

## **Works by Harry Partch and John Cage**

In the United State there has been since Colonial times a music, characterized by its rough-hewn, experimental qualities, distinct from that of Europe. Such men as William Billings (New World Records 80205-2, *White Spirituals from the Sacred Harp*, and 80255-2, *Make a Joyful Noise: Mainstreams and Backwaters of American Psalmody*) in the eighteenth century and Anthony Philip Heinrich (80208-2, which features Heinrich's *The Ornithological Combat of Kings*, and 80467-2, *The Flowering of Vocal Music in America*) in the nineteenth still have the power to startle us.

In the nineteenth century the genteel tradition, with its worship of things European and its conservative suspicion of change nearly stamped out this native individualism. It was this conservatism above all else against which Charles Ives struggled. It was the American past to which Ives turned, to Concord, to evangelistic Protestantism, as well as to the vernacular present. But Ives was also trying to get us to "stretch our ears," and he opened a vast number of musical horizons.

In the generation after World War I, Henry Cowell first stood out as a pioneer in avant-garde music. His music not only challenged us with new sounds and performance practices but more and more turned to a world arena for its materials.

By this point, it was a lonely business to be an avant-garde musician. The hold of latter-day colonialism on the American musical public was strong indeed, and isolation if not ostracism was the almost inevitable cost of individualism. Out of this rich but dubious background emerged two remarkable innovators. Harry Partch and John Cage—both born in California, Partch in 1901, Cage in 1912—are in their generation surely the central figures of the American experimental tradition. They met on several occasions, and Cage, despite an aversion to Partch's artistic idiom, has always been supportive of Partch's music. Partch, on the other hand, had no grasp of Cage's art and even less curiosity about it.

Both men are exemplars of an artistic and philosophic independence and individualism that has few peers. But their approach to music and to life diverged almost as widely as possible. Partch, with vitriolic and passionate condemnation, threw out all of Western musical practice and theory since ancient Greece and set about to forge a wholly new system, with its own scales, melodic and harmonic conventions, instruments, and concert occasions. Cage, more good-naturedly but with equal iconoclasm, divested music first of its focus on pitch, then of countable time, and finally of choice. He launched the principle of indeterminacy in music and has remained its severest practitioner.

While Cage's music is abstract to the point of eliminating the personal preferences of the composer, Partch, vilifying abstraction, championed a mode of art he called "corporealism," underlining at every point the personal signature not only of the composer but also of each performer.

Harry Partch created not only musical compositions but also the instruments for which they were written, the scale to which those are tuned, the theory behind the design of both music and instruments, and the very circumstances for making music, which he believed should not have an existence independent of poetry, drama, dance, sculpture. This is an essential aspect of corporeal art. In a fully realized Partch production there are spoken words wedded to music without the abstraction typical of singing; there is a dramatic story expressed through action in a theater space not excluding visible actions of performing musicians as well as those of dancer-actor-singers; there is a setting which significantly includes, as sculptural objects, the handmade instruments themselves. Music functions as part of a many-faceted artwork.

Partch disliked most manners of performance because of their penchant for abstracting the act of making art from its physical basis. Traditional European concert and operatic singing, for instance, he saw as too instrumental, as he saw European concert dance as too pictorial. He preferred folk and vernacular musics and their performing traditions.

Partch's style, involved as it is with "extramusical" aspects, is not easily compared with those of many of his contemporaries. Recent avant-garde "mixed media" pieces are closer to Partch's art than more traditional music. By contrast his espousal of just intonation and the mathematics of rational proportion places him at sharp variance with proponents of noise and randomness, showing him to have more in common with Asiatic and African musics than with Western. This aspect of his work, together with his strongly metric rhythms and his corporeal earthiness, gives his music an affinity for folk, rock, and jazz music. He has said, "I believe in musicians who are total constituents of the moment, irreplaceable, who may sing, shout, whistle, stamp their feet; in costume always, or perhaps half naked, and I do not care which half" (from *Fragments from Partch*, prepared by Partch for Oliver Daniel of B.M.I.).<sup>2</sup>

While still teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, Cage invented the happening, though the term was not coined until much later. Like Partch, he also often mingles the arts, as in *HPSCHD*, but always in such a way as either to rule out the domination of the art work by anyone's expression or to display the individual performing artists as Dada objects, as in *Theater Piece*.

