cage's rigid schedule of beliefs and prophecies, his monorail mind and his turbine-engined, irreversible locomotive of a career all make it easy for the young to view him as a motorized, an amplified pied piper calling out, "Get on board-a little children, there's room for a million more." □

Theatre of Delusion

I. F. Stone

I

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) now reopening in Vienna may best be seen as the latest in a series of fumbling attempts by mankind to pick up the pieces in the wake of Hiroshima. A month after that first atomic bomb dropped, Einstein said what is still the last word of wisdom on the subject, though we are as far as ever from applying it. To a UPI reporter who tracked him down in a forest cabin near Lake Saranac, Einstein said "the only salvation for civilization and the human race" now lay in "the creation of a world government. As long as sovereign states continue to have separate armaments and armament secrets," he warned, "new world wars will be inevitable."[1]

This idea, like so much else in the repetitive and frustrating history of the struggle against the arms race in the last hundred years, was not new. It appeared at least as early as 1913, in a novel by H. G. Wells, *The World Set Free*. Wells predicted the splitting of the atom—by some stroke of luck or intuitive genius placing the event in 1933, when it actually occurred. He also forecast the use of nuclear energy in a world war so catastrophic it shook men and nations out of their accustomed habits and led them to form a world government as their only assurance henceforth of survival.[2]

For a fleeting moment since forgotten, the dropping of the first bomb did push the American government in the direction of world government. The horrors of Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, the realization of what a third and nuclear world war would do to mankind, shocked American political leaders and scientists into a project whose novelty and magnitude began to be commensurate with the peril they foresaw. But the Baruch-Lilienthal-Acheson plan for the international control of atomic energy they then presented to the United Nations proved to be the first of four lost opportunities since the war to bring the nuclear monster under control; the SALT talks represent another chance, and I fear it too will be lost.

The Baruch plan, as put forward in 1946, would have set up a kind of world superstate for the nuclear age. Unfortunately the plan seems to have passed through three stages, in which the original idealistic impulse was successively revised to make it more "practical" politically. In the process it also grew less magnanimous. It ended up looking—from Moscow's point of view—like a plan for domination of the world and the economy of the Soviet Union by the United States, as Acheson now admits in a section of his newly published memoirs which has escaped attention.[3]

Dean Acheson, then Under Secretary of State, was chairman of a committee appointed by President Truman after the war to draw up a plan for the international control of atomic energy. This committee in turn set up a consultative group of scientists and big business executives[4] under David E. Lilienthal and including J. Robert Oppenheimer. The original sketch for a world authority to take over all sources of uranium and to control all nuclear production facilities came from the Lilienthal group.



This was at least twice revised before publication by the Acheson committee. The others on his committee were General Leslie R. Groves, who headed the Manhattan Project which built the bomb; Dr. Vannevar Bush, who organized science for war in World War II; Dr. James B. Conant, then president of Harvard; and John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson. Stimson recognized very early that the secret of the bomb would soon vanish and had best be shared while it might still be used to build a more stable world.

The main drawback in the original Acheson-Lilienthal plan was that it asked the Soviet Union and all other countries to hand over control of their uranium deposits and open themselves to geological survey at once in return for a promise at some unspecified future date to cease our own production of bombs and hand over their secret to an international authority—if Congress did not change its mind when the time came.

The hedges not only became more onerous but began to seem deliberate pitfalls by the time the plan was revised again by Bernard Baruch, whom Truman named in March, 1946, as US representative on the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. The group Baruch chose to work with him in revising the Acheson-Lilienthal plan for presentation to the UN contained neither liberals, idealists, nor scientists. It was the earliest official postwar collection of cold warriors: John Hancock of Lehman Brothers; Ferdinand Eberstadt, another Wall Street banker with strong military ties; Fred Searls of Newmont Mining, a concern of imperial dimensions and world-wide cartel connections; and Herbert Bayard Swope, the journalist who had become Baruch's personal public relations man.

The Baruch plan, as it became known when it was submitted to the UN, must have seemed to Moscow the blueprint for a world capitalist superstate in which the US would retain its atomic monopoly behind the façade of an international organization under US control. In *Present at the Creation*, Acheson discloses publicly for the first time that he felt the plan as transformed by Baruch contained provisions "almost certain to wreck any possibility of Russian acceptance" because Moscow would see them "as an attempt to turn the United Nations into an alliance to support a US threat of war against the USSR unless it ceased its efforts" to develop an atom bomb, too.[5]

Even the earlier pre-Baruch version would have been hard to sell a ruler of Stalin's ferocious suspicions and primitive Marxist views. The Baruch plan was enough to have frightened off even a gentle Menshevik. It would have eliminated the veto in the UN Security Council to assure, in Baruch's words, "swift and certain punishment" of any violator. It would have thrown the war-torn and terribly weakened Soviet Union open to Western inspection, and at the mercy of a US-led majority in the Security Council. Baruch was no

[1] *Einstein on Peace*, ed. by Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden (Schocken, 1968), p. 336.

[2] In a recently published fragment of autobiography, the late Leo Szilard, discussing the origins of the atomic bomb, wrote of the impression made on him by the Wells novel. It is to the Szilard memoir in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (ed. by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969, 748 pp., $12.95) that I owe my knowledge of Wells's prophetic book. Szilard first read the novel in Berlin in 1932 and thought of it again in London in September of the following year after hearing Lord Rutherford tell the British Association for the Advancement of Science it was "the merest moonshine" to look for sources of power on a commercial scale from nuclear fission!

[3] I was struck by it because I made a similar criticism of the plan when it was first presented a quarter century ago with no knowledge of the intramural misgivings and differences of which Acheson now provides a glimpse. I was then Washington editor of *The Nation*. See my three Washington letters in that publication: "Atomic Pie in The Sky" (April 6, 1946), "Atomic Report: Second Reading" (April 13, 1946), and "The McMahon Bill" (April 20, 1946). Lilienthal because of his association with the TVA was then a hero of the liberals and the left, and my colleagues were shocked that I should criticize a plan which bore his magic name.

[4] From New Jersey Bell Telephone, General Electric, and Monsanto Chemical, companies which had played key roles in the making of the bomb.

[5] p. 155.

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fool and he knew the Russians well. His rhetoric in presenting the plan matched the occasion. The choice, he told the UN, is "world peace or world destruction." But his draftsmanship ensured a Russian *Nyet*. So the first opportunity was lost.

In retrospect the failure transcends the personalities who took part. Mankind just was not ready. The US was not generous enough. The Soviet Union was not trusting enough. If the roles had been reversed, it is hard to believe that the Russian regime, self-righteously Communist and deeply nationalistic, would even have made the gesture. If the view from the Kremlin had been of a war-wrecked USA, their hard-liners would have dismissed such idealism as weakness and seized the opportunity (as our hard-liners did) for an attempt at world domination. Even if the US had been more generous, the Soviets would have been too mistrustful. Even if Russia had not been Communist, even if it had been a capitalist ally, the realities of domestic politics would still have kept the American government from being magnanimous enough to relinquish the atomic secret without attaching strings intended to maintain its control.

The proof of this lies in our nuclear relations with our closest ally, Britain. The production of the world's first atomic weapons was a joint Anglo-American achievement. But by 1945 Britain found itself excluded from information and control despite specific Roosevelt-Churchill agreements for sharing them. Britain was forced to go it alone at Harwell and produce its nuclear weapons on its own. In April 1946 (two months before the Baruch plan was presented to the UN) Congress went a step further and in the McMahon Act forbade the sharing of atomic secrets with Britain or any other nation.[6] Nations and men as the last war ended just had not reached the necessary stage of understanding. Wells, if he were still alive, might have said that the shock of atom bombs falling on two cities was not enough. In his novel, men came to their senses only after an all-out nuclear war had destroyed every city on earth.

II

After each lost opportunity for nuclear disarmament since the war, a new monster of destruction has been born. When the Baruch plan failed, there was only the A-bomb. It had been dwarfed by the H-bomb when the second lost opportunity arrived almost a decade later. This was what Philip Noel-Baker, the grand old man of the world disarmament movement, still active in his eighties, called "The Moment of Hope: May 10, 1955."[7] On that date Moscow made a dramatic about-face at the UN disarmament subcommittee meeting in London and substantially accepted Western proposals for general and nuclear disarmament it had long derided. It offered to lift the Iron Curtain and permit international inspection on a wide scale as part of that scheme only to have the West suddenly lose interest.

The proposals of May 10, 1955, were part of a larger reversal in Russian policy which followed the accession of Khrushchev to power in February of that year and the confidence generated by successful detonation of a Soviet H-bomb. The Soviet disarmament proposals in London were the second of three dramatic about-faces in Soviet foreign policy in the space of little more than one month. The first was the announcement on April 15 that the Russians, after nine years of fruitless negotiation by the West, had agreed to withdraw their troops from Austria and to sign a four-power pact guaranteeing its independence. The third was the arrival of Khrushchev and Bulganin at Belgrade airport on May 26 where Tito impassively heard them declare that they "sincerely regret" Stalin's efforts to overthrow him. This Canossa was the most dramatic manifestation of the new regime's eagerness for a fresh start in foreign policy.

The May 10 disarmament statement was as big a surprise. For years the West had complained that the Soviet Union's disarmament proposals would "ban the bomb" but deny inspection and maintain its superiority in conventional arms. The Western powers were for "total prohibition" of nuclear arms but insisted that it had to be accompanied (1) by reduction of the conventional armies of the US, the USSR, and China to a figure between 1 and 1½ million men and those of Britain and France to about 650,000 and (2) by "the establishment of a control organ" with powers "adequate to guarantee the effective observance of the agreed prohibitions and reductions."[8]

On May 10, 1955, the Russians tabled a draft treaty accepting the West's ceilings on the size of conventional armies, its proposed cut-off by stages in the production and stocks of all "weapons of mass destruction," and the establishment of an international control organ. This organ, in the Soviet draft treaty, would have had a staff of internationally recruited inspectors re-

[6] This was most recently recalled in an *Adelphi Paper* issued by the Institute for Strategic Studies in London last year, *The Control of Proliferation* by Elizabeth Young.

[7] In his indispensable book, *The Arms Race* (Oceana Publications, New York). As a Labour MP and British delegate Noel-Baker has been a figure at most of the disarmament conferences since World War I. Among his earlier books which deserve the attention of a new generation the most important is *The Private Manufacture of Armaments* (1937), the most complete account of the intrigues of what we now term the military-industrial complex before and after World War I. It has long been out of print, and should be made available again.

