What is "sounds which are just sounds"? : On the Acceptance of John Cage's Indeterminate Musical Works

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1. Introduction - What is "sounds which are just sounds"?

The purpose of this article is to examine the conditions for the possibility of what John Cage called "sounds which are just sounds" (Cage 1957: 10: 11l), which he explored in his 'experimental music' after the 1950s. This article will show that his Experimental Music has very little to do with boundless freedom, in spite of giving such an illusion.

The concept of 'just sounds' appeared after the 1950s. These sounds are never "vehicle for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments" (Cage 1957: 10) and they never carry the human spirit on any level. On the contrary, they are understood as kinds of autonomous beings that develop their own self-formation by themselves. They are represented as independent constitutive elements of this world equal to human beings. This could be a good explanation of the concept of 'just sounds.'

> "A sound does not view itself as thought, as ought, as needing another sound for its elucidation, as etc.; it has no time for any consideration – it is occupied with the performance of its characteristics: before it has died away it must have made perfectly exact its frequency, its loudness, its length, its overtone structure, the precise morphology of these and of itself." (Cage 1955: 14) [1]

This article aims to reflect on the concept of 'just sounds' as if these sounds would embody and attain the truth of the sound. As such, the article examines what is required to experience 'just sounds.' The point is not to discuss whether or not 'just sounds' exist in reality without any human sentiments, but rather to reflect on how sounds can be represented as 'just sounds.' This is why it is necessary to examine the conditions for Cage's indeterminate musical works to be possible, for the conditions are the prerequisites to the conception of 'just sounds.'

Chapter 2 will firstly consider Cage's indeterminate musical works. It will explain that, in his indeterminate works, the function of musical notation changed and that, as a result, the audible identification of the musical works was weakened. Some theorists do not recognize Cage's indeterminate works as musical works, but to do so is the prerequisite for the conception of 'just sounds.' This is the reason why, in Chapter 3, we shall consider the conditions for the possibility of Cage's indeterminate works. Then, Chapter 4 will focus on two conditions for the conception of 'just sounds' and will work out the limitations of such a conception. It will be made clear that the conception of 'just sounds' came into existence only in relation to the work-concept found in the historically preceding period of Romanticism.

Finally, the conclusion will argue that ‘just sounds’ is nothing but a fiction.

2. John Cage’s Indeterminate Musical Works

2.1. From Chance Music to Indeterminate Music

What is Cage’s indeterminate Music? Chance and Indeterminacy should be clearly distinguished in terms of Cage’s music though they are sometimes used almost in the same sense. Chance is imposed between the composer and the score when composing. On the other hand, Indeterminacy would be imposed between the score and the performer, and between the performer and the sound results when performing.

Cage’s development as a composer, i.e. the introduction of Chance Operation as a compositional means and Indeterminacy in the performance, could be explained in terms of his desire to use all sounds as musical material. By using chance operation, Cage tried to introduce “unintended sound” as a new musical material. According to Cage’s repeatedly told anecdote (e.g. Cage 1955: 13-14), when he entered an anechoic chamber at Harvard University, which was technologically possible in 1951, he found two kinds of unintended sounds. Though in the ‘silent’ anechoic chamber, he discovered that he heard “two sounds of one’s own unintentional making (nerve’s systematic operation, blood’s circulation).” Therefore, Cage decided that there is never silence in any situation and re-defined silence as sounds “which are called silence only because they do not form part of a musical intention” (Cage 1958: 23). That is, Cage redefined silence as “unintended sound.”

This re-definition of silence was definitively important. Indeed, in order to introduce this re-defined silence or unintended sound as a new musical material, Cage as the composer entered a new phase after 1950s by introducing various chance operations shaping the concept of ‘Experimental Music’. *Music of Changes* (1951), which was composed by chance operations for the first time, would be a good example. When composing it, Cage chose the elements of the musical notes on the notation – Superpositions (events happening at once), Tempi, Duration, Sounds (phrase, pitch, etc.), Dynamics – by tossing three coins (Cage 1952-1958). Arguably, chance operation was the compositional means to realize ‘unintended sounds’. The relationships between musical notes were decided by chance and the connection between the composer and the sound results were broken-off. Because the sound results were decided by chance even without the composer being able to expect them, ‘Experimental Music’ could be defined as ”an act the outcome of which is unknown” (Cage 1955: 13) [2]. The ‘unintended sounds’ of ‘Experimental Music’ must be what Cage referred to as ‘just sounds.’

