

HAPPY NEW EARS! IN CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS: THE STATE OF RESEARCH ON JOHN CAGE

BY DEBORAH CAMPANA



In 1972, Don L. Roberts, while still rather new to his position as head of the Northwestern University Music Library, received a telephone call from someone who identified himself as John Cage. Roberts's first instinct was doubt: was this a friend playing a prank? He chose to regard the call with all seriousness that was due. This *was* John Cage, and as a result, Northwestern's Music Library became the home of a large portion of primary source material that future generations may use to explore the complexities of the eminent composer/performer/poet/philosopher/artist. The seeds for this story, however, were actually planted a few decades earlier.

IN THE BEGINNING

To this point, Cage's career developed swiftly and dramatically. Having grown up in Los Angeles for the most part, Cage's west coast roots extended into Seattle and San Francisco until the 1940s, when he and his wife Xenia moved briefly to Chicago and then to Manhattan in 1942. Compositions in these early years featured percussion instruments and other objects incorporated in music for small ensembles, or to accompany dance classes and performances. His New York debut occurred in 1943, where a concert including *Amores* (1943, prepared piano and percussion), *Imaginary Landscape No. 3* (1942, 6 percussion players), and works by others including Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell was presented in association with the League of Composers at the Museum of Modern Art.

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By the mid-1940s Cage's marriage to Xenia was dissolving, and he changed residences within the city several times prior to moving out to Stony Point, a rural, cooperative community in Rockland County started by Paul Williams in 1954. An intensely creative decade began with the invention of the prepared piano and the landmark composition that helped make it famous, *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946–48). This composition led to recognition by the Guggenheim Foundation as well as the Institute of Arts and Letters, enabling Cage to travel to Europe where he sat in on classes given by Olivier Messiaen, and struck up a friendship with Pierre Boulez.

Upon his return from Europe Cage made the acquaintance of like-minded composers: Morton Feldman, David Tudor, Christian Wolff, and later Earle Brown. Gathering regularly to share ideas on composing and performance, they came to be known as the New York School. During this fruitful time, Cage developed a precompositional planning that would ever after guide his thought. Describing it simply as "chance," he cultivated a process whereby compositional decision-making was taken out of his hands. For example, to compose the *Music of Changes* (1951), he produced a series of charts (for pitch, duration, etc.), and by using chance operations, determined which elements would occur at specific points in the composition. By 1952, chance was taken to a decisive conclusion in his infamous "silent" composition, *4'33"*; titled for the duration no sound would be made intentionally by a performer, the ambient sounds heard by each individual became the listener's musical experience.

By 1958, Cage developed his most extraordinary example of musical notation in the piano part to the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*. Cage felt the *Concert* represented a "revolt against a single means of composing" intending that this approach would coax performers beyond their own traditions but within certain limitations. And yet, when David Tudor performed the piano part, he made his own more traditional manuscript—essentially a translation.¹

When the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* received its premiere at Cage's 1958 twenty-five-year retrospective concert² held at the Town Hall Theater in New York, selections from the piano part were exhibited and

1. One version of Tudor's rendering of the piano part to the *Concert* can be found in the John Cage Notations Collection, Northwestern University Music Library. Also see "David Tudor and the Performance of American Experimental Music, 1950–1959," by John Holzapfel (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1994) for further discussion about Tudor working with Cage's music.

2. *The 25-Year Retrospective Concert of the Music of John Cage*, John Cage, Manhattan Percussion Ensemble, David Tudor, Maro Ajemian, Wergo WER 62472 (1995), 3 CDs.

sold at the Stable Gallery. According to Dore Ashton, art critic for the *New York Times*, “In all the manuscripts there is a delicate sense of design at work that transcends the purely technical matter of setting down music.”³ What began as a musical score became significant in the art world as well. In his later years, Cage ventured into printmaking and watercolors at Crown Point Press⁴ and the Mountain Lake Workshop.⁵

With growing demands for his music and the need to recopy pages of music that had been sold at the Stable Gallery, Cage tried again after earlier discouraging attempts to find a publisher. In 1960, he met with Walter Hinrichsen of the C. F. Peters Corporation, and immediately felt he had found the ideal publisher who would be sympathetic to his work. Hinrichsen agreed to give Cage freedom to decide what he wanted to publish and how it would look on the page. To commemorate their agreement, Peters set about publishing all his music, as well as a catalog listing the music and performances, writings, and a bibliography and excerpts from reviews and critical articles about Cage to that point.⁶ With the publication of his music and soon thereafter his first book, *Silence*,⁷ and then his teaching at the New School for Social Research, awareness of Cage’s music and ideas proliferated.