Both men are masters of the written and spoken word; but while Partch engaged in polemics and even invective along with his intellectually demanding microtonal-music theories, Cage uses language to challenge the supremacy of intellect and emotion as exclusive rivals for the center stage of art. A master of anecdote and choanlike aphorism, Cage has often composed his lectures in an idiom that recalls Gertrude Stein.

Partch described himself as a Dionysian artist. He always aimed for the overwhelming involvement the Dionysian proposes. Cage, while certainly no Apollonian in Stravinsky's sense,<sup>3</sup> aims at a cool, detached, but irritatingly provocative effect on his listeners. Dionysian ecstasy is as far from his art as one can get.

Partch was certainly no Apollonian, to borrow Stravinsky's categories (and in fact Partch used those categories), but he never talked about Apollo, only Dionysus, the quintessential corporealist. Sex and drinking of wine are traditional introductory ecstasies of Dionysus, but the god signifies much more than that: he is a chthonic god, affirming a kind of truth other than that of the sunlight part of life.

Dionysus and Apollo have a secret collusion, a highly important circumstance for art. Stravinsky can be said to have subordinated Dionysus to Apollo, while Partch put Apollo in the service of Dionysus. But these are only emphases: no fully human art can do without either beneficence. Pedantic art lacks Dionysian juice, and gross popular art lacks Apollonian seriousness. Neither Stravinsky nor Partch was guilty of these egregious extremes.<sup>4</sup>

Both men found themselves in need of very special performers. Cage solved the problem by cementing relations with artist-collaborators whose contributions complemented his own with maximum effectiveness. Most notable among these are the dancer-choreographer Merce Cunningham and the pianist/composer David Tudor. Among Cage's collaborations one may also mention his *Double Music* with composer Lou Harrison and *HPSCHD* with composer Lejaren Hiller. Cage's ability to work effectively with other artists is intimately related to his effort to keep his ego out of his art as much as possible.

Partch was just the opposite. At first functioning as a solo composer-performer, he soon found he needed to undertake elaborate training of performers, requiring months of dedicated work for a single performance.

Partch aimed at the widest possible audience, while remaining as uncompromising as Beethoven. Cage has aimed at an unspecified elite capable of transcending the limitations of traditional and popular art. It is a tribute to Partch that in spite of the extreme unavailability of most of his work,<sup>5</sup> he remains a provocative and challenging figure. It is a tribute to Cage that despite a truly esoteric aesthetic position, he has become one of the world's best-known and most influential composers, far outstripping the "controversial" label that seemed for a time inevitable for him.

## **The Corporeal Art of Harry Partch**

Harry Partch, composer: b. Oakland, California, June 24, 1901, d. September 1974. The son of apostate missionary parents, Partch grew up in southern Arizona. About these early years, he says: "I began playing reed organ, mandolin, cornet, violin, harmonica at five or six. I wrote seriously at fourteen (Albuquerque) and made a partial living there, hopping bells, playing piano for silent movies, later a mechanical organ for movies. After that, odd jobs and newspaper proof rooms until the depression, 1931. But I wrote a string quartet in just intonation (the last thing), a symphonic poem, a piano concerto, some fifty songs, and a few other things until I was 22. When I was 28 (I think) I crammed all of this into a big pot-bellied stove in New Orleans. That was 1930, the same year I started on Li Po [see below]. Since then I've destroyed very little."

During the years between 1923 and 1928, Partch's highly individual philosophy, theory, and practise of music was crystallizing. This period culminated in 1928 with the writing of the first draft of his book *Genesis of a Music*, later published (1949) by the University of Wisconsin Press and republished in an expanded second edition (1974) by Da Capo Press, New York. In this book Partch states his aesthetic and theoretic position. The first performance of music representing Partch's mature style was for Henry Cowell's New Music Society, San Francisco, February, 1932.

From 1928, Partch was constantly designing and hand-making his orchestra of instruments. Plagued by poverty and by problems of housing, maintaining, and transporting his instruments, Partch, nevertheless, managed to release privately a series of recordings (Gate 5 Records), which until 1966 were the only available versions of any of his music. Until 1967, when Source 2 published and on the *Seventh Day Petals Fell* in Petaluma, none of his scores were available.