To overcome the weakness of this Chance Operation as the compositional means, Cage introduced Indeterminacy in the performance. According to him, the weakness of the Chance Operation rested in the fact that it fixated the relationship between the scores and the sounds, with the effect that the performer became engaged in a mindless operation limited to transferring these scores into sounds. In a lecture given at Darmstadt (Germany) in September 1958 (Cage 1958: 35-40), Cage even criticized himself by describing *Music of Changes* (1951) as “inhuman” and dangerous like “a Frankenstein monster” (Cage 1958: 36) because this work had a fixed score and made the performer to transfer it mindlessly into sounds. On the contrary,

Indeterminacy consisted in making “an unforseen situation” (Cage 1958: 36) not only for the composer but also for the performer [3]. In the next section, we will consider the characteristics of Cage’s indeterminate musical works.

2.2. The Weakening of the Audible Identification of the Musical Works: The Change of the Function of the Musical Notation

After 1957 Cage manifestly began to act on Indeterminacy (Pritchett 1993: 109). In the indeterminate works, the musical notation changed from the traditional ones, which used to ‘indicate the sound to be played’, to ‘1. the scores which don’t indicate unambiguously the sounds to be played’, and to ‘2. the tools for musical scores to be used in the performance.’ Therefore, Cage’s indeterminate works bore the following characteristics: 1) the variations of sound results for each performance 2) the dissociation between score and sound results 3) the weakening of the audible identification of the musical works.

‘1. the scores which don’t indicate unambiguously the sounds to be played’ appeared after *Winter Music* (1957), whose score gave several possible readings and did not unambiguously indicate the sounds to be played (Pritchett 1993: 110-112). *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58), the integration of Cage’s graphic scores in the second half of the 1950s, is a typical example. As most of the graphic scores of this work cannot be played on their own without transcription, the performer needs to decipher them and make the scores for the performance. For example, in the notation BY found in *Solo for Piano*, which has 84 kinds of graphic scores although it is only a piano part of *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, the points are described inside the rectangular. The points represent noises of any sorts, with their relative pitch given by their placement vertically within the space; the horizontal dimension here represents time. Or, in the notation T, the points are put in the traditional staff notation to represent the pitch, the curved line described surrounded by them represents the changing contours of clusters, and the number in this notation refers to dynamics (Pritchett 1993: 113-124). To discuss the graphic scores as a whole is beyond the scope of this article. We can only highlight that the scores don’t indicate unambiguously how the sounds are to be played, and that the graphic scores in Cage’s indeterminate works always give the possibility to perform several musical versions. Thus, ambiguity should not be criticized as it was intentionally achieved.

The tendency of the scores not to indicate unambiguously the sounds to be played is also evident in the development of Cage’s graphic scores thereafter. In many of his works after the second half of the 1950s (until through the 1960s) (though not all [4]), Cage made musical scores not with the intention to indicate the sounds to be played, but to show the performer how to read them and how to make the musical score used in the performance. That is, the scores changed into ‘2. the tools to make a musical score to be used in the performance’ (Pritchett 1993: 126, 128). The score obviously became ‘the tool’ after *Music Walk* (1957), which used transparent sheets as a part of the score. In this work, Cage presents the performers with ten pages containing various numbers of points, and one rectangular transparent sheet with five parallel lines, much like a musical staff. The performer places the transparent sheet on any one of the sheets and makes the musical score for the each performance. The placement of the points within the five-line grid determines the character of sound events (i.e. plucked or muted

strings, notes played on keyboard, external noises, internal noises, and other sounds). And s/he is instructed to create a musical score as often as s/he needs.