Concurrent with these developments was Cage’s growing support of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, established officially in 1953. Not only did Cage write music for the ensemble, he would also help assemble other musicians and composers, provide live music for events, and tour with the company, even driving the van from one performance to the next. When Cage’s involvement with the company would find him on the road, he found time to compose music, keep diaries, and write poetry, including, for example, mesostics (a sort of acrostic with the name or identity-text running down the middle rather than the side), essays, and other observations for events or lectures, all of which eventually accumulated into his many books.⁸

3. Dore Ashton, “Art Review: Cage, Composer, Shows Calligraphy of Note,” *New York Times*, 6 May 1958.

4. “John Cage,” Crown Point Press, <http://www.crownpoint.com/artists/cage>.

5. “John Cage: New River Watercolors,” Artists and Projects of the Mountain Lake Workshop, <http://www.raykass.com/html/Cage/cage01.html>.

6. *John Cage*, [ed. Robert Dunn] (New York: Henmar Press, 1962).

7. *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961). Available now in a fiftieth-anniversary edition, with foreword by Kyle Gann.

8. Cage’s second book, *A Year From Monday: New Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), features the earliest installments of the diaries he kept; and his third, *M: Writings ’67–’72* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), features his earliest mesostics.

THE RESOURCES

The John Cage Archives: Wesleyan University, University of California at Santa Cruz, Northwestern University Music Library

By the mid-1960s, correspondence and ephemera from students and admirers began to accumulate along with his scores (many of the manuscripts at that time resided with C. F. Peters), recordings, and programs. Cage decided he needed to keep his house in order. Not merely would he maintain his music manuscripts and organize correspondence received, he would keep anything anyone sent him much like a time capsule.

Sorting all of the materials he collected in three categories (music, writings, and mycology), Cage made arrangements with institutions having like interests. Because Wesleyan University Press was the publisher of his books, it was natural that anything having to do with his writings went there.⁹ His enthusiasm for the work of master gardener Alan Chadwick and his “Student Garden Project” on the then-new campus of the University of California, Santa Cruz, inspired Cage to send his “collection of mushroom books and mushroomia” there.¹⁰

Items relating to music represented the largest portion of his collection. Foremost on his mind was the Notations Collection,¹¹ over 400 music manuscripts he had solicited with the help of Alison Knowles from 274 composers including Pierre Boulez, the Beatles, Leonard Bernstein, and Cornelius Cardew. Gathered to benefit the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the inspiration for the Notations Collection stemmed from an earlier project he and Jasper Johns had developed whereby donated artwork was sold for the benefit of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company’s 1964 world tour. While the Notations Collection—documented in excerpts appearing in a volume entitled *Notations*¹²—may not have produced as much capital as the artwork in the earlier project, it does serve as a record of notational experiments through the mid-twentieth century, and has been seen in numerous exhibitions. In 1972, however, all of these manuscripts, along with the correspondence that transpired during the course of the project, resided in Cage’s apartment, until his telephone call to Don Roberts.

9. “Guide to the John Cage Papers, 1937–1992,” Special Collections and Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/ca1000-72.xml>.

10. “Guide to the John Cage Mycology Collection, 1873–1994 (bulk 1950–1990),” University of California, Santa Cruz, Special Collections and Archives, Collection MS74, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4w10133d/>.

11. John Cage (1912–1992) Collection, Series II. Notations Project, 1884–1978 (Bulk 1960–1969), Northwestern University Music Library, Evanston, Illinois (hereinafter, John Cage Collection at Northwestern), <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/evanston-campus/music-library/collections/special-collections/john-cage>.