[8] From the Anglo-French memorandums of June 11, 1954 and March 29, 1955, quoted on pages 15 and 18 of Noel-Baker's *The Arms Race*.

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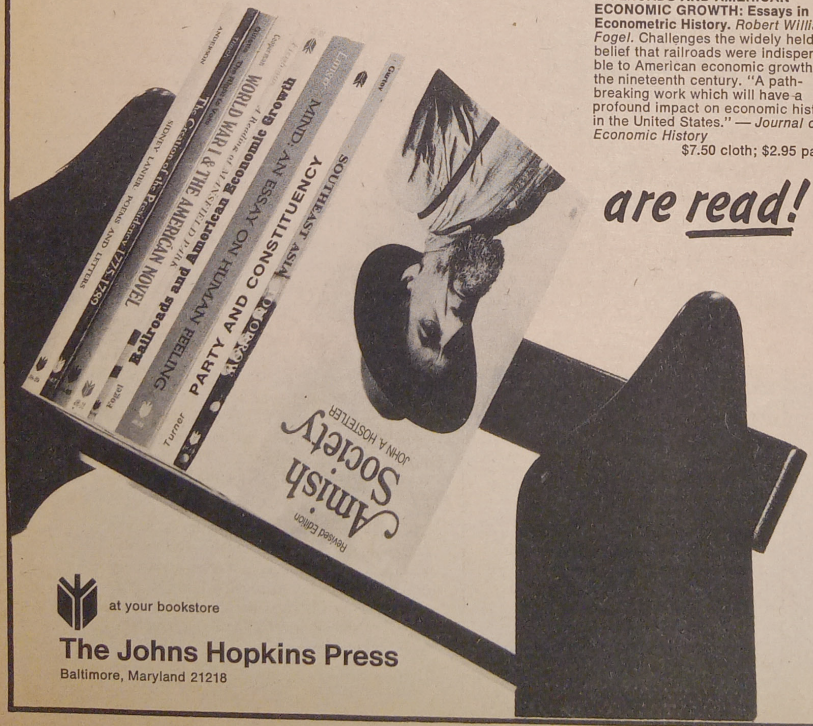
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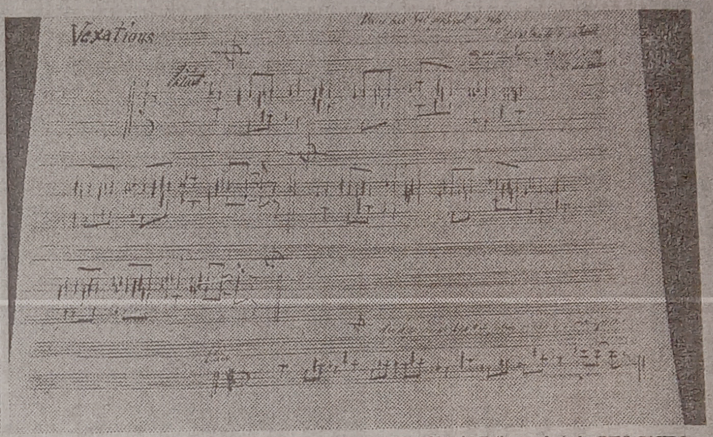
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18 Hours, Over & Over, Same Music 840 Times





Herald Tribune photo by BILL SAURO

MARATHON MUSIC—Three of the 10 pianists who started playing "Vexation," at the Pocket Theatre, 100 Third Ave., last night. The piece, consisting of four phrases, will be repeated 840 times and will end about 12:40 p. m. today. Scorekeeper at left; composer John Cage at the piano.

By John Gruen

Of The Herald Tribune Staff

The world's longest piece of music, Erik Satie's piano composition "Vexations," began its world premiere last evening at 6 in the Pocket Theater at Third Ave. and 13th St.

If all goes well, the work should conclude today—shortly after noon.

A relay team of 10 pianists, led by composer John Cage, banded together to perform the 18 hour and 40 minute composition.

A punch-lock was installed in the theater lobby for ticket buyers (admission $5), who got a $5-cent refund for every 20 minutes they stayed. Any brave ones who survive the entire performance will receive a 20-cent bonus. A food concession nearby was expected to do brisk business.

As the strange concert began, about 50 of the hall's 101 seats were filled with silent, worshipful types.

Some of them had stoked up on chicken broth and pastry in the lobby before padding into the maroon-walled, faintly lighted auditorium where the open concert piano was spotlighted on a darkened stage.

One might easily surmise the marathon "Vexations" to be the work of a madman bent on unhinging the mind of both his performers and his audience. But the fact is that avant-garde composers look to Satie's music as the esthetic prototype of many of their own musical concepts—and no less a priest-like champion of the vanguard than Mr. Cage believes the work to be "remarkably satisfying, and spiritually motivated."

It was Mr. Cage who discovered the unsigned manuscript of "Vexations" while doing research on Satie in Paris in 1949. Since then he has tried to have it performed, without success. (One of the reasons was that tenants living above New York's Provincetown Theater, where it nearly got performed, objected to music being played while they were trying to sleep.)

One might think the manuscript of "Vexations" would weigh a ton. Not so. The entire work is composed of four short phrases, each phrase containing 52 beats (there are no measures), and the 52 beats taking exactly 20 seconds to be played. The entire manuscript is the size of one large sheet of music paper, and takes 80 seconds to read through.

Its enormous length is dictated by one terse direction written by the composer on the top of the manuscript: "To be repeated 840 times."

The mechanics of the performance were worked out by Mr. Cage: Three performers were constantly on stage—a score-keeper (who keeps track of the number of times the piece has been repeated); the performing pianist; and the pianist who is to play next (this one, according to another score direction, must prepare himself for "interior immobility").

When 20 minutes were up (a clock rested on the piano), the score-keeper retired, the one who performed became the score-keeper, the one who prepared himself for "interior immobility" became the performer, and a new pianist sat next to *him*, "preparing himself."

This was to be repeated until the piece was finally over.

The work heard once is simplicity itself. What stands out is its purity and musical symmetry. There is a pleasant rhythmic lilt to the four phrases which falls easily upon the ear, each phrase falling inevitably into the next, its pleasant discords lending it pungency.

To hear this repeated for nearly 19 hours is, of course, another matter.

But composer Cage was clearly elated over the way things were turning out: "Our time consciousness has changed. People today are no longer afraid of time. It becomes a discipline to enter into a work of such length, and the spiritual rewards are infinite."

While the *premiere* of "Vexations" might also prove to be the work's *derniere*, no one will dispute the daring and dedication of the musicians who brought it to life. their names: Mr. Cage, David Tudor, Christian Wolff, Viola Farber, John Cale, Philip Corner, James Tenney, Robert Wood, McCrae Cook and David Del Tredici.

The concert was the benefit of the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts.

...d is a rather pretty, slow-moving, chordal piece of 13 rhythmic beats.

There were no program notes. At, thinking that a concert

...in the audience stay put; many out the hall.

Behind the pianist were seated two others—one a score-keeper, the other

They did not moved in and

...Base line, tritones, bass line, tritones.

Time meant nothing, and the listener floated in a suspended animation as seconds flowed into minutes with the idiotic

At 8:40 Mr. Tudor still standing takes over from David Del Tredici in a neat changing of the guard in which the new man's left hand moves in while the other's right hand moves off.

A. M. Tuesday

By RAYMOND ERICSON

Everything quiet and proceeding on schedule. About 20 persons listening, some reading, some writing, a few whispering.

...of the piano.

Two of the pianists play gingerly, with an uneven touch; are they out of practice? There is an occasional wrong note and

Continued on Page 48, Column 1

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SDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1963. The New York Times. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMB

Music: A Long, Long, Long Night (and Day) at the Piano



John Cale, fresh in body, during his first appearance.



As he ends his 20-minute stint, Cale is relieved by John Cage, responsible for 18-hour-40-minute piano marathon.



Cale, seemingly hypnotized by the 80-second work of Erik Satie, tries to rest in theater basement in the morning.



So does Arthur Conescu, owner of Pocket Theater.

Satie's 'Vexations' Played 840 Times by Relay Team

Whatever it was, it made musical history, from 6 P. M. Monday to 12:40 P.M. yesterday at the Pocket Theater, 100 Third Avenue near 13th Street.

In 18 hours and 40 minutes, the 180 notes of Erik Satie's "Vexations," an 80-second work, were played 840 times—a grand total of 151,200 notes that took 67,200 seconds to play, and took a relay team of 10 pianists, plus two pianists who made an occasional appearance, to play them.

The idea was John Cage's. He had located the music, and the result was conceivably the longest concert since Homer sang the entire "Iliad" and "Odyssey." As no one man could cover this heroic effort, a relay team of critics was formed, to pass in the baton at, roughly, two-hour intervals.



The end of the concert, which began 6 P.M. Monday, being applauded by the hardy audience at 12:40 P.M. yesterday.



The New York Times (by Edward Hausner and Larry Morris)

Work performed consists of 180-note passage to be repeated 840 times, as indicated by composer's instruction at top of score. A dozen pianists participated in the concert.

6 to 8 P. M. Monday

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

Viola Farber led off. Before her was a photostat of the "Vexations" manuscript. On it were written, in Satie's hand, instructions to the effect that the music is to be repeated 840 times.

Why 840? It could as easily have been 1,000. Or 329. But he wrote 840, for reasons best known to himself. He was, after all, the great eccentric of French music.

"Vexations" was composed around 1920 (Satie died in 1925) and is a rather pretty, slow-moving, chordal piece of 13 rhythmic beats.

There were no program notes. At, thinking that a concert lasting a day and a half might need some kind of come-on, the management did print some house rules: $5 for first admission, refund of 5 cents for each 20 minutes, and a 20-cent bonus to anybody who stayed the entire program. Time cards were issued at the beginning.

Miss Farber started promptly at 6, before an audience of seven persons, two of them critics and one a critic's wife. But everybody felt the hot breath of an historic event. The hall rapidly began to fill. By 8 there were 22 in the audience. They did not stay put; many moved in and out the hall.

Behind the pianist were seated two others—one a score-keeper, the other the relief. At 8:20, Miss Farber rose as Robert Wood moved in. His left hand played the bass theme, and then he slipped behind the vacated keyboard.

