

CAGE AND SPAIN.

NOTES FOR A SPANISH BIOGRAPHY

The first contact of Cage with Spanish culture was with the erudite Joan Pijoan, his Art History professor at the Pomona College, Clermont (California) in 1928, the same man who encouraged him to study in Paris with the architect Erno Goldfinger. Following the steps of Gertrude Stein, it would be in the fortunate isle of Mallorca, during a three month stay, that he wrote the first compositions using a mathematical system of his own invention. He travelled to Cordoba, Seville, Madrid and Toledo, always in third class trains. In 1958 he journeys from Darmstadt, focal point of European postwar avant-garde music, to Milan, invited by Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna in order to work in the RAI's phonological studio. There he meets and instructs Juan Hidalgo and Walter Marchetti, who in the form of the group ZAJ in the 60's "will be the hispanisers of Cage's liberating spirit", according to Llorenç Barber, his Spanish biographer. His silent work *4' 33'* would be the opening piece in ZAJ's foundational performance in 1964. Hidalgo has written: "John Cage is my father, though my name is Hidalgo; and Duchamp, my grandfather, though he isn't called Cage... But fathers are forgotten. And as far as my great grandparents, they could've been Chinese".

In 1966 he meets Joan Miró at the Maeght Foundation at St-Paul-de-Vence, whose painting he affirms is so familiar that it is a part of himself. That same summer he visits Marcel and Teeny Duchamp at Cadaqués where he'll write *Joan Miró in third person: 8 texts* included in his book *Of Monday in one year*.

In 1972, with David Tudor, he took part in the *Pamplona Encounters*, where he interpreted the *62 Mesostics (Acronyms)re Merce Cunningham* using 8 microphones and

the corresponding speakers. Fascinated by the ZAJ group (now including Esther Ferrer) he describes it as "more Nô than the Nô theatre" and offers them a tour through the USA which they did in 1973. Later in Bologna (1978), Hidalgo and Marchetti will help him with the train happening, *Cage's train (searching for lost silence). 3 excursions in a prepared train, variations on a theme by Tito Gotti*, consisting of the different routes of seven coaches loaded with musicians, passengers and amplified local sounds, through the North of Italy. In 1982 he participates in the festival in honour of Marcel Duchamp, invited by the Cadaqués Music Festival, with a concert from the *Austral Studies* interpreted by Grete Sultan. In 1984, he dictates a conference in Madrid for the inauguration of the Marcel Duchamp retrospective at the Caixa.

In 1991, Cage exhibits at the Espai Pobleu of Barcelona; drawings and watercolours with allusions to the Zen gardens and an ambience, *Essa y*, inspired by the essay of the freedom writer Henry D. Thoreau "The duty of civil disobedience". In November, that same year, the Autumn Festival of Madrid dedicates a gala to him, with the presence of Cunningham, Tudor, ZAJ, the critic Daniel Charles, Llorenç Barber's Taller de Música Mundana, Fátima Miranda, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, Javier Maderuelo, among others. The unforgettable experience provided by the revision of some of his works during the Madrid Festival, a unique occasion which was lost for modern Balearic culture, compels us to consider including his work in a future Spanish repertoire, as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.

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