

CAGE AGE

DANIELE LOMBARDI

ATOPOS





foto Roberto Masotti

Cage Age

Once in Amsterdam , a Dutch musician said to me, "It must be very difficult for you in America to write music, for you are so far away from the centers of tradition."

I had to say, "it must be very difficult for you in Europe to write music, for you are so close to the centers of tradition."

I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm frightened of the old ones

Something always happens

With our custom of celebrating centenaries, this year it was the turn of John Cage, a multi-faceted, complex, and continually contradictory figure, yesterday the target of academics, today one of the most popular composers in the world. Like Marcel Duchamp to the world of art, he was a turning point in the history of the last century, and so a concert dedicated to him should help reveal some aspects of his way of thinking and his work: he was both a celebrity and celebrated, perhaps the forerunner of today's musical reality.

The concert opens with the Suite for toy piano, a playful gesture for this little instrument that comes so close to the sound of the gamelan, five short pieces that evoke Cage's constant great passion for dance, also for his closeness to the great Merce Cunningham. Before moving toward the Eastern philosophies, he revealed his social commitment with songs like In the name of the Holocaust for "prepared" piano. Since the early forties he had been setting a variety of things on the piano strings, such as screws, erasers, window insulation, coins, bamboo and other things, in order to transform the spectrum of sound, to bring it closer to that of a percussion set. The idea was originally to accompany dance: a percussion set turned out to be complex and too expensive, while with this preparation, only a single pianist was required to achieve a similar result. A Room, like In a landscape and Dream, is a page where the quest for beauty of the sound is combined with a serene sliding, marking a departure from both numerological and visual procedures of the sign, the trace of the gesture. A Room can be performed on a normal or prepared piano and in this case the natural sound of the instrument gives it a special charm. Music for piano is a collection of 84 short pieces verging on a synthesis between image and sound that is a synthesis of space and time, consisting of four autonomous parts. In this concert, the fourth section is performed

(69-84). Cage expressed the subjective-objective dialectic through antithetical compositions like 4'33", where the perception of a mental silence, as well as being the non-silence of reality, aspires to project the will of a non-action towards a new sensibility, a new way of listening to the world as it is, without the creative act: "happy new ears." Wanting to do something playful similar to "Pavarotti and his friends," he summoned Henry Cowell, who was briefly his teacher. Cowell was a great revolutionary for the piano, and to date he has suffered all the lack of recognition bestowed on true pioneers. He was the first to invent a mode called "Stringpiano", which included directly interacting on the keyboard and strings. Many of the piano practices attributed to Cage like "muted" sound (by stopping the strings with fingers), pizzicato or plucked strings, and the systematic use of clusters (clusters of notes played with the palm of the hand or forearm) we owe to this still little-known composer. Dynamic Motion was written in 1914, when Cage was two years old, but on listening, it reveals a new sound that hurles it forward several decades in time.

A fundamental aspect of Cage's concept of music, from the form to the event, was randomness, improvisation, movable structure, impromptu choices by the performer, more or less guided by schemes that often are only indications of time segments, an extreme act of interactive decision-making between composer and performer. Variations IV, the last composition on the programme, is an example of this practice, and in this case the "happening" is guided by various instructions. The version presented in this concert uses piano, a female vocalist, a percussionist and a young improviser at the toy piano, all of whom interact with ambient sounds recorded in Florence.

Variations IV is a tribute to Cage, to remember the hours we spent together in Florence, a month before his death.

(Daniele Lombardi, September 2012)

www.danielelombardi.com





foto Roberto Masotti





ATP 021

CAGE AGE

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LC-00129

DANIELE LOMBARDI

pianoforte e toy piano

1	John Cage	TOY PIANO Suite for toy piano	1948	07:35
2	John Cage	COSA PUO' FARE UN PIANISTA CONTRO LE GUERRE In the name of the holocaust	1942	09:18
	John Cage	STRUCTURES Two Pieces	1946	
3		1		03:51
4		2		04:57
5	John Cage	EUPHONIC ENTRACTE A Room	1943	03:24
6	John Cage	TIME-SPACE Music for piano 69-84	1956	14:02
7	Henry Cowell	CAGE & COWELL Dynamic Motion	1914	03:38
8	John Cage	IL SUONO DEL SILENZIO 4'33" Tacet, any instrument or combination of instruments	1952	04:33
9	John Cage	HAPPENING Variations IV DANIELE LOMBARDI PIANOFORTE ANA SPASIC SOPRANO JONATHAN FARALLI PERCUSSIONI JONAS DAUERIO TOY PIANO MAURO FORTE COORDINAMENTO E REGIA DEL SUONO	1963	22:54

total time 75:01

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PER I BENI E
LE ATTIVITÀ
CULTURALI