That is to say, 1) until the musical score to be used in the performance was made, neither Cage the composer nor the performer could foresee the sound results; 2) the sound results always varied each time the musical work was played because theoretically (or technically) a musical score to be used in the performance was re-made again and again. Namely, for Cage, the graphic score became the tool that forbade arbitrary sounds selection by the composer and the performer who was henceforth instructed about how to make the musical score to be used in the performance. The graphic score became the tool that made the sound results indeterminate each time the work was played. Thus, Cage’s indeterminate works could be characterized as follows: 1) the variations of sound results for each performance 2) the dissociation between score and sound results 3) the weakening of the audible identification of the musical works. Therefore, as the relationship between the score as a tool and the sound results in the indeterminate work is not the kind of direct relationship there is between signifier and signified, the traditional form of audible identification of musical works lost its ground. Thus, “an unforeseen situation” (Cage 1958: 36) for the performer could be experienced.

3. The Affirmative Acceptance of John Cage’s Indeterminate Musical Works: Rejection, Oppression, Acceptance

3.1. The Logic of rejection or oppression

The modes of acceptance of Cage’s indeterminate works may be divided into three types: Rejection, Oppression, and Acceptance. These types must be acknowledged according to the understanding of the concept of a musical work. Indeed, how much we are prepared to distance ourselves from the traditional concept of a musical work will decide how far we can understand Cage’s indeterminate works. People reject, oppress, or affirm Cage’s indeterminate works, depending on their conception of a musical work. In the traditional discourses on the problem of the identity of the musical work – one of the classical topics in the aesthetics of music – Cage’s indeterminate works would be rejected, as they are not independent and autonomous musical works based on the interchangeability between musical score and sound results [5]. However, affirmative acceptance is the prerequisite for the conception of ‘just sounds.’ Thus, after having examined in this chapter the logic of rejection or oppression with regards to Cage’s indeterminate works, we will be in a position to appraise L. Goehr’s affirmative acceptance and to consider what are the necessary conditions for Cage’s indeterminate works to be possible.

First of all, the logic of rejection can be found in traditional discourses on musical works, which are thought to be based on musical scores only, and whose representative theorists are Roman Ingarden and Nelson Goodman. Ingarden defines the musical work as an ideal object, and sound performances as realizations of one aspect of musical notations. As for Goodman’s theory, the musical work can legitimately exist only when musical score and sound results correspond to each other unambiguously (Goodman 1976: 127-130, 177-178: WATANABE 2001).

With this kind of discourses, Cage’s indeterminate works end up being rejected as they cannot grasp the point in elaborating such works. Ingarden’s over-elastic theory would

acknowledge Cage's musical works as such, but wouldn't be able to say anything about the importance of his indeterminate works, as the theory postulates that the score of so-called musical works always corresponds to the sound results. Goodman mentions Cage's graphic scores, but only to point to the fact that the latter's indeterminate works do not possess that unambiguous correspondence between sound results and score. For Goodman, his indeterminate works are therefore not justified in being called musical works (Goodman 1976: 189-190) [6]. In both theories, the important characteristics of Cage's indeterminate works are ignored – i.e. the variations of sound results in each performance, and the dissociation between score and sound results.

Secondly, the logic of oppression can be found in recent musicological discourses around Cage, which presuppose that musical works are based not on the musical score but on "the compositional system" (Pritchett 1989: 252). These discourses reached their climax from the 1990s on (e.g. Pritchett 1993; Perloff and Junkerman 1994; Bernstein and Hatch 2001; Nicholls 2002; Patterson 2002, etc.). Most of them criticized existing Cage studies for being ideological, too focused on the aesthetic, and tried to regard Cage as the composer only (not as the philosopher). Their analytical and positivistic studies of "Cage's actual work" (Pritchett 1989: 250) do not focus on the score but on the compositional process, because while the former is "a randomly derived product of a system," the latter is "the product of the composer's deliberation and has a fixed nature" (ibid: 252). Thus, they tend to highlight the composer's taste, his arbitrary selection, or his involvement in music, which are theoretically dismissed in Chance Music. This analytical approach must be evaluated in terms of "the pivotal moment in the history of Cage studies" (Bernstein 2001a: 2) and has become widespread now.