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In 1943 began a series of grants, barely enabling Partch to produce most of his major works. Previous to this, except for a single grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1934, all of Partch's support had come from individuals. This kind of patronage continued all his life, but after 1943 was augmented significantly by foundations, universities, and museums.<sup>6</sup>

Just intonation, the tuning of musical intervals in their acoustically simplest relations, became a lifelong focus of Partch's musical activity. Since the use of such tuning does not provide even distribution of notes in the octave, it easily leads to a music with many intervals smaller than the usual half steps. Thus Partch's microtones grew out of his interest in reintroducing pure consonance into music, not primarily out of his interest in Asiatic music. In his use of microtones, he sometimes set about to evoke non-Western cultures, but more typically he utilized the subtle nuances provided by this pitch usage to render the inflections of spoken English.

Whether sung or spoken, Partch's melodies are close to realistic representations of vernacular spoken English, much closer than Sprechstimme or any other form of musicalized speech.

Having educated himself musically in public libraries, Partch listed as influences upon his work, “Yaqui Indians, Chinese lullabies, Hebrew chants for the dead, Christian hymns, Congo puberty, Chinese music hall (San Francisco), lumber yards and junk shops... Boris Godunov....

One of the fundamental convictions which motivated Partch to create his own instruments was his rejection of equal-tempered tuning, the basis of design of Western musical instruments since the eighteenth century. Building his musical theory, like most of those of Asia and of the ancient world, upon “just tuning,” Partch has resumed and extended greatly a tradition once considered lost in the West.<sup>7</sup>

The first piece composed in his mature manner was the Li Po Songs (1930-33), five of which are included here. (Partch often revised, expanded, and retitled his works; this one is also known as Li Po Lyrics, Six Poems by Li Po, Ten Settings of Lyrics by Li Po, and Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po.) He used a sung and a spoken voice part (“subjective” and “objective” voices respectively), a device he also used in later narrative works such as *The Wayward*. The settings are virtuosic for Partch on Adapted Viola and quite brilliant also for the vocalist. They were recorded in 1947.

Not long after the Adapted Viola (1928-30) came the first Adapted Guitar, followed by the Kithara. Experiments on a special keyboard (the Ptolemy) were stillborn but led eventually to the Chromelodeon.

Eleven Intrusions, four of which are included here (Side One, bands 1-3 and 8), was composed in Gualala, California, in 1949-50, and recorded there in 1950 with my wife Betty, me, and Donald Pippin assisting. The texts of “The Rose,” “The Wind,” and “The Waterfall” (Side One, bands 1-3) are by Ella Young. (Added lyrics in “The Wind” are from Lao-tzu.) The text of “The Street” (Side One, band 8) is the closing passage from Willard Motley’s novel *Knock on Any Door*. Like the Li Po settings, these are intimate chamber pieces and do not suggest the scope of Partch’s later full-scale theatrical works.

The remaining work, *The Dreamer That Remains—A Study in Loving* (1972), was Partch’s last composition (Side One, band 9). He derived it from his score for the film *The Dreamer That Remains: A Portrait of Harry Partch*, produced by Betty Freeman and directed by Stephen Pouliot. It uses narrating/ intoning voice (Partch), other speaking voices, chorus, and instruments, including the four built after 1971: Boo II, New Harmonic Canon I, New Kithara I, and Mbira Bass Dyad. The score contains these notes by Partch:

The first movement (about 6 minutes) might be called organic. It developed without preconceived structure. A plan would have been, to my mind, inherently wrong. First, because of time limitations of the film, and second, because of my own requirements (or insistence) in using a certain set of instruments.

Every instrument has its sui generis character. Not one of them is easily thought of as diatonic. Given these facts, or limitations or considered as a bright potential they do not fit into a determined structure.

The short second or final movement (about 3-4 minutes, with Coda) is entirely narrative and satirical, contrasting memories of my childhood (1905-1910) with the present.

The musicians must play, sing, act—when acting is called for. In its entirety, the work is predeterminedly dramatic.

The brash musician is a kind of musical clown—one whose good will is as automatic as breathing. The Voice is crouching inside a blue-tinted plastic bubble, kneeling, in hips-on-heels position, his shoulders hunched forward, but head up, in a pleading posture—hands crossed on chest. It is a probable fact that a girl would require only one cry for help before someone responded, but in this instance three cries are needed; therefore the character is male. He is purely symbolic in any group. A lost waif, a runaway, from home or institution. His pleas are always plaintive. A spot illuminates him for only the brief moment of his cry.