And so to the others—to MacRae Cook, John Cale, John Cage, Christian Wolff, David Del Tredici, David Tudor, Philip Corner and James Tenney. Joshua Rivkin helped out one 20-minute spell.

Note succeeded note; implacably, doggedly, swinging back and forth like the windshield wiper of an automobile, and staying in much the same orbit. Base line, tritones, bass line, tritones.

Time meant nothing, and the listener floated in a suspended animation as seconds flowed into minutes with the idiotic repetition of beat after beat. Nirvana? Shanith, shanith, shanith. . . .

8 to 10 P. M. Monday

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

"Vexations" still running strong on keyboard. Fireman drops in to check that audience doesn't exceed 197; 18 in sight, each in a silent cocoon of contemplation.

In locker room, John Cale, fresh from keyboard, says it's a tricky business playing the piece. Not so much on the hands but "the head goes first," he says.

At 8:40 Mr. Tudor still standing takes over from David Del Tredici in a neat changing of the guard in which the new man's left hand moves in while the other's right hand moves off. Nobody onstage counts house, although audience has slipped to 13, all very quiet.

Survival rations in lobby — coffee, chicken broth, peaches and pastry—moving slowly but the night is young. In front of theater some off-duty pianists and friends talk music. Inside, "Vexations" is still rerunning. By now, as hard to forget as a television commercial jingle. At 9:20, big influx of audience; house now holds 32. Augurs well for the evening.

10 P. M. Monday to 12:45 A. M. Tuesday

By RAYMOND ERICSON

Everything quiet and proceeding on schedule. About 20 persons listening, some reading, some writing, a few whispering. No one sleeps. One woman complains about the "terribly noisy" click of a photographer's camera.

The people drift out and back again slowly to the languorous rhythm of the music. The atmosphere is dreamlike and hypnotic, à la "Last Year at Marienbad."

The pianists are of all kinds: one is stiffbacked, using little motion of the hands, another is a keyboard wiper with limp wrists; one bends over the keys as if in prayer, another sits slightly sideways as if afraid of the piano.

Two of the pianists play gingerly, with an uneven touch; are they out of practice? There is an occasional wrong note and

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Relay Team of Pianists Plays Through the Night

Continued From Page 45

it sounds like a horrible discord.

Some of the pianists get interpretive, apparently unable to stand the monotony of a single dynamic level. They play sotto voce, then mezzo-forte with a restrained passion. Touch varies from phrase to phrase, and one pianist constantly emphasizes the theme with a firm even tone.

Is this what the ice-cream venders go through who cruise the streets in wagons playing the same tune over and over again?

The musical pattern digs into the mind as one contemplates the list of performing pianists. Can one fit the names to the tune? Will they scan properly?

They begin fine: VI-o-la-FAR-ber-RO-bert-Wood-Mac-RAE-Cook. So far, so good. Then it breaks down. By juggling the 35 syllables in the names they can be made to fit the 36 notes of a double passage, slurring one syllable over two notes. The result is not bad, and the game has helped to pass the minutes.

The paradox of being irritated and hypnotized by the music at the same time continues. Have stayed the allotted quota of time and yet feel strangely reluctant to leave. Perhaps one is merely hoping that something will happen to interrupt the unceasing flow of music and provide a sensation of sorts. Nothing changes. As fatigue finally ettles in, one might as well leave. Tomorrow is another day, with lots of work to be done.

12:45 to 2 A. M. Tuesday

By BRIAN O'DOHERTY

Peak audience thanks to driftage from Hans Hofmann show at Museum of Modern Art. About 40, all told. Some of the pianists bedded down on a pad in the basement. Infiltration of street noises. Continuation of cathedral silence within. Music goes on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on.

2 to 4 A. M. Tuesday

By SAM ZOLOTOW

In audience, 20 persons, mostly male and unmistakably of the beatnik variety. Two women had male escorts; one did not. A number of those present combined listening with reading. Others dozed occasionally.

Charles G. Morrow, of the Columbia Graduate School of Business and a student in composition at the Mannes College of Music, did his homework for an accountancy examination next week.

Mr. Morrow's companion, during the night but that it was a "wonderful experience."

"I don't know why it's wonderful," she said, "but it's wonderful."

11 A.M. to 12:40 P.M. Tuesday

BY HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

The strain is beginning to show. Some of the pianists got as much as three hours of sleep. Some did not sleep at all, and looked it. But the music went unfalteringly on.

Outside, a few theoreticians were discussing the significance of the event.

"This kind of music," said one, "leads toward the elimination of conscious control."

"Hell," said one of the pianists. "All I was trying to do was maintain control." He yawned.

At noon, 30 in the audience, half of them newspaper reporters and photographers. Viola Farber, the last to play, as she had been the first, came out with something added—a rose in her hair. Promptly at 12:40 she finished.

A spattering of applause, then great applause. All came on stage twice. Cries of bravo and one yell of encore.

One person collected the full refund of $3. He was Karl Schenzer, an actor in the Off Broadway production of "The Brig."

"It was a great experience," he said, unsmiling. "I feel exhilarated, not at all tired. Time? What is time? In this music the dichotomy between various aspects of art forms dissolves."

Mr. Morrow and Mr. Lee collected $2.50 refunds. They had been in the theater from 8 P.M.

Downstairs the pianists were drinking champagne. There was very little talk.

"Esthetics? Esthetics has disappeared," said David Tudor, tiredly.

Recor For A

James Lee, was reading "Reihe," a collection of critical essays on composition. Mr. Lee operates a concession at the ANTA Theater and studies composition and conducting at the Manhattan School of Music.

A student from the New School for Social Research, who declined to give his name, brought along a knapsack with provisions and books. He had been there since 6 P.M.

Asked why he was remaining, he replied: "It's a challenge to my endurance. There's always the fascination for the grotesque."

Twenty-one were counted in the audience at 4 A.M. The total take by that time was $250 from 50 persons. One 90-cent refund was reported by the management.

4 to 7 A. M. Tuesday

By ANON.

The reviewer, who humbly requested that his name not be mentioned, entered and promptly fell asleep.

"I couldn't help it," he said when his relief man woke him. "The music was positively Zen."

7 to 9 A. M. Tuesday

By HOWARD KLEIN

Six in the audience as Christian Wolff plays his fourth complete set. The hypnotic music provides a point of concentration, which, being of such a fragile, unresolved character, the mind is led deep into oneself.

While actually playing (one learned later), the mind is similarly freed. There are almost no possibilities of expression. The consciousness is deflected from the mechanics of playing to the inner state of balance, which, in response to the calming effect, is poised as if suspended.

The pianist feels the keys beneath his fingers, feels the pedal, sees the lights, the stage, the clock to the left, the photostat of the score on the rack; but in the suspended state, nothing registers.

The interval of 20 minutes is gone in a moment. The next pianist is waiting and the player retires reluctantly. The experience is dreamlike, and the pianist tries to resist waking up.

9 to 11 A. M. Tuesday

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THE POCKET THEATRE PRESENTS

"VEXATIONS"

by

ERIK SATIE

Performed by the Pocket Theatre Piano Relay Team
For the benefit of the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts
Monday, September 9, 1963 at 6:00 PM

Players in order of appearance:

6:00-6:20 Viola Farber
6:20-6:40 Robert Wood
6:40-7:00 MacRae Cook
7:00-7:20 John Cale
7:20-7:40 ? [redacted]
7:40-8:00 John Cage
8:00-8:20 Christian Wolff
8:20-8:40 David Del Tredici
8:40-9:00 David Tudor
9:00-9:20 Philip Corner
9:20-9:40 James Tenney
9:40-10:00 Viola Farber
10:00-10:20 Robert Wood
10:20-10:40 MacRae Cook
10:40-11:00 John Cale
11:00-11:20 ? [redacted]
11:20-11:40 Philip Corner
11:40-12:00 Christian Wolff
12:00-12:20 David Del Tredici
12:20-12:40 David Tudor
12:40-1:00 John Cage
1:00-1:20 James Tenney
1:20-1:40 Viola Farber
1:40-2:00 Robert Wood
2:00-2:20 MacRae Cook
2:20-2:40 John Cale
2:40-3:00 ? [redacted]
3:00-3:20 Philip Corner
3:20-3:40 Christian Wolff
3:40-4:00 Robert Wood
4:00-4:20 David Tudor
4:20-4:40 John Cage
4:40-5:00 James Tenney
5:00-5:20 Viola Farber
5:20-5:40 Robert Wood
5:40-6:00 MacRae Cook
6:00-6:20 John Cale
6:20-6:40 ? [redacted]
6:40-7:00 Philip Corner
7:00-7:20 Christian Wolff
7:20-7:40 David Del Tredici
7:40-8:00 David Tudor
8:00-8:20 John Cage
8:20-8:40 James Tenney
8:40-9:00 Viola Farber
9:00-9:20 Philip Corner
9:20-9:40 MacRae Cook
9:40-10:00 John Cale
10:00-10:20 ? [redacted]
10:20-10:40 Philip Corner
10:40-11:00 Christian Wolff
11:00-11:20 David Del Tredici
11:20-11:40 David Tudor
11:40-12:00 John Cage
12:00-12:20 James Tenney
12:20-12:40 David Tudor

HOUSE RULES

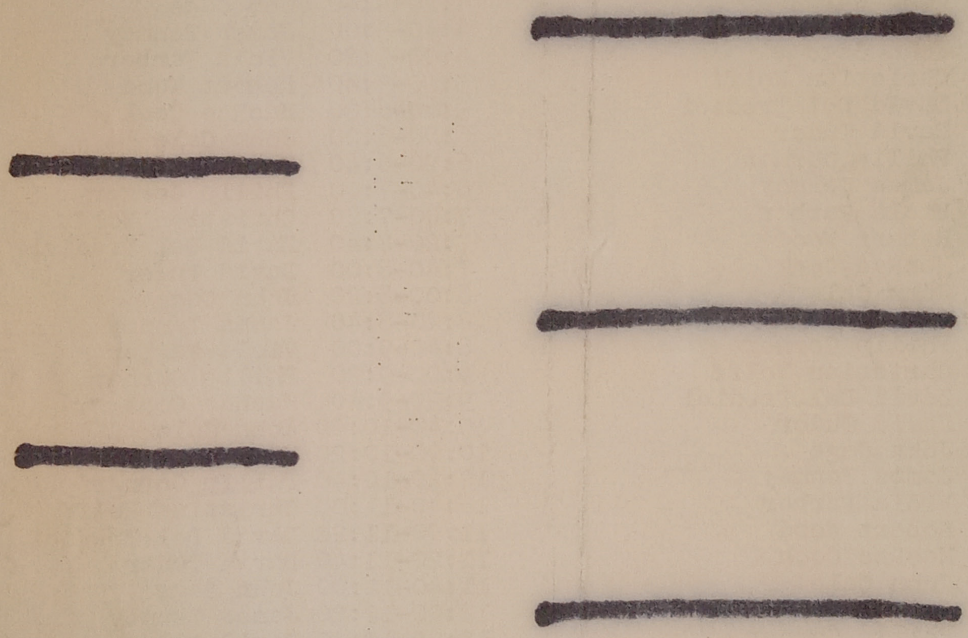
Patrons may enter or leave at any time. Price is always $5.00 for first admission.
Punch time clock when entering and leaving. Refunds will be figured for elapsed time thus registered at the rate of 5 ¢ for each twenty minutes, with a 20 ¢ bonus at the end of the program for those who have remained throughout.
Patrons may check their time cards with box office when going out and pick them up when they return later at no additional cost.