However, this kind of analytical approach raises several problems, especially when adopted for examining Cage's indeterminate works. Indeed, it reduces the ontological basis of the musical works not to the musical score but to the compositional process as the product of the composer. In other words, this approach raises the same problem as existing theories based on score-centrism that regard the musical work as a product of the composer.

The problem with these theories is that they usually don't refer to Cage's indeterminate works, whereby the score as the product of the composer (especially the score as a tool to be used in performance) and the sound results do not directly relate to each other as signifier and signified. Thus, the framework of the analytical approach cannot understand nor explain the important characteristics of Cage's indeterminate works and why he deliberately made such a kind of musical works [7]. Such as theoretical stance is similar to that of European avant-garde composers such as P. Boulez in that they criticize Cage's indeterminacy for giving up any responsibility for the sound results. Cage's music may be sometimes evaluated, according to their standard, as carrying into art music various kinds of strange and unaccustomed factors. However, Cage's desire to abandon the composer's and performer's control over sound results would never be adequately appraised (Cage and Boulez 1993; Nattiez 1993). Put differently, the ideal of 'Experimental Music' would be oppressed.

3.2. The Affirmative Acceptance: The Musical Works as "challenge" to the work-concept

The logic behind accepting affirmatively Cage's indeterminate works can be found in the

theory by L. Goehr, which evaluates such a body of works as a practical challenge to the musical work-concept from Romanticism.

Her description of the musical work-concept typically emphasizes two factors: 1) the concept’s practical influence over reality 2) the concept’s historicity. To discuss the problem of the work-concept as a whole is beyond the scope of this article, but it may be worth examining Goehr’s thinking about Cage’s indeterminate works in its broad lines.

She claims “specifically of the concept of a musical work (i) that it is an *open* concept with *original* and *derivative* employment; (ii) that it is correlated to the *ideals* of a practice; (iii) that it is a *regulative* concept; (iv) that it is *projective*; and (v) that it is *emergent* concept” (Goehr 1992: 89-90; see ch.4). That is:

(i) By being used not only for the original but also for the derivative object, the content of the concept would be transformed (90-95).
(ii) The work-concept is correlated to the ideals of the performance-practice of classical music, which usually means perfect compliance with scores (97-101).
(iii) The work-concept determines, stabilizes, and orders the structure of practice (101-106, 115-119).
(iv) We regard each musical work as if it had an ‘objective’ existence, even though it has a projective or fictional existence because the work-concept functionally involves projections or hypostatization (106-107).
(v) The work-concept had a regulative function (iii) from around 1800 (107-109).

Her argument deconstructs a kind of bias about the conception of a musical work. She relativizes understandings that see the musical work-concept as being always intended towards “philosophical definitions” (Goehr 1992: 260). As in Romanticism, such a traditional conception calls for metaphysical correctness and sees, in her own words, “the central conception of a musical work as a self-sufficiently formed unity, expressive in its synthesized form and content of a genius’s idea” (Goehr 1992: 242). What Goehr has achieved is to show the theoretical process of the destruction of work-centrism developed in art studies as well as musicology in the second half of the 20th century. According to Goehr, the concept of a musical work started to function as *the* central concept in the field of art music. Moreover, she argues that even now we still think of the musical work in the traditional way, i.e. we still regard the work-concept as a centered entity. That is why it is difficult to think about ‘music’ without using the concept of a musical work. We are, as it were, the prisoners of the concept of a musical work.

Unlike Ingarden or Goodman, Goehr, who does not sustain the idea of audible identification as the necessary condition of the musical work, could accept affirmatively Cage’s indeterminate musical works. How that? This is what we will discuss next in details by examining the way Goehr dissolves ‘the paradox’ attached to Cage’s indeterminate works.

