

Performance Trends / Technological Trends

(Bridging cage's release of control to the current ease of software-based performance)

This paper explores the relationship of Cage's compositional process after the utilization of chance-based operations in conjunction with his broad backdrop of cross-cultural influences as a means to connecting current practitioners with a force to access technology and its outpourings to generate material and manifest it in performance. Forging new territory of experimental practices and taking profoundly intense risks in bringing his work to the public eye, Cage is an ideal model to glean insight into the present flow of technology-based systems being used by trained musicians and computer programmers with a fervor for musical expression who intend to execute creative intentions and proffer them out to an increasingly eclectic audience. Determining the consequences of these creative challenges as well as how they penetrate academic and sometimes remote communities will be shown. A special focus on audience accessibility to non-traditional forms of performance will be questioned following various examples of Cage's pieces contrasted with several current instances of similar character.

A number of examples of computer-based compositional methods will be examined including Ircam's Open Music (a full visual programming language based on CLisp), CalMus (a similar program for contemporary composition) and MetaSynth (a program that maps visual images to sounds) as methodological tools to solving problems of composition. These examples will give a view into current methods of composition that are not directly connected to academic musical training, but possibly making a case for their legitimacy for accessing conceptual constraints for the purpose of structural fortuity. Ethical considerations of questioning traditionally perceived musical competency using these programs will be explored with the hopes of distinguishing elements of musical training and computer programming abilities. How these two communities have somehow joined to form a single creative identity in current compositional practices and performance occasions will also be explored.

Cage's traditional background and training and his process of abandoning formalistic trends and exploring the relevant elements of risk he encountered while accessing performance venues is salient. In a quagmire of experimentalism, he maintained a level of significance without the customary peer justification of what is defined as musically competent and this point will be given serious attention. There will be a particular focus on musical esteem as reflecting the notion of competence, fitting into a given aesthetic and finding threads of Cage's cross-cultural baggage that was filtering through his intentions to gain visibility, respectful status and recognition.

Bridging Cage to the present will be a model for further discovering the potential of the contemporary arena in terms of the creative process. This objective is to

disrupt the limitations of the obvious cultural biases found in aesthetically controlled environments and hopefully to encourage and inspire the inner territory necessary for unlocking freedom and challenging belief systems. Ultimately these choices will serve to harness the range of potential, better define what may at first seem as a haphazard profusion of abundant resources, but as guidance to tie together this important historical perspective and move the current Cagean-like thinker to the stage.