Piano by Steinway

Time clock courtesy of Union Time Recorders

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Chabrier

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PHILHARMONIC TAKES ON THE AVANT-GARDE



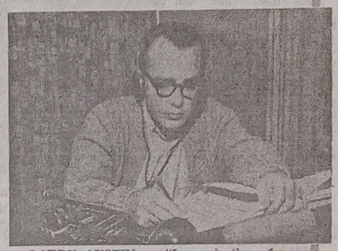
LEONARD BERNSTEIN—Conducts new series which combines modern works with standard fare. Around him, some of the avant-garde composers.



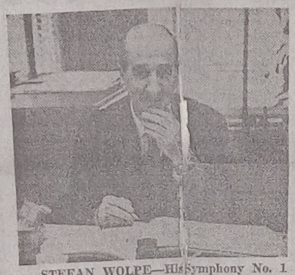
EARLE BROWN — "Avallable Forms II (for Orchestra, Four Hands)," on Feb. 6-9 programs.



JOHN CAGE—"Atlas Eclipticalis With Winter Music" (Electronic Version), also on programs of Feb. 6 to 9.



LARRY AUSTIN — "Improvisations for Jazz Soloists and Orchestra" will have its first New York performance Thursday.



STEFAN WOLPE—His Symphony No. 1 will have its world prelere on Jan. 16.



PIERRE BOULEZ—Will conduct the first United States performance of his "Doubles" at Jan. 23 concert.



MORTON FELDMAN—. . . "Out of 'Last Pieces,'" Feb. 6 through 9.



AARON COPLAND—Soloist in his Piano Concerto this week. The concerts are in Philharmonic Hall.

By HOWARD KLEIN

AARON COPLAND'S Piano Concerto, which the composer will play with the New York Philharmonic this week, is one of nine works currently forming the orchestra's five-week avant-garde series. Leonard Bernstein, the architect of the series, has emphasized in it the far far out.

The Copland Concerto and its companion piece, Larry Austin's "Improvisation for Orchestra and Jazz Soloists," provide two looks at the jazz trend. The Austin piece is new and will be given its premiere. The Copland dates from 1926 and represents an approach that was avant-garde in its day; in the context of the series it affords a backward look over the shifting sands of avant-gardism.

Mr. Copland, who was limbering up his fingers at his home in Peekskill, spoke one cold, sunny day last week about the concerto, the series and music's possible directions.

His home perches on an abrupt wooded hill and looks westward across the Hudson River valley to the hills beyond. The composer, dressed casually in a bulky brown sweater and brown slacks, peered at the landscape from his seat on the sofa while he spoke quietly and good humoredly with an occasional stern word directed toward Alice B., his new black-and-white cat.

"You can't ask anyone over 35 about what is or isn't avant-garde," the 63-year-old Mr. Copland said. "Only the 25-year-olds really know what it is, for they are in the midst of the new trends. Back in the twenties we thought we were at the center of a musical revolution, but the situation today is far more revolutionary than it was 30 or 40 years ago.

"Looking at Webern's music then, I saw the same things in it that I do now. But there is a curious phenomenon about people's reactions to the same piece. Obviously, there were elements in his music that have excited the younger composers the way they were did us.

"One cannot take into account the possible side effects of a composer's work. John Cage's temperament is very far from my own, but it would not have been right for me to say, 'Stop this nonsense, John,' for regardless what one thinks, his 'nonsense' has had positive effects. A new generation has inferences in works that were completely overlooked by the last one.

"When I premiered my concerto in 1926 with Serge Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony, the reactions were quite violent. They called me an 'ogre'; the listeners claimed that Koussevitsky programed it with the malice of a foreigner who wanted to show how bad American music is."

He spoke of Koussevitsky's invaluable aid to young composers and noted the lessening push for contemporary music that followed the conductor's death in 1951. The current Philharmonic series provided a measure of emphasis in the right direction, but Mr. Copland feared the emphasis on the far out would give the impression that no middle ground existed between Xenakis's "Pithoprakta" and Britten's "War Requiem."

"I like the dramatic effect of throwing this far-out music at the audiences all at once, though. After all, it has more publicity value. Music of a less radical kind always gets less notice."

The composer refused to predict what directions music would take. The field of art was too vast and too full of possibilities for that sort of generalization.

"I have found the serial methods valuable to myself and I use them, not in a didactic sense but following my own rules. When I was in Paris with Boulanger in the twenties, Schoenberg's Viennese sound was not for us: we were trying to be American then. One thing I do see in music's future is a kind of return to nationalism and personality. There is the need in the human psychology to recognize a face in a piece of music and this is not possible in many of the international-school compositions."

Photo credits: Hin. Vittor Craft. The New York Times (by Sam Falk), Pic. Kraft-Robinson

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6/27/76

The Gospel According To Giedion and Gropius Is Under Attack

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Modern architecture is at a turning point. A half century after the revolution that ushered in the modern movement and changed the look and character of the built world, we are in the midst of a counter revolution. Although the streets of cities everywhere are lined with the glass and steel towers that testify to the genius and influence of Mies van der Rohe, and the sculptured concrete forms of Le Corbusier have transformed our surroundings, from public buildings to housing, the theory and practice of modernism are under serious attack.

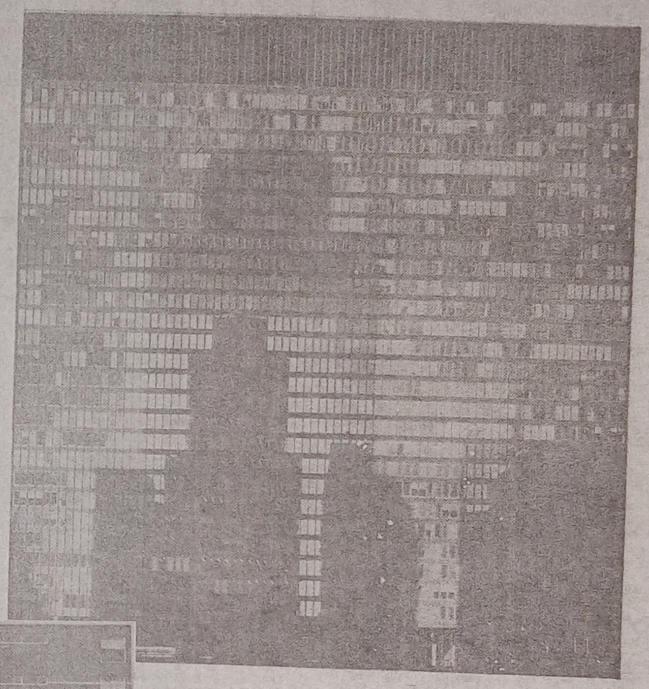
There is no controversy about the monuments themselves. Such structures as Le Corbusier's Marseilles apartments and chapel at Ronchamps are among the ranking prototypes of 20th-century high-rise and symbolic construction; the prophetic vision of Mies's post-World War I glass skyscrapers have been fulfilled handsomely in Chicago in the 1960's. The equally prophetic humanism of Alvar Aalto, the early work of Walter Gropius, and all of the landmark examples of the leaders of the International Style remain among the icons of the profession.

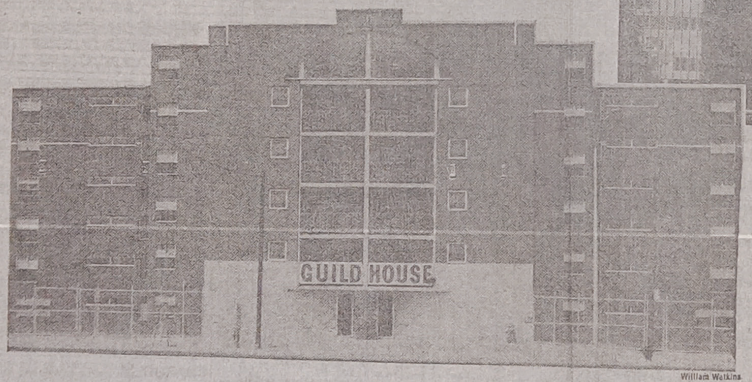
But other icons are being broken. The beliefs and tenets of the modern movement that created these buildings—the gospel according to Giedion and Gropius that preached functional and formal purity and rejection of the past—is being increasingly debated and denied. There is in process now a complex, provocative and generation-splitting restructuring of what Martin Pawley and other writers have called the "architectural belief systems" of the 20th century. The philosophy, art and practice of architecture are changing.

The evidence of these changes is clear. Last fall, the Museum of Modern Art, which introduced the International Style to the United States in 1932 and retained its ideological fervor for 40 years, staged a huge Beaux Arts show—a literal exhumation of the specific style and teaching that modernism rebelled against. This spring, at the same time that Chicago has honored its celebrated skyscraper heritage with a major exhibition, a counter-show of "what the Chicago School left out" has been causing furious comment. Both the New York exhibition and the rebel show in Chicago lean heavily on a change of heart and eye that rejects accepted doctrine and "rediscovers" what the modernists discarded.