The paradox of Cage’s indeterminate works is that, even though those works intend to negate ‘the work’ as an identity, they are nonetheless ‘the work’ in practice (Goehr 1992: 261). However, this is nothing other than an apparent paradox. Goehr dissolves this paradox at two levels and evaluates affirmatively Cage’s indeterminate work in terms of practical challenge to

the musical work-concept from Romanticism.

Firstly, Goehr shows both the philosophical and the practical sides of the challenge to the concept of musical work [8]. According to Goehr, "it is one thing to broaden a concept's meaning as musicians want to accommodate more examples and new ideas. It is quite another thing to use new examples as counter-examples to philosophical definitions based on a certain range of musical works. Only the latter involves a claim that a given definition is metaphysically incorrect" (Goehr 1992: 260). In other words, Goher argues that the transformation of the concept of musical work (i.e. the challenge to the work-concept) could be accomplished not only through a philosophical critique of the work-concept, in other words through "philosophical definitions" that would tells us about whether or not to include a particular kind of musical piece in the work-concept and about the metaphysical correctness of such a piece; but also through 'the practices' that don't require to be metaphysically correct. Thus, Goehr provides us with the possibility to understand the practices of the musical avant-garde of the 20th century as the practices that claim to change and transform the traditional work-concept.

Secondly, Goehr divides the musical work-concept into one to be challenged and one that is challenging the other. The traditional work-concept to be challenged comes from Romanticism, i.e. "the central conception of a musical work as a self-sufficiently formed unity, expressive in its synthesized form and content of a genius's idea" (Goehr 1992: 242). This conception tries to subordinate to such a unity all aspects of musical activities – notation, performance, listening, etc. On the contrary, the challenging work-concept, (the one from the musical avant-garde of the 20th century) is the very 'practice' that tries to understand the concept of a musical work freed from its original ideological, political, and aesthetic associations from back to Romanticism [9]. The latter is still formulated as a work-concept, but it is no less than "an occasion for a certain kind of musical performance" (Goehr 1992: 268). As it were, Cage's indeterminate musical works *expanded the conception of a musical work*. Goehr could be said to succeed in demonstrating theoretically not only the existence of such a musical work but also that the conception of a musical work actually has its own historicity [10].

For somebody like Goehr, it is possible to accept affirmatively Cage's indeterminate works and to dissolve the apparent paradox. Goehr, by firstly suggesting that even philosophically incorrect practices ('the practices' that don't require to be metaphysically correct) can critique the work-concept and secondly dividing the musical work-concept into one to be challenged and one that has the power to challenge, explains coherently how musical works can critically disrupt the work-concept centered on the work precisely by negating the work as identity. The cause of the effect of paradox may come from the fact that one confuses the practice of the musical work with the philosophical discussion surrounding metaphysical correctness, and also from the fact that one regards such a practice as carrying the musical work-concept from Romanticism. Thus, from this section we may say that the conditions for the possibility of Cage's indeterminate works would be: 1) to admit the musical work existing as 'the practice' that challenges the traditional musical work-concept; and 2) to differentiate between the musical work-concept to be challenged and the one that has the power to challenge the traditional work-concept, that is, the work-concept from Romanticism and the one through the

practices of the musical avant-garde of the 20th century. In other words, to accept affirmatively Cage’s indeterminate works is to accept 1) the concept’s practical influence towards reality, and 2) the concept’s historicity.

4. What is “sounds which are just sounds” ?

4.1. Requirements for the conception of ‘just sounds’

Following what has been previously examined, we can now clarify the requirements for the conception of ‘just sounds.’

First of all, the most important requirement is obviously to accept affirmatively Cage’s indeterminate works. Indeed, the conception of ‘just sounds’ is possible only when we accept the historicity of the musical work-concept, that is, only when we evaluate affirmatively the characteristics of the indeterminate musical work as previously introduced in order to challenge the traditional musical work-concept from Romanticism expressive in the synthesized form and content of the composer’s idea (or futhermore, all the musical work-concept which centered the composer's intentional making). This is the prerequisite for the conception of ‘just sounds.’