12. John Cage, *Notations* [New York: Something Else Press, 1969].

According to Cage, composer Pia Gilbert had suggested he consult with music collector and antiquarian Albi Rosenthal,¹³ who ultimately appraised the Notations Collection.¹⁴ Given that the Northwestern University Music Library had at that time recently acquired a portion of the Moldenhauer Archive,¹⁵ and had a declared interest in developing a collection that focused on music of the twentieth century, it seems that Rosenthal may have suggested Northwestern as the place to house Cage's music-related items as well.¹⁶ After securing a home for the Notations Collection at Northwestern, Cage felt this would be the appropriate home for all the other "musical papers" including "papers, programs and printed criticisms . . . almost entirely [associated] with my own activities as composer or performer."¹⁷ A decade later, his friend Minna Lederman alluded to these papers: "Learning that some universities classify the ephemera of distinguished men as treasures, he once cleared his working space of all its accumulation, and shipped the cargo (it was massive) to the Northwestern University Music Library."¹⁸

From the 1970s on, Cage sent boxes of music-related material. Some highlights of his collection at Northwestern include scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and programs assembled by his mother documenting his career through the early 1950s, correspondence with his parents during his 1949–50 European trip, as well as photocopies of the correspondence to, in addition to the letters from, Pierre Boulez at the time of their early acquaintance (dating from 1949 to 1953).¹⁹

Approximately one year after Cage's passing in 1992, Frans van Rossum and Julie Lazar, both of whom were conducting research on Cage,²⁰ along

13. John Cage to Albi Rosenthal, typed letter signed (C23.10), 4 January 1967, John Cage Collection at Northwestern.

14. Albi Rosenthal, Valuation of the John Cage Archive (C38.36), 6–9 October 1967, John Cage Collection at Northwestern.

15. *The Rosaleen Moldenhauer Memorial: Music History from Primary Sources: A Guide to the Moldenhauer Archives*, ed. Jon Newsom and Alfred Mann (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2000).

16. John Cage to Richard L. Press, typed letter signed, 26 December 1972, Northwestern University Music Library.

17. John Cage to Don L. Roberts, typed letter signed, 23 January 1973, Northwestern University Music Library.

18. Minna Lederman, "John Cage: A View of My Own," in *A John Cage Reader: In Celebration of His 70th Birthday*, ed. Peter Gena and Jonathan Brent, with Don Gillespie (New York: C. F. Peters, 1982), 157.

19. *The Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, documents collected, edited, and introduced by Jean-Jacques Nattiez, et al., trans. and ed. by Robert Samuels (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993; originally published in French and English as *Pierre Boulez/John Cage: Correspondance et documents* [Winterthur, CH: Amadeus, 1990]). Excerpts from this correspondence can also be found in my chapter, "A Chance Encounter: The Correspondence between John Cage and Pierre Boulez, 1949–1954," in *John Cage at Seventy-Five*, ed. Richard Fleming and William Duckworth, *Bucknell Review* 32, no. 2 (1989): 209–48.

20. Van Rossum (then at California Institute of the Arts) was conducting musicological research, and Lazar was preparing for the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's exhibit on Cage—*Rolywholyover: A Circus*—which opened in September 1993.

with the help of Laura Kuhn of the John Cage Trust, facilitated the transfer of all the remaining correspondence to Northwestern. The correspondence is especially significant not only because Cage was a meticulous and dedicated correspondent, but because of the stationery he employed: Note-o-Grams.²¹ On this triplicate form he composed the original note, kept one copy, and sent the remaining two to the recipient who would respond on the second copy, keeping the remaining copy. So, for much of the correspondence there exists Cage's original content as well as the recipient's response. The Northwestern University Music Library is currently completing an online index to all Cage correspondence found in this collection.²²

John Cage Music Manuscript Collection

After Cage's passing, Laura Kuhn, who had begun assisting him in 1986 with the production of *Europeras 1 & 2*,²³ worked with Merce Cunningham to establish the John Cage Trust.²⁴ One of the first and most significant tasks of the trust was the gathering of all of Cage's music for the creation of an inventory. Kuhn—along with musicologists Paul van Emmerik, James Pritchett, Martin Erdmann, and András Wilhelm—organized, described, and photocopied the music.²⁵ Cage had intended that his collection be sold to benefit the Cunningham Dance Company. Once the inventory was compiled, an anonymous donor purchased the collection on behalf of the New York Public Library, where the John Cage Music Manuscript Collection now resides.²⁶

Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation Collection

From the 1940s on, Cage was integral to the dance of Cunningham as composer and performer, then as founding music director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC). Due to devoted care by David Vaughan, archivist of Cunningham's collection, researchers of Cage's music have the opportunity to explore this extremely important facet of the composer's life and work. With Cunningham's passing, the MCDC

21. Still available from the same Dallas-based company Cage used, DrawingBoard Printing, <http://www.drawingboard.com/ItemDisplay.aspx?categoryid=5121>.