Among architects, a group of "young Turks" has embraced this "radical" re-viewing of the past, and much more. In Philadelphia and at

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William Watkins

A new school of young architects whose work is "romantic, eclectic and fiercely intellectual," as represented by Robert Venturi's Guild House, are in revolt against the "pure functionalism of such masters as Mies van der Rohe, whose Federal Center in Chicago is a modernist icon.

accompli, paralleled in importance and achievement by ily a few periods in civi- ... glorified new ructural materials and sys- ns, and developed a style ed on the expressive use these elements.

the same time, it was ly allied to the growth straction in the other with its insistence on healthful and happy housing for all countries and classes. It was to be free of all hypocrisy and cant and any reference to history.

Le Corbusier proposed tearing down part of Paris for towers in a park and shocked no one; the Deutsche Werkbund built model housing that housed very few; Hugh Ferriss drew "future

All this—the perversion of the modernist ideal, the failure of its social aims, the explosion of the myth of progress, the deadly spread of the commercial cliché, the disruptive impact on the receiving environment, plus the poverty and rigidity of design from which any allusion to the past has been expunged — led inevitably to

without its own architectural belief system. The philosophy of eclectic revivalism was synthesized by Robert Venturi in a slim, catalytic book called "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1966.

(When the Museum opened its "scandalous" Beaux Arts

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The Gospel Is

Continued from Page 1

Yale, academic movements strongly influenced by architects Louis Kahn and Charles Moore and historian Vincent Scully, have produced a generation of heretics. Their approach is romantic, eclectic, and fiercely intellectual, a far-cry from the hard-line, functional esthetic of the 1920's and 30's that was to save society as it created art.

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Today, New York architect Richard Meier builds houses of exquisite Corbusian nostalgia that are anything but "machines to live in." The Philadelphia firm of Venturi and Rauch draws equally from the near and distant past and the vernacular scene for low-key designs that are viewed by some as leg-pulling satire and by others as serious innovation. The New York firm of Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer uses the "industrial esthetic" of the early modernists with the same tongue-in-cheek delight that it applies to the inclusion of camp details. The younger Chicago architects are reviving local 1930's modernism with aesthetic nostalgia rather than with functionalist doctrine.

This work is being forged out of new ideas that incorporate everything from visual irony and scholarly exercises in historical revisionism to a powerful disillusionment with the failure of the dream of the world of the future promised by the modernists. The broad outlines of the new architecture—for there are diverse and interlocking trends—are part of a culture that is currently rejecting or questioning older values, discovering a new populism and pluralism, and is increasingly informed and selective in its taste.

The result is neither static nor stagnant; this is a period of vital exploration. But there is little agreement about what is going on. The older generation sees the new directions as blasphemous and the younger generation sees them as the creative reopening of the limits of design.

The counter revolution had to happen, not just because history and art never stand still, but because so much else has happened in these fifty years in which the modern style has become the established way of building. Modern architecture is acknowledged to be an immense, incontrovertible and and often magnificent fait accompli, paralleled in importance and achievement by [illegible] a few periods in civi- [illegible] promised new ructural materials and sys- ns, and developed a style ed on the expressive use these elements.

the same time, it was ly allied to the growth straction in the other with its insistence on flat surfaces, simple geometric shapes and primary colors. There were laws, written and unwritten. Ornament was crime. Form followed function. Industrial processes and materials, or the machine esthetic, replaced handcrafts. The break with the past was to be total.

But rules are made to be broken. The present generation of architects, using the advances in structural technology freely, detours significantly from the earlier functional straitjacket. It is no longer considered essential to reveal or express basic structure; the best recent work of Kevin Roche, for example, conceals it with a flat glass and metal skin whose elements express a quite different scale, without sacrificing a rational relationship between the two. There is a rising emphasis on the use of structure and technology to create an esthetic of formal drama for its own sake, related to function, but quite independent of it.

The forms that once followed function are treated as abstract sculpture. Elements of technology — industrial trusses, exposed ducts, factory glazing—are used as a decorative vocabulary of symbolic objects and intrinsic ornament rather than as objects of utility. The English work of James Stirling carries this practice to an expert high.

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The idea of a building and its uses expressed with basic simplicity and clarity is often replaced, in the work of younger practitioners, by ambiguity and playfulness. The kind of complexity and even arbitrariness in the way the components of a building are combined and the calculated effects that result suggest the architecture of Mannerism or the Baroque rather than the puritanical pieties of modernism. In fact, an eclectic mannerism that would have the modern masters turning in their graves is replacing the "purism" and "functionalism" of the 20th-century architectural revolution.

The new approach requires skill and carries a high amount of risk. At the same time there is a careful questioning of everything the modern movement has promised and delivered.

And we can see now the limitations of modernist doctrine. The modernists promised Utopia; their vision was of a cleaner, brighter, more efficient and orderly universe in which architecture and technology would create healthful and happy housing for all countries and classes. It was to be free of all hypocrisy and cant and any reference to history.

Le Corbusier proposed tearing down part of Paris for towers in a park and shocked no one; the Deutsche Werkbund built model housing that housed very few; Hugh Ferriss drew "future metropolises" that never came to pass. But it was truly believed that architecture was to be a social tool in a marriage of morality and art that would have confounded even Ruskin, and architects were to be the missionaries of a new and better world.

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It did not work because it promised too much, and what it promised was unreal. Modern architecture is perhaps a classic case of the disappointments — no matter how great the very real accomplishments—that go with too-high expectations. The question asked by a new generation of students is how such high ideals could have produced so much inhumanity.

The dream of modernism was caught in other 20th-century revolutions, in racial, social and moral upheavals far beyond the architects' control that made their panaceas seem touchingly naive. It was crushed by economics, which reduced a reductionary esthetic still further, from the bare beauty of the new technology to the cheap, stripped expediency of businessmen and bankers. It was distorted and turned into clichés by speculators and jerry-builders.

The basic belief that functional and mechanical logic led naturally to elegance and beauty was disproved in a million sterile downtown "renewals." And the kind of architectural sociology that replaced the 19th-century row houses of the Gorbals in Glasgow, for example, with modern high-rise towers, simply exchanged one kind of slum for another.

There were, in addition, theoretical blind spots that courted disaster. If modernism rejected history, it also rejected reality. It still retained the traditional idea of the building as monument, ignoring great masses of lesser construction, and imposed its monuments on their surroundings with a stunning lack of environmental empathy.

Environment, in fact, was the important missing concept. There was little concern for the need to relate building elements to each other in a social, functional and esthetic pattern beyond the most abstract planning diagrams. The organic strengths and accretions of the ad hoc environment were anathema.

All this—the perversion of the modernist ideal, the failure of its social aims, the explosion of the myth of progress, the deadly spread of the commercial cliché, the disruptive impact on the receiving environment, plus the poverty and rigidity of design from which any allusion to the past has been expunged — led inevitably to disenchantment. And then came a new generation, which had no bad associations with history, for whom old buildings did not mean oppressive ideas or conditions, and who did not share the taboos of their fathers.

Looking for enrichment, both visually and emotionally, this generation has indulged in a romantic revivalism that accommodates both the most superficial nostalgic kitsch and the most informed historicism. It is an orgy of rediscovery.

Architects have developed a new set of attitudes and interests based on new perceptions of history and the environment. The two are inextricably linked. To see the environment whole, one must see history whole, and it has become necessary to deal sensitively with older buildings and values. It has become equally necessary to acknowledge the rationale and the result of disorderly, but vital organic growth.

Today's architect, therefore, does not find history expendable; this is one profession that went through the "history is irrelevant" bit half a century ago. In fact, historicism, and in particular, historical revisionism, is one of the leading factors in the new architecture. But history is seen and used very differently now. There is a selective preoccupation with those periods that serve the almost perverse complexity of the contemporary condition: Mannerism, the Baroque, Romantic Classicism. There is great interest in those styles that were declared despicable, dead, or non-existent by the modernists: the Beaux Arts, Victoriana, Art Deco and all the products of the near-past that were deleted by revolutionary taste or doctrine. There is a fascinating rewriting of recent history to restore suppressed styles and periods.

●

Fringe figures, not-long-buried or still alive, are being revived and reinterpreted: George Howe, George Fred Keck, Andrew Rebori, Barry Byrne and Ely Jacques Kahn among the modernists; Ralph Adams Cram, a "modern" medievalist; Frank Furness, the most exuberantly outré of the Victorians. Continuities and sequences are being filled in and rearranged, and all of this work is being given fresh meaning.

But this process, too, is not without its own architectural belief system. The philosophy of eclectic revivalism was synthesized by Robert Venturi in a slim, catalytic book called "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1966.

(When the Museum opened its "scandalous" Beaux Arts

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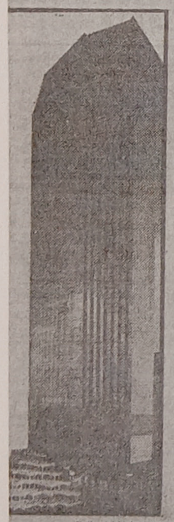
Under Attack

exhibition in 1975, it signified the official acceptance of the new respectability of the Academy and put its official stamp on the broadening of modernist horizons through the examination of the past. The expected shock waves never materialized because historical eclecticism had already been embraced by the architectural avant garde.)

●

Venturi's point, now generally accepted, was that the art of architecture was an inclusionary whole, made up of all of history and all of the elements of the environment, and that examination of this continuity, with its contrasts and intricacies, had much to teach the designer about the richness of esthetic and functional relationships. He called strict modernist doctrine exclusionary in its renunciation of these models and effects. He endorsed a vital and messy disorder over an orderly sterility, and suiting his own style for a sensitive, suggestive esthetic, incorporated mannerist elements of symbolism and ambiguity into his style.

An even earlier eclectic precedent is to be found in the frankly syncritic borrowings from Soane and Ledoux and other 19th century Romantic Classicists in the work of Philip Johnson in the 50's and 60's, to an obliga-



Nathaniel Lieberman

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to of embarrassment and abuse from the righteous. The buildings weren't always very good, and some were even quite bad, but these experiments led to Johnson's liberated, crystalline geometry that is in the front ranks of today's creative work.

The liberating example of Louis Kahn, puzzling at first but increasingly understood and hailed as architectural horizons widened, is now seen to be of paramount importance. Kahn, trained in the Beaux Arts, never scuttled its lessons; his underlying love of classicism and solidity created a unique modern style. He managed to incorporate a sense of the timeless qualities of architecture, from antiquity on, in his striking contemporary work, opening the eyes and minds of an entire generation of students to the universality of the building art.