In addition and arguably, the second requirement is that the conception of ‘just sounds’ can *only* exist *within* ‘*Music.*’ The conception of ‘just sounds’ cannot exist outside ‘(the history of) Music’ because such a conception can only exist *in relation to* the historically anterior work-concept from Romanticism. Let us discuss the main idea behind this.

Arguably, the reason why a sound is represented as ‘just sound’ is because it seems to correspond to certain things from Nature [11]. Thus, by using compositional means such as Chance and Indeterminacy, the sounds used in the musical compositions are not understood to be artificially and intentionally produced as in the musical works of Romanticism. On the contrary these sounds are perceived as natural things found ubiquitously in Nature, without carrying any human expression or sentiment. Consequently, to produce ‘just sounds’ is only possible *in relation to* the musical works of Romanticism and must be understood as something that *can be purposefully composed. The conception of ‘just sounds’ needs to be understood from within the history of (Western Art) Music*. We must however be aware that this logic wouldn’t hold outside *the history of (Western Art) Music*, for the conception of ‘just sound’ can be made only when compared with the musical sounds found in the Romantic works, in other words only when thought in relation to the historical background. Therefore, the argument is to say that, in order to represent one sound as ‘just sound,’ we must *remain within* ‘*Music*’ and forget about the historicity – not only of the work-concept – but also of ‘Music’ itself, which must have a historicity of its own and be that of cultural institutions.

The previous study clarifies two requirements for the conception of ‘just sounds’. First of all, we must accept affirmatively Cage’s indeterminate works, and secondly, we must *remain within* ‘*Music*’ and forget that, not only ‘the musical work’, but also ‘Music’ is a cultural institution produced within a particular culture.

4.2. The limits of the conception of 'just sounds'

From what has been considered, we can work out the limits of the conception of 'just sounds'. The idea of 'just sounds' is nothing but a fiction (that is, contrary to natural things found ubiquitously in Nature, a cultural artifact intentionally made by the composer) constructed within a cultural institution called Western Art Music. In addition, the signification of the sounds must be eliminated in order to be represented as 'just sounds.'

Take *4′33″* (1952) as an example. During the performance of *4′33″* the audience would murmur, roar, buzz, or make some noise because the performer plays nothing on the stage. In Cage's viewpoint, the sounds made by the audience are the musical sounds consisting of *4′33″*, because those unintentionally made sounds are the re-defined silence. However, in contradistinction to Cage's viewpoint, it is obvious that the noise of the audience only makes sense *if outside the cultural institution of 'Music.'* For example, it can point to how loudly the audience accustomed to going to the concert hall can be. This noise would never show such loudness if the concert hall was destructed. It would tell us the degree of noise made by polite people. However, when we listen to *4′33″* in the way Cage wants us to do, the signification of the noise, for example what it tells us about the behavior of the audience, must be eliminated. If not, *4′33″*cannot be experienced as unintended sounds without any human sentiment. In the fiction called 'just sounds,' the signification of the sound is eliminated. Douglas Kahn highlighted acutely the way signification is eliminated in Cage's activity as follows:

> "To musicalize sound is just fine from a musical perspective, but from the standpoint of an artistic practice of sound, in which all the material attributes of a sound, including the materiality of its signification, are taken into account, musicalization is a reductive operation, a limited response to the potential of the material. For Cage himself, the reductions and impositions that came with the musicalization of worldly sound were at odds with the core precepts of his own aesthetic philosophy, especially as expressed in his famous axiom "Let sounds be themselves." To ask, as Cage did, for sounds bereft of their associations was to dismiss the vernacular, deny experience, and repress memory - for there are no sounds at the material level heard by humans that are heard outside culture and society. There are no sounds heard through a pure perception - only an apperception "contaminated" by sociality. ... " (Kahn 1993: 105)

Kahn's consideration makes us understand Cage's need to eliminate the signification of the sound. According to Kahn, to 'musicalize' 'worldly sound' is the strategy Cage found to introduce the unintended sound in the anechoic chamber as the new musical sound. In order to realize this strategy, Cage broke the connections between the composer and the sound results, and eradicated the associative dimensions of sounds by using Chance and Indeterminacy. Following Kahn, we may think that Cage's logic that consisted in representing the sound as 'just sound' whose function is to resist and eliminate any signification, is about dismissing the possibility of using other words to describe this sound otherwise.