At the time Partch started adapting and building acoustic instruments, the only electronic instruments in general use were the Theremin and the Ondes Martéot, neither of which interested him. This lack of interest extended and intensified when musique concrète and Köln-style electronic music emerged, since he scorned their incorporeality. (This position parallels Cage's objections that concerts of magnetic-tape music were antitheatrical, an opinion he voiced a year or so after the realization of his first tape piece, Williams Mix [1952].)

Partch grew up on a ranch and had plenty of experience working with his hands in a shop. If he had an aptitude for electrical things, he had little opportunity to show it. Certainly he did not have the technological training to innovate in applied electronics, nor the inclination to collaborate with others on anything like an equal footing. One foray in this direction was actually a benign ruse perpetrated without his knowledge. In 1950 Lauriston C. Marshall, then head of the Microwave Radiation Laboratory of the University of California at Berkeley, arranged with Henry Allen Moe, who was president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, to provide funds for Partch's work at Gualala, California. They worked out a joint fellowship for Marshall and Partch with the ostensible purpose of designing and building an electronic organ to provide a permanently reliable standard of pitch for Partch's instruments. Moe and Marshall knew that the electronic technology of the time could in no way achieve the accuracy needed with the funds available. Partch, who would never have agreed to such a pretext, had to be kept in the dark about it. Most of the money was used to purchase lumber and other materials for building new instruments and to hire sound engineer Harry Lindgreen to bring an MGM sound truck out into the redwood forest to record *Eleven Intrusions* and *Dark Brother*. Partch's personal needs were supplied by friends under the pretext that they were not gifts. He believed that the organ project failed because of his collaborators' incompetence or mismanagement.

When, a year or so before Partch's death in 1974, Hermann Pedtke, coinventor of the Motorola Scalatron, visited him in San Diego to describe and demonstrate the new instrument, Partch said mournfully, "It's just what I needed. Twenty years too late."

But with all his mournfulness, personal isolationism, cantankerousness, and suspicion of friends and collaborators, the picture of Partch that emerges in the film *The Dreamer That Remains* is substantially correct and complements my own in "The Corporealism of Harry Partch."<sup>8</sup>

He really frightened many people. He was strong enough to impress those he met even casually with his undercurrent of enormous emotional energy. Combined with disregard for anyone's opinions and with the supremely difficult undertaking that performing his music has always been, this personal energy and drive could generate an atmosphere of alarming intensity.

It could also generate an almost fanatical loyalty and love. He had that in common with John Cage.

### **A Chronology of Partch's Mature Years**

In 1934 and 1935 Partch was in Europe on a Carnegie Foundation Grant, notably for an interview with William Butler Yeats and to get his permission to use his translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Favorably impressed with Partch's approach to setting texts, Yeats gave verbal permission, but when in 1950 Partch began his *Oedipus* at the Yeats estate, following Yeats's well-known overall policy concerning musical settings, denied permission, necessitating a new translation, which Partch undertook himself with the aid of a Bay Area scholar.

In 1935 Partch began his wanderings across the United States as a hobo, which lasted until 1941. Up to this period he had constructed only his *Adapted Viola* (1928-30) and his first *Adapted Guitar* (1934). The *Li Po Songs* (1930-33), *The Lord Is My Shepherd* (1930-31), *By the Rivers of Babylon* (1931), and *The Potion Scene* (*Romeo and Juliet*) (1931) were all originally set for voice (Partch) and *Adapted Viola*. In 1938 in Los Angeles he built his first *Kithara*. In 1941 in Chicago he adapted his first reed organ (*Chromelodeon I*). This was just after the completion of *Barstow* at Big Sur.

Later in 1941 Partch revised *Barstow* and *The Lord Is My Shepherd* to include his new instruments. In 1942 and 1943 in Chappaqua and Ithaca, New York, he composed *Dark Brother*, *The Letter*, *San Francisco Newsboy Cries*, *U.S. Highball*, and *Two Settings from "Finnegans Wake"* (also known as *Two Excerpts from James Joyce*). In 1943 and 1944 he received Guggenheim Fellowships. In 1944, at Carnegie Recital Hall and Columbia University, he gave his first major concerts.