A young New York group has taken closer historical models. John Hejduk plays on Corbusian themes and motifs; Richard Meier, Charles Gwathmey and others ring changes on the nostalgic and formalistic elements of the International Style. This is an expert game of almost instant recall, totally divorced from the theories and conditions that shaped those forms in the first place.

In a sense, this is modern architecture turned inside out, its basic elements transformed into an arcane but elegant vocabulary for a tour de force kind of building based on special references for those in the know. This rearranging and incorporating of motifs becomes a style in itself, abstract to the point of sculpture, aggressively and hermetically esthetic at a time of declared emphasis on social utility and human needs. This is consummate mannerism. And it is also an élite style when élitism is a pejorative word. It is producing some of today's most skilled and handsome building, as well as some architectural navel watching, and there is the danger of an exotic dead end.

●

What is most significant about this kind of history is that it is being transmuted into something totally new. It is all revisionist, whether it is a group of architects rewriting the history of the Chicago School, or another group using rediscovered design principles in an uncommon or unusual way. No one intends to engage in conventional revivals; there will be no neo-Gothic or neo-Baroque or copies of medieval or mannerist monuments or traditional systems of ornament. But architects raised on "less is more" are hungrily groping for a little more.

They are avid for the revelations of space and facade afforded by the classical Beaux Arts; they are admiring of the picturesque use of light, level and surface enrichment as tools of functional purpose and sensuous response in High Victorian styles; they can fall in love with a 1920's facade. The recycling of old buildings is no accident at this time. But these lessons are not being taken literally, and their interest comes from much more than nostalgia. What is being sought are ways to achieve an enlargement and elaboration of modern vision, technique and effect.

Interpretively, everything is "in" that the modernists threw out. This principle of inclusionism, or almost anything goes, extends to another parallel new interest: the vernacular or Pop environment. The architectural avant garde is equally intrigued by the rediscovery of history and the new discovery of the popular landscape—the hagiography of signs and symbols, motels, fast sales and fast food, of the highway, the suburb and the city. Chaotic commercial accretions are carefully dissected for function and symbolism.

●

Here, too, Robert Venturi and his wife, Denise Scott Brown, must be credited. They achieved the apotheosis of the "dumb and ordinary" building and environment—an event that has a clear parallel in Pop Art. The architectural message was delivered in the 1960's through articles and a book, "Learning from Las Vegas." This was a much harder bullet for most architects to bite than the rehabilitation of history in "Complexity and Contradiction."

But this perception of the vernacular environment adds another valuable chapter to history. Its insights and evaluations are revealing. Beyond that, however, the Venturis have translated their observations into debatable, didactic principles for the practice of architectural design. These principles not only turn architecture inside out, they turn élitism inside out. In their kind of inversion, the builders' economic and functional justifications for junk become the architect's guidelines for art. A stunning contradiction is produced: élite populism. What is most significant, however, is that this intellectual exercise, too, is a form of eclecticism, with an input into the design process similar to neo-historicism. It is, in fact, part of the same architectural package.

A particularly quixotic kind of élite populism can be seen in the work of the firm of Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer, which incorporates elements of kitsch, dumb-and-ordinary and near-history into a product frequently distinguished by urbane wit and skill. Simple industrial materials and mechanical elements are celebrated as high art. But the ultimate example of this popular mechanics approach is probably Paris's Centre Pompidou, the prizewinning design by Piano and Rogers, now in construction for the new museum (more correctly an information, entertainment and cultural center) that will be Paris's contemporary cultural showplace. Described in Architectural Design (a British periodical that regularly feels the pulse of the avant garde) as an "urban machine, fluid and flexible," it is to be a place where specialists and laymen "design their own needs into the building, as free as possible from the limitations of architectural form."

●

Old dreams die hard. We have come full circle. Here again is the modernists' wonderful machine for living and doing other things in, married this time, with remarkable ingenuity, to the new populism: everyone is to share in giving the building its identity. Since its identity has already been firmly established by the architects, in a *macho* structural steel-and-glass esthetic of elaborate, mechanistic symbolism and indelible style, this may be paternalistic populism. And we are back to the monument again.

All of these trends represent attitudes and styles only possible at a time of the near-total reevaluations that are currently running through most of the institutions of contemporary society. This new architecture is a part of its time. Its polarities of subject and style are due to another current concept, the idea of "pluralism," an already overworked word that implies a permissable and desirable cultural diversity. And its products are only possible in the hands of extremely able, acutely well-educated, worldly professionals of highly developed sensibilities.

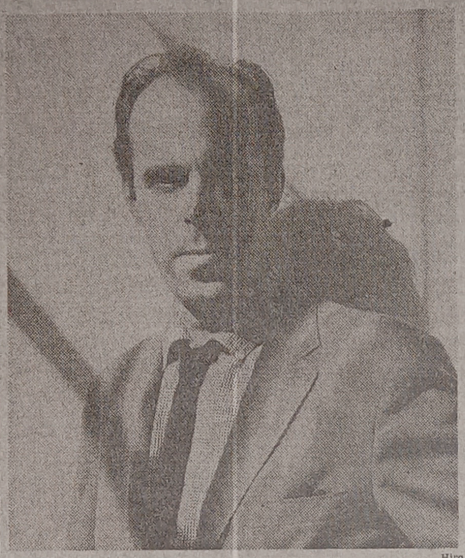
The words that tie these many directions together are revisionism and romanticism. Austerity is now a matter of economics more often than of taste, and never of decree. History and hedonism are back. Architecture is admittedly not going to save the world and it has a far gentler moral stance. It may still improve parts of the environment noticeably, and it has developed a commendable social awareness.

But two things are being reordered radically today: the history of the modern movement and the theories and principles upon which the contemporary practice of architecture rests. The nostalgia, the revivalism, the symbolism, the arcane and arbitrary uses of the past, the canonization of the recent and the ordinary, bespeak a cultural sophistication rather than a cultural copout. These references are being employed carefully and creatively, with immense calculation and rigorous intellect, for a cool and challenging art. ■

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Music: Last of a Series



Hiro

Earle Brown, who conducted work of his own at the concert

Bernstein et al Conduct 5th Avant-Garde Bill

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

THE avant-garde came to an end last night, at least as far as the New York Philharmonic was concerned. Leonard Bernstein conducted the fifth and final program of the series, and brought down his baton around 11:05 P.M. before an audience considerably smaller than it was when the evening started.

In a way we had the crème de la crème last night, as far as avant-grade manifestations is concerned. The three composers represented were all American, and they were all pioneers in aleatory. At least that is the word that has achieved most currency. John Cage, one of the three, prefers "indeterminate" to "aleatory."

●

Aleatoric or indeterminate music is that in which the composer leaves one or more elements open to the performer. It is music of chance, in which certain compositional aspects might be fixed, others entirely free. In Mr. Cage's "Atlas Eclipticalis," the score "may be performed in whole or in part, for any duration, by any ensemble." So the composer tells us.

In Morton Feldman's "Out of Last Pieces," the composer's graphs "erase memory, erase virtuosity." Earle Brown's "Available Forms II" has 38 structural units, or

may come back for further investigation.

Perhaps it was unwise of Mr. Bernstein to subject his audience to so long an evening. Before intermission, he conducted the "Fall" Concerto from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons," with John Corigliano as soloist, and he continued with the Tchaikovsky "Pathétique." That meant an hour of music alone. Thus it was one of the longest programs in recent Philharmonic history, and it may be that many who left did so not because of the music but because of the inexorable demands of the Long Island Rail Road or New York Central.

●

But who can write or think about Vivaldi and Tchaikovsky when faced with the memory of the squawks, pointillisms, chaos, delicacies, mysteries, calculations and miscalculations of indeterminate music? Some of it may be written for no other reason than pour épater le bourgeois; some of it shows delicate evocations of sound; some of it is phony; some of it exciting. In itself, it is a passing fad, but it does illustrate the

The Program

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC. Leonard Bernstein, John Cage, James Tenney and Earle Brown, conductors; with David Tudor, pianist and John Corigliano, violinist.

Autumn, from The Four Seasons . . . Vivaldi
Symphony No. 6 . . . Tchaikovsky
Improvisation by the Orchestra Atlas Eclipticalis with Winter Music (electronic version) . . . Cage
Out of Last Pieces . . . Feldman
Available Forms II (First U. S. Performance) . . . Brown

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sented "in any combinations, sequences or juxtapositions."

The program notes were detailed, and so were Mr. Bernstein's comments. But none of those are really of any help for understanding this music, if it is music. It is not subject to analysis, for there is no precedent. It is not subject to any standard measurement. There is a strong analogy to certain forms of action painting, and it is significant that many aleatoric composers, especially these three, constantly evoke the work of Jackson Pollock, Phillip Guston and Robert Rauschenberg.

In any event, these pieces, with their new sounds, apparent chaos and weird textures, shook the audience quite a bit. Not unexpectedly, the most unconventional was Mr. Cage's. He used an orchestra of more than 80 players, and each instrument was equipped with a contact microphone that led into a little preamplifier on the floor. The preamplifier led into an electronic mixer, which fed into six amplifiers, which went to six loudspeakers scattered through the hall. The piano was amplified, and on the podium was, instead of a conductor, a mechanical affair with a spoke that slowly revolved. When 8 minutes were up, the piece was over. In the Brown piece, though, two live conductors were needed —Mr. Bernstein and the composer.

One might think that Mr. Cage's piece, and the others, would have caused some kind of demonstration. What happened was that during the progress of the work, people walked out. When it was over, there was a more general exodus. There were a few lusty boos, a few counter-cheers. But on the whole the music fell flat. So did the music of Mr. Feldman and Mr. Brown. The audience, the part that remained, seemed more amused than anything else. Its amusement had started with a demonstration of IBM music, and an improvisation by full orchestra that lasted a minute and a half.

If nothing else, though, the program did shake the innocence of many listeners in the audience. For the first time many of them were exposed to a type of music that is making a strong impact on the young avant-garde. Now those innocents know that there are all kinds of strange and possibly immoral things going on in the world of music. Some may flee in horror, picking up their skirts. A few

breakup of values in music the way so many other manifestations mirror the equivalent breakup in contemporary life and thought.

Tabernacle Choir to Tour

SALT LAKE CITY, Feb. 6 (UPI)—The Mormon Tabernacle Choir will make a two-week concert tour this summer with performances in seven major cities, including an appearance at the New York World's Fair. The choir will also give concerts in Houston, New Orleans, Atlanta, New York City, Rochester, Cleveland and Minneapolis. The tour will begin July 20.