22. Jennifer Ward and Ruth Young provided an overview of this indexing project at the Music Library Association's February 2009 meeting in Chicago.

23. See her dissertation: Laura Diane Kuhn, "John Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2*: The Musical Means of Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1992).

24. "About the John Cage Trust," <http://www.johncage.org/about.html>.

25. Laura Kuhn, e-mail to author, 21 December 2011.

26. "Major Collections of the Music Division," New York Public Library, <http://www.nypl.org/locations/tid/55/node/35708>.

officially closed in 2011. Several years prior, however, Cunningham had decided that the archive of films and videos, programs, and all other papers associated with the dancer and company would join Cage's music manuscript collection at the New York Public Library. Researchers may consult the Dance Division to work with this important collection.²⁷

Other Manuscript Materials

Resources useful for study on John Cage may be found in the collections and archives of other composers. For example, Cage's correspondence with Virgil Thomson documenting many details especially relating to the early years of his career lies in Thomson's collection at Yale's Irving S. Gilmore Music Library.²⁸ David Tudor's archive provides a wealth of resources linking Cage with this important performer and composer. Photographs, sound recordings, and Tudor's transcriptions of Cage's graphically-notated scores are a mere sample of the body of documents found in the Tudor archive at the Getty Research Institute.²⁹ Similarly, in the collection of Pierre Boulez at the Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel, Switzerland, one may find a pencil score Cage gave to him circa 1950. In addition, Morton Feldman's collection, also at the Sacher Foundation, includes correspondence between Cage and Feldman dating 1954–82 together with other documents.³⁰

THE LITERATURE

Considering that John Cage lived into his eightieth year, and as 2012 is the centenary of his birth, most of the biographical work on him to date has been written by individuals who knew or met him personally or had corresponded with him. The earliest endeavor to discuss Cage's life and work occurred at midcareer by Calvin Tomkins in his *New Yorker* profile³¹ that later became part of a volume also exploring the lives and work of Robert Rauschenberg, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Tinguely, and Merce Cunningham.³² Next came Paul Griffiths's concise but extremely useful

27. "A Living Archive," Merce Cunningham Dance Company, <http://www.merce.org/archive/living.php>. See also David Vaughan, *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*, ed. Melissa Harris (New York: Aperture, 1997).

28. "Register to The Virgil Thomson Papers, MSS 29, MSS 29A," Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University, <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0029>.

29. Nancy Perloff, "The Art of David Tudor," The Getty Research Institute, http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/guides_bibliographies/david_tudor/index.html.

30. E-mail from Felix Meyer, Paul Sacher Foundation, 19 January 2012.

31. Calvin Tomkins, "Figure in an Imaginary Landscape," *New Yorker*, 28 November 1964.

32. Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant Garde*, expanded ed. (New York: Penguin, 1976, c1968).

summary of Cage's life and work through the 1970s.³³ The focus of David Revill's biography³⁴ published early in 1992, was primarily on his life, whereas David Nicholls's work³⁵ published fifteen years after Cage's passing serves as more of a critical overview of his life and work. The most recent biographical contribution is by Kenneth Silverman, whose background in American culture brings a perspective on Cage's place in cultural history.³⁶

A more personal reflection on the Cage and Cunningham association may be found in Carolyn Brown's memoir, *Chance and Circumstance*.³⁷ Brown (once married to composer Earle Brown) danced with the Cunningham company from its inception to the 1970s, and shared her insights on Cage, his interaction with Cunningham, as well as his important participation in the MCDC. A shorter, but no less personal, recounting of her friendship with Cage may be found in Minna Lederman's contribution to the volume *A John Cage Reader*.³⁸ Although these are only two examples, many more such narratives can be found, indicative of the warmth elicited by Cage of the individuals with whom he was in contact.