From 1944 to 1947 Partch was research assistant at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. There he composed *Two Studies on Ancient Greek Scales* and recorded the *Li Po Poems* and *U.S. Highball* (first version). He built his first Harmonic Canon, reworked his first Adapted Guitar and adapted a second guitar, and built the Diamond Marimba.

In 1947 he went to live on pianist Gunnar Johansen's ranch at Gualala, where he built his Bass Marimba in 1949. Also in 1949 the University of Wisconsin Press published the first edition of *Genesis of a Music*, his book on music. In 1950 he adapted his *Cloud-Chamber Bowls* and built the *Spoils of War*. He began work on a second Chromelodeon, recorded *Eleven Intrusions* and *Dark Brother*, and received a third Guggenheim Fellowship, this time shared with Lauriston Marshall (see above).

In 1951 Partch moved to Oakland, composed *Oedipus*, and built his Marimba Eroica. Early in 1952 *Oedipus* was performed at Mills College under the direction of Arch Lauterer. In 1952 Partch composed the *Plectra and Percussion Dances* and began a revised version of *Oedipus*, using his own translation. This was premiered in Berkeley in 1953.

That year Partch moved to Sausalito and founded the Gate 5 Ensemble. *Plectra and Percussion Dances* was the first Gate 5 record release. In 1954 came the performance of the revised *Oedipus*, followed by its recording. Partch completed Chromelodeon II, rebuilt the Marimba Eroica, built the Surrogate Kithara, the second Harmonic Canon, the second Kithara, and the Bamboo Marimba (*Boo*), and composed his Lewis Carroll settings ("*O Frabjous Day [The Jabberwock]*" and "*The Mock Turtle Song*") at this time. In 1955 he wrote *The Bewitched* and *Ulysses Returns from the Edge of the World* (also known as *Ulysses at the Edge*), rewrote *Barstow*, *The Potion Scene*, and *U.S. Highball*, collected *Summer 1955*, and copied out *The Letter* and *San Francisco Newsboy Cries*. That year he went to San Diego and in 1956 from there to Oaxaca, Mexico, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

In 1957 he went to Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, and then to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he produced *The Bewitched* with Alwin Nikolais. The first performances were at Urbana and in St. Louis. (In 1959 a second production, with Joyce Trisler and the Juilliard Dance Theatre, played at Columbia University and the University of Illinois.)

In 1958 Partch went to Evanston, Illinois, to do the film *Windsong* with Madeline Tourtelot. While there they also made the film *Music Studio* and Partch built the *Bloboy*. He recorded the second version of *U.S. Highball*, *Barstow*, and *Ulysses at the Edge*.

In 1959 Partch returned to Urbana and began composing *Revelation in the Courthouse Park*, which was produced the following year under the direction of Barnard Hewitt. Partch built the *Cry-Chord*, composed *Bless This Home*, *Rotate the Body in All Its Planes* (for a gymnastic film), and *Water! Water!*, which was produced in 1961. The records *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* and *Thirty Years of Lyrical and Dramatic Music*, an anthology, were released in 1962. This marked the end of the need for private record releases.

The commercial issues of large works between 1964 and 1971 by Composers Recordings, Inc., and Columbia Records (see Discography) came about in large part through efforts on Partch's behalf by Broadcast Music, Inc. Oliver Daniel and Carl 6 Haverlin of BMI had earlier worked out a unique contract for Partch, which was vital to his economic survival for the rest of his life. Partch was listed and publicized as a BMI composer even though none of his works was published until considerably later, there being little advantage in disseminating scores largely in a type of tablature for unique instruments available only directly through the composer.

In 1963 Partch moved to Petaluma, California, where he built the Zymo-Xyl and the Mazda Marimba and composed *And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell* in Petaluma.

In 1964 he moved to Del Mar, California, where he built the Gourd Tree and began the *Eucal Blossom*. From there he went to Van Nuys, California, the next year and built the *Quadrangularis Reversum*. The same year he moved to Venice, California, and built his third *Harmonic Canon* and a new *Surrogate Kithara*. In 1965-66 he composed *Delusion of the Fury*, which was premiered in 1966 in Los Angeles with Danlee Mitchell conducting. In 1966 in San Diego he finished and copied *Delusion*. The following year saw another production of *Oedipus* and the rewriting of *Windsong* as *Daphne of the Dunes*. In 1968 Partch received a gala concert and exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York arranged largely through the efforts of Oliver Daniel.