Therefore, we are now in a position to say that the requirement for the conception of 'just sound' is to eliminate any signification attached to it. In other words, the very conception of

‘just sound’ is only possible within that cultural institution called Western Art Music, as there is no way of using words to describe it other than ‘just sound’ (or, in Cage’s case, ‘noise’). As Kahn points out, ‘just sound’ is nothing but the sound from which signification is eliminated. In short, it is clear that Cage’s strategy has limitations.

5. In Conclusion – Why have we considered the prerequisites for the conception of ‘just sound’?

So far, we have explored the conception of ‘just sound.’ We have considered the modes of acceptance of Cage’s indeterminate works, examined the prerequisites for the conception of ‘just sound’ and designated the limits of such a conception.

This article will contribute to keeping a distance from Cage’s mystical words, from any mindless faith in Cage, or from any cult attached to him, of the kind for instance the author experienced in his twenties in a dazzling and confusing way. This study will also enable us to stand outside ‘(the history of Western Art) Music’. Thus, it is now clear that ‘just sounds’ were nothing but sounds named as such within the cultural institution of Music and that Cage’s indeterminate musical works after all never actually destroyed the cultural institution of ‘(Western Art) Music’ itself – although it might have intended to criticize the traditional work-concept from Romanticism.

In addition to the argument previously expounded, this article might highlight Cage’s achievement. If it had not been for Cage who tried to ‘musicalize’ all sounds, Douglas Kahn couldn’t think about ‘Music’ from “the standpoint of an artistic practice of sound, in which all the material attributes of a sound, including the materiality of its signification, are taken into account” (Kahn 1993: 105).

From this ensues the following suggestion. Would ‘*Sound Art*’, which was not thought to be ‘Music’ within the Arts that use sounds, become possible only after Cage, who defined the composer as the one to “be faced with the entire field of sound” (Cage 1937: 4) and who tried to include all sounds as musical sounds into Art Music?

Notes

[1] The following sentences illustrate the idea of ‘just sounds’ and the expression “sound which are just sounds,” which is very poetic and difficult to understand as below.

> “This project will seem fearsome to many, but on examination it gives no cause for alarm. Hearing sounds which are just sounds immediately sets the theorizing mind to theorizing, and the emotions of human beings are continually aroused by encounters with nature. Does not a mountain unintentionally evoke in us a sense of wonder? Otters along a stream a sense of mirth? Night in the woods a sense of fear? Do not rain falling and mists rising up suggest the love binding heaven and earth? Is not decaying flesh loathsome? Does not the death of someone we love bring sorrow? And is there a greater hero than the least plant that grows? What is more angry than the flash of lightning and the sound of thunder? These responses to nature are mine and will not necessarily correspond with another’s. Emotion takes place in the person who has it. And sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly. The opposite is what is meant by response ability.” (Cage 1957: 10)

[2] " ... the word "experimental" is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown. ... " (Cage 1955: 13)

[3] The fuller study of the compositional development of Cage lies outside the scope of this paper, but it may be worth mentioning that the idea of Indeterminacy began to be explored immediately after Chance Operation was adopted. (e.g. Cage's musical works of which title is the length of the work itself (or pieces which could be performed either separately or together) can be regarded as Cage's attempt to realize "an unforeseen situation" both for the composer and the performer (Cage 1958: 36). *34'46.776''* for a Pianist, written for David Tudor and *31'57.9864''* for a Pianist written for Cage himself, both played at Donauenschinger Musiktage in 1954, would be typical examples).