A multitude of options exist for exploring Cage's words (beyond his own books) on any given topic whether through his own lectures, writings, or conversations. The most recent contribution by Peter Dickinson, *CageTalk*, features interviews with Cage as well as others about Cage.³⁹ Foremost among those who brought Cage's own words to light is Richard Kostelanetz, initially in the 1970 monograph that could be described as Cage's important writings to date that had not appeared in *Silence*,⁴⁰ a collection of writings about him,⁴¹ and volumes comprising interviews he himself and others had with Cage.⁴² In his book of interviews with Cage, *For the Birds*,⁴³ French musicologist Daniel Charles—like Joan

33. Paul Griffiths, *Cage*, Oxford Studies of Composers, 18 (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

34. David Revill, *The Roaring Silence: John Cage, a Life* (New York: Arcade, 1992).

35. David Nicholls, *John Cage*, American Composers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

36. Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (New York: Knopf, 2010).

37. Carolyn Brown, *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

38. Pp. 151–64 (see n. 17).

39. *CageTalk: Dialogues With and About John Cage*, ed. Peter Dickinson (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006).

40. *John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz, Documentary Monographs in Modern Art (New York: Praeger, 1970). Also see *John Cage Writer: Previously Uncollected Pieces*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Limelight, 1993).

41. *Writings about John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

42. Richard Kostelanetz and John Cage, *Conversing with Cage*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kostelanetz, *John Cage (ex)plain(ed)* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996).

43. *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles*, English version prepared by Richard Gardner, ed. by Tom Gora and John Cage (Salem, NH: M. Boyars, 1981), a translation of *Pour les oiseaux: Entretiens avec Daniel Charles* (Paris: Belfond, 1976).

Retallack in hers, *Musicage*⁴⁴—conducts several interviews probing Cage’s thoughts particularly associated with philosophy as well as his writings, artwork, and music. There are, of course, many other insightful and provocative interviews with Cage, but a few of my favorites include those by Roger Reynolds,⁴⁵ Walter Zimmermann,⁴⁶ and Moira and William Roth.⁴⁷

By the mid-1960s, Cage’s accomplishments had found a place in music history books. William Austin, in his *Music in the 20th Century*, included commentary on Cage’s percussion and prepared-piano music as well as his “rejection of composing”⁴⁸ in reference to indeterminacy. Peter Yates discussed Cage in conjunction with music and theater, electronic and computer music. In the second portion of his book, Yates devoted an entire chapter to “introducing” him.⁴⁹ That chapter begins as follows:

A former music librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library, Gladys Caldwell, told me that around 1924 a young but commanding voice spoke to her over the telephone: “My name is John Cage. I am twelve years old. I play the piano. I wish to find a violinist who will play the Beethoven sonatas with me. Can you find me one?” The authority of the young voice was not to be denied; she found the violinist.

In H. Wiley Hitchcock’s *Music in the United States*⁵⁰ (first published in 1969), Cage also figured into discussion regarding his earliest music and in relation to Schoenberg and Cowell; in editions thereafter, he noted the influence of technology on late-twentieth-century music depicted in Cage’s 1937 lecture, “The Future of Music: Credo.”⁵¹ In 1974, Michael Nyman focused on Cage and his work as a recurring theme in his book *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*.⁵² By 1997, Cage’s impact on American musical development was pervasive, as evidenced in Kyle Gann’s *American Music in the Twentieth Century*.⁵³

44. *Musicage: Cage Muses on Words, Art, Music*, ed. Joan Retallack (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press/University Press of New England, 1996).

45. “Interview with Roger Reynolds,” in *John Cage* (see n. 6), 45–52.

46. “John Cage,” in *Desert Plants: Conversations with 23 American Musicians* (Vancouver, BC: W. Zimmermann and A.R.C. Publications, 1976), 47–68.

47. Moira and William Roth, “John Cage on Marcel Duchamp: An Interview,” *Art in America*, November/December 1973.

48. William Austin, *Music in the 20th Century: From Debussy through Stravinsky* (New York: Norton, 1966), 383.

49. Peter Yates, “An Introduction to John Cage,” in his *Twentieth Century Music: Its Evolution from the End of the Harmonic Era to the Present Era of Sound* (New York: Pantheon, 1967), 303–12.

50. H. Wiley Hitchcock with Kyle Gann, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4th ed., Prentice-Hall Music History Series (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

51. *Ibid.*, 353.

52. Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 2d ed. with a foreword by Brian Eno, *Music in the Twentieth Century*, 9 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

53. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

The earliest dissertations on John Cage appeared in 1970–73, by Ellsworth Snyder,⁵⁴ William Duckworth,⁵⁵ and Charles Beeler.⁵⁶ They explored more deeply his aesthetics and notation means (specific ways of communicating to performers) at a time when there was little other such commentary. Similarly, when John Francis,⁵⁷ James Pritchett,⁵⁸ and I⁵⁹ were researching Cage's music in an analytical vein for our own dissertations, detailed evidence of his work could be found only in sketches and manuscripts, and access to such documents was extremely limited. Today—over forty years since Snyder, Duckworth, and Beeler's dissertations—a search in ProQuest Dissertation Publishing will produce over 200 titles with Cage-related topics, including his percussion music by Barry Williams,⁶⁰ theater pieces by William Fetterman,⁶¹ *Europeras 1 & 2* by Laura Kuhn,⁶² his songs by Janetta Petkus,⁶³ the historiography of Cage's early years by David Patterson,⁶⁴ and the number pieces by Rob Haskins.⁶⁵ While the emphasis of this article has been on English-language publications, I would like to acknowledge Paul van Emmerik's dissertation on the evolution of Cage's compositional technique,⁶⁶ as well as Martin Erdmann's Cage-related analytical work.⁶⁷

Research on specific aspects of Cage's life and work have appeared in the past few decades. James Pritchett's dissertation topic, for example, evolved into a more complete study of Cage's music.⁶⁸ Christopher

54. Ellsworth Snyder, "John Cage and Music since World War II: A Study in Applied Aesthetics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1970).

55. William Duckworth, "Expanding Notational Parameters in the Music of John Cage" (Ed.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1972).

56. Charles Beeler, "Winter Music/ Cartridge Music/ Atlas Eclipticalis: A Study of Three Seminal Works by John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1973).

57. John Francis, "Structure in the Solo Piano Music of John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1976).

58. James Pritchett, "The Development of Chance Techniques in the Music of John Cage, 1950–1956" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1988).

59. Deborah Campana, "Form and Structure in the Music of John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1985).

60. Barry Williams, "The Early Percussion Music of John Cage, 1935–1943" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1990).

61. William Fetterman, "John Cage's Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1992); also as vol. 11 in the series Contemporary Music Studies (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1996).

62. See n. 22.

63. Janetta Petkus, "The Songs of John Cage (1932–1970)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 1986).

64. David Patterson, "Appraising the Catchwords, c. 1942–1959: John Cage's Asian-derived Rhetoric and the Historical Reference of Black Mountain College" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996).

65. Rob Haskins, "An Anarchic Society of Sounds: The Number Pieces of John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 2004).

66. Paul van Emmerik, "Thema's en variaties: Systematische tendensen in de compositietechnieken van John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1996).

67. Martin Erdmann, "Untersuchungen zum Gesamtwerk von John Cage" (Ph.D. diss., Rheinische-Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, 1993).

68. James Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage*, Music in the Twentieth Century, 5 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Shultis,⁶⁹ Marjorie Perloff,⁷⁰ and Sam Richards⁷¹ explored Cage's writings in terms of influences, philosophy, and structure. Today, it is possible to find entire volumes devoted to specific works as seen in Thomas DeLio and Michael J. Budds's book on *Amores*,⁷² and most recently, Kyle Gann's latest work analyzing all aspects of *4'33"*.⁷³

In the last decades of Cage's life, numerous conferences, seminars, and concert series were organized in celebration of his life and ideas, often culminating in collections of studies produced by composers, performers, musicologists and other historians, artists, poets, and philosophers. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman edited one such volume comprising work presented during a series at Stanford University involving Cage himself just months before his passing.⁷⁴ Stefan Schädler and Walter Zimmermann produced an extensive program book for what was to have been an eightieth birthday celebration for Cage in Frankfurt.⁷⁵ David Bernstein and Christopher Hatch edited proceedings from a conference entitled "Here Comes Everybody: The Music, Poetry, and Art of John Cage," held at Mills College in 1995.⁷⁶