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Most Adventurous of Adventurous

Lincoln Center

New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, assisted by John Cage, James Tenney and Earle Brown. Soloists: John Corigliano, violinist; David Tudor, pianist. The Avant Garde—Program V:
"Fall" from "The Four Seasons" ..... Vivaldi
Symphony No. 6 ("Pathetique") ..... Tchaikovsky
Music of Chance:
Atlas Eclipticalis ..... Cage
. . . Out of "Last Pieces" ... Feldman
Available Forms II (first U. S. performance) ..... Brown

By Alan Rich

You can come out from under your seat now, Aunt Martha, it's all over.

Leonard Bernstein and the Philharmonic ended their avant-garde series in Philharmonic Hall last night in a blaze of . . . well, in a blaze. Any one who may have complained about the cautious rationing of the far-out music on previous concerts in the series could have no cause to complain this week. The dose was large and stiff.

Three composers were on deck, three of the most adventurous of the adventurous. There was John Cage, grand sachem of the experimental, the man to whom music itself is only part of music. With a Cage piece you have to watch while you listen, unhear while you hear. Then there was Morton Feldman, who makes the most expressive silences this side of Ingmar Bergman. And finally there was Earle Brown, who invented the idea that making music means taking chances.

By the way, there was also Vivaldi and Tchaikovsky, almost enough of them for a full symphony concert. The "Fall" section of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" was neatly, crisply set forth by a tiny ensemble. Tchaikovsky's "Pathetique" got a somewhat edgy, frenzied performance, with eloquence here and there and ragged ensemble as well. These curtain-raisers lasted over an hour in themselves, and many people went home at intermission, both satisfied by what they had heard and fearful of what they hadn't.

Then the fun began in earnest. Mr. Bernstein got a big hand when he announced that this was the last concert in the avant-garde series, but an even bigger one when he surmised that some might have wanted it to go on. Actually, Mr. Bernstein wasn't playing it for laughs last night; he spoke lucidly, briefly and well on the matter at hand, the handling of chance elements in musical composition.

As part of the speech, he produced a piece that had been composed on Pegasus, an IBM computer owned by the BBC in London, and had the piece played by some of the wind players of the orchestra. Pegasus is a square; the piece turned out to be a stolid old chunk of old-hat twelve-tone music, and rhythmically about as inventive as a Sousa march.

Next came about 90 seconds of pure improvisation by the orchestra, with Mr. Bernstein throwing a few elementary signals. This was also pretty hopeless; an orchestra trained to play a Tchaikovsky score accurately and well is not necessarily an improvising unit. Aside from a few clever passages from the winds and percussion, most of the players were content to noodle a couple of standard warmup passages. Chance became misfortune.

On, then, with the program. Mr. Cage's piece, which took its note-patterns from a series of astronomical maps, laid itself a star-studded egg. The gimmick here was that each instrument played through a small contact microphone, with Mr. Cage and his assistant James Tenney turning the controls on and off according to a prearranged plan. Loudspeakers around the hall surrounded the audience with the resulting sounds.

To what end? Mr. Cage has always held that music is a kind of theater, and many of his pieces are genuinely fun to watch. Not this one; aside from a mechanical "conductor" on the stage, a kind of oversized stopwatch, there was nothing to do but to concentrate on dreary, raucous travesties of orchestral sound, resembling nothing so much as a flock of migrating macaws heard from inside a radio signal shack. Artificial or real, musical sounds ought to be more attractive than all that, and Mr. Cage has done better. He could have added to the interest by putting bells on the exit doors. They would have drowned out the music.

Mr. Feldman's piece was better received. Here the object was to work with improvised pitches worked onto a predetermined plan of tempo and rhythm. The music had the usual Feldman stamp of near-silence punctuated by bright and attractive splashes of sonic pinpoints. It was all attractive in a way, if you can take it as just that. But eight minutes' worth were about seven minutes' worth in excess.

Finally (it was now 10:55, by the way, and the hall was about one-third full), came a genuine piece of music, Earle Brown's "Available Forms." This is an extremely complex work, planned along the lines somewhat of Stockhausen's famous Piano Piece No. 11. Two orchestral groups were involved, each led by its own conductor (Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Brown). The conductor assigned his forces, in turn, one or another of a series of pre-composed short fragments. The chance element arose from the communication, or non-communication, between the two groups.

Gimmick or not, the piece came to life as a musical experience. There were dead spots, arising from times when both conductors chose relatively motionless fragments for their groups to play. But there were spots that really caught fire. Dense, fascinating, intensely colored and full of creative fire, chance or not, Mr. Brown's creation made musical sense. It made a spectacular ending to a series that, with all its ups and downs, its false starts and faulty premises, has enlivened the musical season no end.

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This article, completed in February of 1961, was published in Metro (Milan) in May. It may be read in whole or in part, any sections of it may be skipped, what remains may be read in any order. The style of printing here employed is not essential. Any of the sections may be printed directly over any of the others, and the spaces between paragraphs may be varied in any manner. The words in italics are either quotations from Rauschenberg or titles of his works.

To Whom It May Concern:
The white paintings came
first; my silent piece
came later.

—J. C.

ON ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, ARTIST, AND HIS WORK

Conversation was difficult and correspondence virtually ceased. (Not because of the mails, which continued.) People spoke of messages, perhaps because they'd not heard from one another for a long time. Art flourished.

The goat. No weeds. Virtuosity with ease. Does his head have a bed in it? Beauty. His hands and his feet, fingers and toes long-jointed, are astonishing. They certify his work. And the signature is nowhere to be seen. The paintings were thrown into the river after the exhibition. What is the nature of Art when it reaches the Sea?

Beauty is now underfoot wherever we take the trouble to look. (This is an American discovery.) Is when Rauschenberg looks an idea? Rather it is an entertainment in which to celebrate unfixity. Why did he make black paintings, then white ones (coming up out of the South), red, gold ones (the gold ones were Christmas presents), ones of many colors, ones with objects attached? Why did he make sculptures with rocks suspended? Talented?

I know he put the paint on the tires. And he unrolled the paper on the city street. But which one of us drove the car?

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As the paintings changed the printed material became as much of a subject as the paint (I began using newsprint in my work) causing changes of focus: A third palette. There is no poor subject (Any incentive to paint is as good as any other.). Dante is an incentive, providing multiplicity, as useful as a chicken or an old shirt. The atmosphere is such that everything is seen clearly, even in the dark night or when thumbing through an out-of-date newspaper or poem. This subject is unavoidable (*A canvas is never empty.*); it fills an empty canvas. And if, to continue history, newspapers are pasted onto the canvas and on one another and black paints are applied, the subject looms up in several different places at once like magic to produce the painting. If you don't see it, you probably need a pair of glasses. But there is a vast difference between one oculist and another, and when it is a question of losing eyesight the best thing to do is to go to the best oculist (i.e., the best painter: he'll fix you up). Ideas are not necessary. It is more useful to avoid having one, certainly avoid having several (leads to inactivity). Is Gloria V. a subject or an idea? Then, tell us: How many times was she married and what do you do when she divorces you?

There are three panels taller than they are wide fixed together to make a single rectangle wider than it is tall. Across the whole thing is a series of colored photos, some wider than tall, some taller than wide, fragments of posters, some of them obscured by paint. Underneath these, cutting the total in half, is a series of rectangular color swatches, all taller than wide. Above, bridging two of the panels, is a dark blue rectangle. Below and slightly out of line with the blue one, since it is on one panel only, is a gray rectangle with a drawing on it about halfway up. There are other things, but mostly attached to these two "roads" which cross: off to the left and below the swatches is a drawing on a rectangle on a rectangle on a rectangle (its situation is that of a farm on the outskirts of a mainstreet town). This is not a composition. It is a place where things are, as on a table or on a town seen from the air: any one of them could be removed and another come into its place through circumstances analogous to birth and death, travel, housecleaning, or cluttering. He is not saying; he is painting. (What is Rauschenberg saying?) The message is conveyed by dirt which, mixed with an adhesive, sticks to itself and to the canvas

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upon which he places it. Crumbling and responding to changes in weather, the dirt unceasingly does my thinking. He regrets we do not see the paint while it's dripping.

Rauschenberg is continually being offered scraps of this and that, odds and ends his friends run across, since it strikes them: This is something he could use in a painting. Nine times out of ten it turns out he has no use for it. Say it's something close to something he once found useful, and so could be recognized as his. Well, then, as a matter of course, his poetry has moved without one's knowing where it's gone to. He changes what goes on, on a canvas, but he does not change how canvas is used for paintings—that is, stretched flat to make rectangular surfaces which may be hung on a wall. These he uses singly, joined together, or placed in a symmetry so obvious as not to attract interest (nothing special). We know two ways to unfocus attention: symmetry is one of them; the other is the over-all where each small part is a sample of what you find elsewhere. In either case, there is at least the possibility of looking anywhere, not just where someone arranged you should. You are then free to deal with your freedom just as the artist dealt with his, not in the same way but, nevertheless, originally. This thing, he says, *duplication of images*, that is symmetry. All it means is that, looking closely, we see as it was everything is in chaos still.

To change the subject: "Art is the imitation of nature in her manner of operation." Or a net.

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So somebody has talent? So what? Dime a dozen. And we're overpopulated. Actually we have more food than we have people and more art. We've gotten to the point of burning food. When will we begin to burn our art? The door is never locked. Rauschenberg walks in. No one home. He paints a new painting over the old one. Is there a talent then to keep the two, the one above, the one below? What a plight (it's no more serious than that) we're in! It's a joy in fact to begin over again. In preparation he erases the De Kooning.

Is the door locked? No, it's open as usual. Certainly Rauschenberg has techniques. But the ones he has he disuses, using those he hasn't. I must say he never forces a situation. He is like that butcher whose knife never became dull simply because he cut with it in such a way that it never encountered an obstacle. Modern art has no need for technique. (We are in the glory of not knowing what we're doing.) So technique, not having to do with the painting, has to do with who's looking and who painted. People. Technique is: how are the people? Not how well did they do it, but, as they were saying, frailty. (He says—and is he speaking of technique?—"What do you want, a declaration of love? I take responsibility for competence and hope to have made something hazardous with which we may try ourselves.") It is a question, then, of seeing in the dark, not slipping over things visually. Now that Rauschenberg has made a painting with radios in it, does that mean that even without radios, I must go on listening even while I'm looking, everything at once, in order not to be run over?

