

# The Museum of Modern Art

## JOHN CAGE

American composer John Cage, whose work has radically extended the boundaries of music, is one of the most inventive and influential figures of twentieth-century music and art. Cage's innovative use of chance in the composition and performance of his works, are among his most important contributions. His work with Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham, which began during his years at Black Mountain College (1948-52), represents one of the most enduring and fruitful artistic collaborations of the century.

Cage's first New York concert was at The Museum of Modern Art in 1943. The three works performed established his reputation as a seminal figure of the avant-garde. Cage moved on to a sixty-year career in which he performed throughout the world, all the while actively experimenting with new forms and ideas.

Born in Los Angeles in 1912, John Cage studied with Richard Buhlig, Henry Cowell, Adolph Weiss, and Arnold Schoenberg. In 1949 he received both a Guggenheim Fellowship and an award from the National Academy of Arts and Letters. The latter was in recognition of his work with percussion orchestra and his invention of the prepared piano. Cage was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1978 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1988. In 1982 the French Légion d'Honneur made him a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. In 1988-90 Cage delivered the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. He has been associated with Merce

Cunningham since 1943 and is musical advisor to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

In addition to his musical work, Cage has published many books of written and graphic work. The former include *Silence* (1961), *Notations*, with Alison Knowles, (1969), *Writings Through Finnegans Wake* (1979), and *Themes and Variations* (1982). His graphic works include *Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel*, with Calvin Sumsion (1969), *Mushroom Book* with Lois Long and Alexander Smith (1974), and several series of etchings and monoprints made at Crown Point Press, California, between 1978 and 1990.

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