In addition, other commemorative volumes were produced in honor of Cage's seventieth⁷⁷ and seventy-fifth⁷⁸ years. Collaborative volumes have also appeared, notably on Cage's music prior to chance edited by David Patterson,⁷⁹ and *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage* edited by David Nicholls.⁸⁰ Two volumes produced and edited by Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn in their Musik-Konzepte series, are especially important for providing perspectives on Cage's reception in Europe.⁸¹

Similarly, volumes have been produced in conjunction with exhibits focused on Cage, such as *Dancers on a Plane* produced by the Anthony

69. Christopher Shultis, *Silencing the Sounded Self: John Cage and the American Experimental Tradition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

70. Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

71. Sam Richards, *John Cage as—* (Oxford, Eng.: Amber Lane Press, 1996).

72. Thomas DeLio, *The Amores of John Cage*, ed. Michael J. Budds, CMS Sourcebooks in American Music, 7 (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2009).

73. Kyle Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"*, Icons of America (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

74. *John Cage: Composed in America*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

75. *John Cage: Anarchic Harmony: Ein Buch der Frankfurt Feste '92/Alte Oper Frankfurt*, ed. Stefan Schädler and Walter Zimmermann (Mainz; New York: Schott, 1992).

76. *Writings Through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art*, ed. David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

77. *A John Cage Reader*.

78. *John Cage at Seventy-Five*.

79. *John Cage: Music, Philosophy, and Intention, 1933–1950*, ed. David W. Patterson, Studies in Contemporary Music and Culture, 3 (New York: Routledge, 2002).

80. *Cambridge Companions to Music* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

81. *John Cage*, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, 2d ed., 2 vols., Musik-Konzepte, Sonderband (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1990).

d'Offay Gallery,⁸² and at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art: *Rolywholyover: A Circus*.⁸³ Cage's devotion to the visual arts reached a new level in his later years when he was able to pursue printmaking at Crown Point Press. Documents of this experience may be found in *John Cage Etchings*.⁸⁴ Additionally, Kathan Brown's volume, *John Cage: Visual Art, to Sober and Quiet the Mind*, provides beautiful reproductions of Cage's printmaking and watercolors along with commentary on his process.⁸⁵ Ray Kass further documents Cage's work in watercolor in a volume that accompanies the exhibit, *The Sight of Silence: John Cage's Watercolors*, destined for the National Academy Museum and the Taubman Museum of Art.⁸⁶ Kass along with Stephen Addiss also provide evidence of Cage's work at the Mountain Lake Workshop in the volume that accompanied the exhibit *John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures*.⁸⁷

The periodical literature on Cage, his work, aesthetics and philosophy, influences, and connections with other composers and artists is far too great to summarize in this article. Of those individuals not yet noted here, however, at least the following should be: musicologists Leta Miller and John Holzaepfel who have explored extensively the life and work of Lou Harrison and David Tudor, respectively, and also the many connections with Cage. Also, in their 1992 article for *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Paul van Emmerik and Martin Erdmann undertook a critical overview of writings and research on Cage initially in recognition of what would have been his eightieth birthday.⁸⁸

Today, as might be imagined, the popularity of Cage and his ideas may be found readily on the Internet. There is an extensive Wikipedia article⁸⁹ as well as a collection of links to Cage-related writings and other

82. Susan Sontag, with Richard Francis, et al., *Cage–Cunningham–Johns: Dancers on a Plane: In Memory of Their Feelings* (New York: Knopf, in association with Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1990). The exhibition took place at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London (31 October–2 December 1989); and the Tate Gallery Liverpool (23 January–25 March 1990).

83. John Cage, *Rolywholyover: A Circus* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; New York: dist. by Rizzoli International 1993), issued in connection with a major exhibition of the same title at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 12 September–28 November 1993.

84. John Cage, *John Cage Etchings 1978–1982* (Oakland, CA: Point Publications, 1982), "to accompany an exhibition at Crown Point Gallery, opening April 18, 1982."

85. San Francisco, CA: Crown Point Press, 2000.

86. Ray Kass, *The Sight of Silence: John Cage's Complete Watercolors* (Roanoke, VA: Taubman Museum of Art; New York: National Academy Museum, 2011), catalog of an exhibition held at the National Academy Museum, New York City, 12 September 2012–13 January 2013; and Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, Virginia, 15 February–19 May 2013.