In 1971 Partch moved to Encinitas, California, to a home loaned to him by Betty Freeman. There he built the second *Boo*, a new *Harmonic Canon I*, and a new *Kithara I* and composed the music for the film *The Dreamer That Remains*. In 1972 he moved to San Diego, where he died in 1974 of a heart ailment. He was alone.

### **Sound and Silence: The Art of John Cage**

Aspects of the 1920s art movement Dada and Zen Buddhism underpin Cage's explorations of radical aesthetics. Many of his compositions could better be described as aesthetic rather than simply musical experiments.

It is particularly the Dada art of Marcel Duchamp to which Cage affirms affinity. Duchamp's "readymades" or "found objects," for example, are the exact counterparts of compositions in which Cage admits any portion of all the world of sound into a musical event—and by chance selection, not even by choice. *Imaginary Landscape No. IV* for twelve radios affords an excellent and well-known example.

European Dada was critical of art, intellectualism, society, and civilization itself. Provocative, irritating, baffling, self-contradicting, outrageous, and very often hilariously funny, Dada art has found in many of its American exponents what Cage has called "a kind of space": an affirmation, even when it may seem that it is precisely nothing, or at least something absurd, that is being affirmed.

Like many Dada artists, Cage has been called a phony. After one of his lectures an irate questioner challenged, "Mr. Cage, are you a charlatan?" Cage replied, without hesitation, "Certainly not. I was born in 1912." Another, more thoughtful but still provocative, asked, "Are you serious?" Cage stopped pacing the stage and replied with genuine and startling gravity, "Of course I am." Then he burst out laughing and resumed pacing. These exchanges resulted, doubtless, from matching prepared answers to questions by chance, a procedure described in *Silence*.<sup>9</sup>

But Cage thoroughly transcends the Dada label, as he does most generalizations that critics and the public have sought to attach to him. One way to see this is to examine aspects of his relation to Zen Buddhist thought.

Shortly before his first chance compositions appeared in the early fifties, Cage had been attending Daisetz Suzuki's classes at Columbia University. While one should not leap to a simple cause and effect relation between these facts (at the same time, for instance, Cage was exposing himself to Indian thought, particularly writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy), the nonlogical and paradoxical essence of Zen had an undeniably liberating influence on both Cage and his art. Perhaps the keynote of that decisive change (if one can dare use "keynote" in this atonal, amusical, alogical context) was courage. Cage spoke of Coomaraswamy's inclusion of "The Heroic" as one of the four positive emotions (there being also four negative emotions and one neutral one, tranquility). Cage remarked<sup>7</sup> that the heroism of, for example, Nietzsche's superman was not at all what he understood by this emotion. He pointed, rather, to the courage to give up anything, everything, even one's own ego, certainly one's taste, and any self-congratulation that might well up about one's courageousness.

In some respects Cage's Zenlike side is even more clearly revealed in his teaching and writing than in his art. Anecdote, especially true, unvarnished anecdote, often has in Cage's speech and writing a very similar intent to that of the Zen master's choan, that often funny and always baffling answerless riddle prescribed as meditative nutrient to the disciple.

One of Cage's most famous compositions affords an excellent example of Zen principles at work in his art. "4'33" is not unique in using a time length as its title, and it is certainly not the only Cage work in which much of the performer's contribution is silence. It is unique in being his only composition to ask of the performer, beyond three indicated page turns at specified times, nothing but silence. Ostensibly for piano, ostensibly concerned with durations, the piece concedes in its very instructions that either of these specifications is optional: the piece may be played by any performer and may be any length.

At first glance, Dada may seem most evident in this radical aesthetic experiment. Performances of the piece have produced derision, outrage, angry disturbances, debates among audience members, individual to mass exits, and with less callow listeners a quiet intensity resembling a silent Quaker meeting.

Music of Changes stands at the divide between Cage's early music and that in which he has been concerned with chance. The compositional choices were determined as far as possible by the method of consulting the I Ching ("Book of Changes"), an ancient Chinese oracle and book of philosophy that Cage has since used frequently in making his chance compositions. Though Cage's use of the term "indeterminacy" dates from after the composition of Music of Changes, the concept can be useful in assessing it. From the vantage of the performer, the work is as thoroughly determined by its notation as any work in the conventional repertoire, though a comparison of this performance (recorded in 1953 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), which Cage prefers, with the score reveals extensive liberties taken by the pianist, David Tudor. These are very much in the spirit of the work and do not sound in the least like improvisation, which Cage abjures. The indeterminacy lies in the composer's abdication of his prerogative to make most of the compositional decisions. Not even the durational structure, which up to that time had been Cage's main compositional control, is part of his decision-making. Decisions were restricted to delineating the limits of the possible in various parameters and setting up a way to let chance decide exactly what events would occur.