[4] 'Not all' because they can possibly include '3. the scores to indicate the actions which usually make sounds' as the musical direction that Cage took after the second half of the 1950s. Because of lack of space, we cannot discuss these scores in details here (it could be said that most of them would belong to the genre called 'performance').

[5] As for details, most of Cage's music (not only his indeterminate works) doesn't have the interchangeability between the musical score and the sound results. Indeed, after *4'33''* (1952), Cage included as the musical sound not only the sound produced but also the ambient sounds that were there during the performance of the piece. As a result, the sound results changed every time the work was played. In other words, the weakening of the audible identification of the musical works can be found in most of all Cage's musical works.

[6] It may be possible to find Goodman's judgment of value here though he carefully kept away from it elsewhere (see Goodman 1976).

After pointing out that neither scores in the Middle age nor Cage's graphic score imply unambiguous correspondence between the sound results and the score, Goodman writes: "...sometimes revolution is retrogression." (Goodman 1976: 190)

[7] Pritchett himself realizes that his own approach should be used only for chance music and not for indeterminate music (Pritchett 1989: 260). Or else, it might make sense to regard this analytical approach as a strategy, as Pritchett himself argues, that musicologists chose in order to have the possibility to examine chance music (not indeterminate music).

However, this approach is to deal with Cage's work assuming that the musical work is the object to determine. Therefore, the approach could be criticized on the basis that it is confined to the 'musicological' framework in a narrow sense. If such was the case, the following could be argued. This approach deals with Cage's indeterminate work as an object to be determined; it puts Cage at the tail end of Western Art Great Composers; it studies Western Art Music's scores scientifically and analytically; and, as a result, it aims to *fertilize* a substantial amount of dissertations and scholarly articles motivated by 'musicological' desire.

[8] Before dividing the concept of challenge into two types, Goehr discusses the philosophical critique of the counter-example method (the method to discuss the work-concept from the viewpoint of whether it can include one musical piece or another). Although this article is not the place to debate about Goehr's argument, we can nonetheless summarize it in its broad lines.

Goehr criticizes the counter-method because it shares the same belief as methods based precisely on what it rejects, i.e. the traditional work-concept. As Goehr explains, the counter-method matters only if "a given object has or does not have the properties associated with the kind in question" and, therefore, as the traditional work-concept, regards the work-concept as closed and static ignoring the historicity of the work-concept (Goehr 1992: 258).

[9] Goehr uses the word 'Neutralization' to define the activity that tries to free a concept from its original ideological, political, and aesthetic contents rooted in Romanticism (Goehr 1992: 266). According to her, three factors have greatly contributed to the neutralization of the musical work-

concept from Romanticism: formalism (after the second half of 19th century), the dissemination of mechanical reproductions of sounds, and the musical avant-garde of the 20th century (Goehr 1992: 266-270). To consider how they relate to each other would be interesting, but would have to be left for a later study due to lack of space.

[10] Therefore, ‘just sounds’ would be understood as a kind of tropes to realise such a musical work. Because the sounds in the compositions are ‘just sounds,’ the musical works can be free from the composer’s intentional making.

[11] Arguably, by being compared to Nature, the artificiality of ‘just sound’ would be camouflaged, and the sound would be represented as free from any intention.

On Cage’s stance toward Nature.

First of all, Cage often compared his own music to Nature.

Secondly, Cage often regarded the purpose of Art as if “to imitate nature in her manner of operation” (Cage 1961b: 100, etc.), and quoting Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, he talked about his own music and “the parallel with nature” (Cage 1957: 11). He also envisioned his own art not as “life as art” but as “art as life” (Cage 1981: 87), that is, he envisioned his Art as intended towards Nature.

It is however evident that Cage’s music is not ‘Nature.’ In spite of being intended towards ‘art as life,’ Cage’s activities cannot be anything other than ‘life as art’ since they are one of the cultural practices peculiar to Western Culture and called Western Art Music.

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