87. *John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures*, selected and ed. Stephen Addiss and Ray Kass (New York: George Braziller, 2009), to accompany an exhibition at the Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art and Print Study Center, University of Richmond, Virginia, 2 October 2009–7 April 2010.

88. Paul van Emmerik and Martin Erdmann, "Zur Geschichte der Cage-Forschung: Ein kritischer Überblick," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 49, no. 3 (1992): 207–24.

89. "John Cage," http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Cage. As with any Wikipedia article, this must be read prudently; for example, many, including Cage himself, would not consider him a "music theorist" (par. 1).

pertinent online resources maintained by Josh Ronsen entitled *John Cage Online*,⁹⁰ in addition to a list for Cage enthusiasts begun by Joseph Zitt in 1994: Silence, the John Cage Mailing List.⁹¹ On YouTube one may find historic video or film clips of Cage in performance, as well as numerous interpretations of his work by countless performers.

One of the most valuable resources available documenting all things Cage is *A John Cage Compendium* by Paul van Emmerik, musicologist at the University of Utrecht, in collaboration with Herbert Henck and András Wilhelm.⁹² Begun in the early 1980s, this multifaceted project is an ongoing effort; it is at once a chronology documenting events and performances derived from interviews and other writings, a chronological catalog of his works, writings, and artwork, as well as a bibliography of writings and listings of sources, recordings, and films.⁹³ As useful as this work is in this online format, it would also be a tremendous asset to our reference collections in the future.

Perhaps the greatest potential realm for future research into Cage-related work is performance practice. It is no secret that Cage's notation took many guises over the course of his compositional life, and that some choices he made are not interpreted easily by performers who did not work with him directly. Be it the graphically-notated piano solo to the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957), the images used in *Score (40 Drawings by Thoreau)* (1974), or the simple lines of *Ryoanji* (1983–85), performers today do not have the benefit of being able to confer with the composer himself; they may be confused by what they see on the page and not necessarily advantaged further by the narrative preceding the music. Cage himself admitted in a letter to composer-musicologist Walter Zimmerman dating from May 1990 that the notational technique of the "number" pieces had ultimately elicited a desired outcome: "I am just beginning to write music in the way that I want it to be heard. . . . If you want to play for my 80th birthday, play only works in the new series which is identifiable by the [numbered] titles."⁹⁴

It is possible that performances of the number pieces, perhaps the most plainly notated of Cage's post-1950 works, could benefit from additional, expert advice. For example, before the Arditti String Quartet

90. *John Cage Online*, <http://www.ronsen.org/cagelinks.html>.

91. Silence@virginia.edu, Scholarly Discussion on the Music of John Cage, <http://lists.virginia.edu/sympa/info/silence>; and its archive, Silence: The John Cage Mailing List (found at Bend of the Bay), <http://www.bendofbay.org/2007/05/05/silence-the-john-cage-mailing-list-message-archive/>.

92. *A John Cage Compendium*, <http://www.cagecomp.home.xs4all.nl/>.

93. An overview of the development of this resource may be found in Paul van Emmerik's chapter, "Here Comes Everything," in *Writings through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art*, 157–66.

94. John Cage to Walter Zimmerman, 18 May 1990, autograph Note-o-Gram signed (carbon copy) (C441), John Cage Collection at Northwestern.

coached a student group during a master class held during Northwestern University's "John Cage NOW" festival in March 1992, members of the esteemed quartet questioned what they could offer the students who were to perform the *30 Pieces for String Quartet* (a notational precursor to the number pieces). In fact they discovered many ways the student group could improve their performance, including their placement around the hall, the manner and use of stopwatches, as well as dynamic-level changes, for example.⁹⁵ In essence, the time is now for those performers who had the opportunity to work with Cage directly to record what he imparted regarding the performance of his music, as the future disposition of his musical legacy rests with them.

ABSTRACT

In commemoration of the 2012 centenary of John Cage's birth, this article explores the state of research on his life and work. Included is an overview of the disposition of manuscript music and correspondence, as well as descriptions and history of the various archives he himself established. The article also features a review of the literature about Cage, primarily monographic in nature, information about select dissertations and periodical articles, and pertinent Internet resources.



95. Catalog for "John Cage NOW," a festival honoring John Cage's eightieth year, produced by the Northwestern University School of Music in affiliation with the Arts Club of Chicago, 2-7 March 1992.