Would we have preferred a pig with an apple in its mouth? That too, on occasion, is a message and requires a blessing. These are the feelings Rauschenberg gives us: love, wonder, laughter, heroism (I accept), fear, sorrow, anger, disgust, tranquillity.

There is no more subject in a *combine* than there is in a page from a newspaper. Each thing that is there is a subject. It is a situation involving multiplicity.

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(It is no reflection on the weather that such-and-such a government sent a note to another.) (And the three radios of the radio combine, turned on, which provides the subject?) Say there was a message. How would it be received? And what if it wasn't? Over and over again I've found it impossible to memorize Rauschenberg's paintings. I keep asking, "Have you changed it?" And then noticing while I'm looking it changes. I look out the window and see the icicles. There, dripping water is frozen into object. The icicles all go down. Winter more than the others is the season of quiescence. There is no dripping when the paint is squeezed from a tube. But there is the same acceptance of what happens and no tendency towards gesture or arrangement. This changes the notion of what is beautiful. By fixing papers to canvas and then painting with black paint, black became infinite and previously unnoticed.

Hallelujah! The blind can see again. Blind to what he has seen so that seeing this time is as though first seeing. How is it that one experiences this, for example, with the two Eisenhower pictures which for all intents and purposes are the same? (A duplication containing duplications.) Everything is so much the same, one becomes acutely aware of the differences, and quickly. And where, as here, the intention is unchanging, it is clear that the differences are unintentional, as unintended as they were in the white paintings where nothing was done. Out of seeing, do I move into poetry? And is this a poetry in which Eisenhower could have disappeared and the Mona Lisa taken his place? I think so but I do not see so. There is no doubt about which way is up. In any case our feet are on the ground. Painting's place is on the wall—painting's place, that is, in process. When I showed him a photograph of one of Rauschenberg's paintings, he said, "If I had a painting, I'd want to be sure it would stay the way it is; this one is a collage and would change." But Rauschenberg is practical. He goes along with things just as they are. Just as he knows it goes on a wall and not any which way, but right side up, so he knows, as he is, it is changing (which one more quickly? and the pyramids change). When possible, and by various means, he gives it a push: holes through which one sees behind the canvas the wall to which it is committed; the reflective surfaces changing what is seen by means of what is happening; lights going on and off; and the radios. The white paintings were airports for the lights, shadows, and particles.

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Now in a metal box attached by a rope, the history kept by means of drawings of what was taken away and put in its place, of a painting constantly changing.

There is in Rauschenberg, between him and what he picks up to use, the quality of encounter. For the first time. If, as happens, there is a series of paintings containing such and such a material, it is as though the encounter was extended into a visit on the part of the stranger (who is divine). (In this way societies uninformed by artists coagulate their experiences into modes of communication in order to make mistakes.) Shortly the stranger leaves, leaving the door open.

Having made the empty canvases (*A canvas is never empty.*), Rauschenberg became the giver of gifts. Gifts, unexpected and unnecessary, are ways of saying Yes to how it is, a holiday. The gifts he gives are not picked up in distant lands but are things we already have (with exceptions, of course: I needed a goat and the other stuffed birds, since I don't have any, and I needed an attic in order to go through the family things [since we moved away, the relatives write to say: Do you still want them?]), and so we are converted to the enjoyment of our possessions. Converted from what? From wanting what we don't have, art as pained struggle. Setting out one day for a birthday party, I noticed the streets were full of presents. Were he saying something in particular, he would have to focus the painting; as it is he simply focuses himself, and everything, *a pair of socks*, is appropriate, appropriate to poetry, a poetry of *infinite possibilities*. It did not occur to me to ask him why he chose Dante as a project for illustration. Perhaps it is because we've had it around so long so close to us without bothering to put it to use, which becomes its meaning. It involved a stay in Florida and at night, looking for help, a walk through land infested with rattlesnakes. Also slipping on a pier, gashing his shin, hanging, his foot caught, not calling for help. The technique consists in having a *plan*: *Lay*

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out stretcher on floor match markings and join. Three stretchers with the canvas on them no doubt already stretched. Fulfilling this plan put the canvas in direct contact with the floor, the ground thereby activated. This is pure conjecture on my part but would work. More important is to know exactly the size of the door and techniques for getting a canvas out of the studio. (*Combines* don't roll up.) Anything beyond that size must be suitably segmented.

I remember the show of the black paintings in North Carolina. Quickly! They have become masterpieces.

Is it true that anything can be changed, seen in any light, and is not destroyed by the action of shadows? Then you won't mind when I interrupt you while you're working?

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The message changes in the *combine-drawings*, made with pencil, water color, and photographic transfer: (a) the work is done on a table, not on a wall; (b) there is no oil paint; (c) because of a + b, no dripping holds the surface in one plane; (d) there is not always the joining of rectangles since when there is, it acts as reminiscence of stretchers; (e) the outlines appear vague as in water or air (our feet are off the ground); (f) I imagine being upside down; (g) the pencil lines scan the images transferred from photographs; (h) it seems like many television sets working simultaneously all tuned differently. How to respond to this message? (And I remember the one in *Dante* with the outline of the toes of his foot above, the changed position and another message, the paper absorbing the color and spreading it through its wet tissues.) He has removed the why of asking why and you can read it at home or in a library. (These others are poems too.) Perhaps because of the change in gravity (*Monument 1958*), the project arose of illustrating a book. (A book can be read at a table; did it fall on the floor?) As for me, I'm not so inclined to read poetry as I am one way or another to get myself a television set, sitting up nights looking.

Perhaps after all there is no message. In that case one is saved the trouble of having to reply. As the lady said, "Well, if it isn't art, then I like it." Some (a) were made to hang on a wall, others (b) to be in a room, still others (a + b).

By now we must have gotten the message. It couldn't have been more explicit. Do you understand this idea?: *Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two.)* The nothingness in between is where for no reason at all every practical thing that one actually takes the time to do so stirs up the dregs that they're no longer sitting as we thought on the bottom. All you need do is stretch canvas, make markings, and join. You have then turned on

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the switch that distinguishes man, his ability to change his mind: *If you do not change your mind about something when you confront a picture you have not seen before, you are either a stubborn fool or the painting is not very good.* Is there any need before we go to bed to recite the history of the changes and will we in that bed be murdered? And how will our dreams, if we manage to go to sleep, suggest the next practical step? Which would you say it was: wild, or elegant, and why? Now as I come to the end of my rope, I noticed the color is incredibly beautiful. And that embossed box.

I am trying to check my habits of seeing, to counter them for the sake of greater freshness. I am trying to be unfamiliar with what I'm doing.

(I cannot remember the name of the device made of glass which has inside it a delicately balanced mechanism which revolves in response to infrared rays.) Rauschenberg made a painting combining in it two of these devices. The painting was excited when anybody came near it. Belonging to friends in the country, it was destroyed by a cat. If he takes a subject, what does he take? And what does he combine with it, once he's put it in place? It's like looking out a window. (But our windows have become electronic: everything moves through the point where our vision is focused; wait long enough and you'll get the Asiatic panoply.) Poetry is free-wheeling. You get its impact by thumbing through any of the mass media. The last time I saw him, Rauschenberg showed me a *combine-drawing*, and while I was

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looking he was speaking and instead of hearing (I was looking) I just got the general idea that this was an autobiographical drawing. A self-portrait with multiplicity and the largest unobstructed area given to the white painting, the one made of four stretchers, two above, two below, all four of equal size. Into this, structure and all, anything goes. The structure was not the point. But it was practical: you could actually see that everything was happening without anything's being done. Before such emptiness, you just wait to see what you will see. Is Rauschenberg's mind then empty, the way the white canvases are? Does that mean whatever enters it has room? (In, of course, the gap between art and life.) And since his eyes are connected to his mind, he can see what he looks at because his head is clear, uncluttered? That must be the case, for only in a mind (twentieth) that had room for it could Dante (thirteenth-fourteenth) have come in and gone out. What next? The one with the box changed by the people who look at it.

What do images do? Do they illustrate? (It was a New Year's Eve party in the country and one of them had written a philosophical book and was searching for a picture that would illustrate a particular point but was having difficulty. Another was knitting, following the rules from a book she had in front of her. The rest were talking, trying to be helpful. The suggestion was made that the picture in the knitting book would illustrate the point. On examination it was found that everything on the page was relevant, including the number.) But do we not already have too much to look at? (Generosity.) Left to myself, I would be perfectly contented with black pictures, providing Rauschenberg had painted them. (I had one, but unfortunately the new room has a slanting ceiling and besides the wall isn't long enough for it. These are the problems that have no solution, such as the suit wearing out.) But going along, I see I'm changing: color's not so bad after all. (I must have been annoyed by the games of balance and what-not they played with it.) One of the simplest ideas we get is the one we get when someone is weeping. Duchamp was in a rocking chair. I was weeping. Years later but in the same part of town and for more or less the same reason, Rauschenberg was weeping.

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(The white paintings caught whatever fell on them; why did I not look at them with my magnifying glass? Only because I didn't yet have one? Do you agree with the statement: After all, nature is better than art?) Where does beauty begin and where does it end? Where it ends is where the artist begins. In this way we get our navigation done for us. If you hear that Rauschenberg has painted a new painting, the wisest thing to do is to drop everything and manage one way or another to see it. That's how to learn the way to use your eyes, sunup the next day. If I were teaching, would I say *Caution Watch Your Step* or Throw yourself in where the fish are thickest? Of course, there are objects. Who said there weren't? The thing is, we get the point more quickly when we realize it is we looking rather than that we may not be seeing it. (Why do all the people who are not artists seem to be more intelligent?) And object is *fact*, not symbol. If any thinking is going to take place, it has to come out from inside the Mason jar which is suspended in *Talisman*, or from the center of the rose (is it red?) or the eyes of the pitcher (looks like something out of a movie) or—the farther one goes in this direction the more one sees nothing is in the foreground: each minute point is at the center. Did this happen by means of rectangles (the picture is "cut" through the middle)? Or would it happen given this point of view? Not ideas but facts.

. . . . . .

M. C. Richards and David Tudor invited several friends to dinner. I was there and it was a pleasure. After dinner we were sitting around talking. David Tudor began doing some paper work in a corner, perhaps something to do with music, though I'm not sure. After a while there was a pause in the conversation, and someone said to David Tudor, "Why don't you join the party?" He said, "I haven't left it. This is how I keep you entertained."