Cage's use of chance is not to be confused with randomizing. Later, in 1968, when composing HPSCHD, he declined to let Lejaren Hiller, his collaborator on the work, use a random-number generator in achieving chance selection. He insisted instead that Hiller enable the computer to simulate exactly the process of consulting the I Ching. This method permits ordered successions to occur, though not predictably, rather than randomizing all successions.

The role of chance is to eliminate the dominance of habit, an inexorable arbiter in all choice. In some works this process includes the actions of the performer, but in Music of Changes this is not the case. The habits of the performer, except those responsible for his control of his instrumental technique, are no more in play here than in a Stravinsky score—if anything, less. It is in improvisation, where a performer's choice has a wide field of operation, that habit holds widest sway. This is the reason for Cage's dislike of improvising.

Cage's description of Music of Changes follows:

#### Composition10

My recent work (Imaginary Landscape No.IV for twelve radios and the Music of Changes for piano) is structurally similar to my earlier work: based on a number of measures having a square root, so that the large lengths have the same relation within the whole that the small lengths have within a unit of it. Formerly, however, these lengths were time-lengths, whereas in the recent work the lengths exist only in space, the speed of travel through this space being unpredictable.



What brings about this unpredictability is the use of the method established in the I-Ching (Book of Changes) for the obtaining of oracles, that of tossing three coins six times. [A description of how to consult the I Ching is here omitted.]

Charts are made of an equal number of elements (sixty-four) which refer to Superpositions (one chart) (how many events are happening at once during a given structural space); Tempi (one chart); Durations (n, the number of possible superpositions, in these works, eight charts); Sounds (eight charts); Dynamics (eight charts).

Where there are eight charts, four at any instant are mobile and four immobile (mobile means an element passes into history once used, giving place to a new one; immobile means an element, though used, remains to be used again). Which charts are which is determined by the first toss at a large unit structural point, an odd number bringing about a change, an even number maintaining the previous status.

The Tempi and Superpositions charts, however, remain unchanged through the entire work.

In the charts for sounds thirty-two of the elements (the even numbers) are silences. The sounds themselves are single, aggregates (cf. the accord sometimes obtained on a prepared piano when only one key is depressed), or complex situations (constellations) in time (cf. the Chinese characters made with several strokes). Sounds of indefinite pitch (noises) are free to be used without any restriction. Those of definite pitch are taken as being twelve in number. In any chart for sounds (there being thirty-two sounds) two squares (four times four) exist, one above the other. Reading horizontally or vertically, one reads all twelve tones. In the case of the mobility of sounds (disappearance into history) four in succession also produce the twelve tones, with or without noises and repetitions. In the case of "interference" (the appearance of a sound having characteristics in common with the characteristics of the previously sounded situation) the characteristics that produce the interference are omitted from the newly appearing sound or cut short in the situation that has previously sounded. In the radio piece, numbers on a tuning dial are written instead of sounds, whatever happens being acceptable (station, static, silence).

In the charts for dynamics only sixteen numbers produce changes (one, five, nine, etc.); the others maintain the previous status. These are either dynamic levels or accents (in the piano piece); levels, diminuendi, and crescendi in the radio piece. In the piano piece, combinations of dynamic levels (e.g. fff p) indicate accents; in the case of a sound complex in time this may become a diminuendo or (by retrograde interpretation a) a crescendo, or derived complex.

A way of relating durations to sounds has been thought of in the course of this work but not in it utilized: to let four durations equal a specified length (on the chart, horizontally or vertically and in mobility four in succession)-this specified length being subject to change.

The chart for Tempi has thirty-two elements, the blanks maintaining the previous tempo.

Each one of events one to eight is worked from the beginning to the end of the composition. For instance, the eighth one is present from beginning to end but may sound only during a structural space that has been defined by a toss (for superstitions) of fifty-seven to sixty-four. It is then not only present but possibly audible. It becomes actually audible if a sound is tossed (rather than a silence) and if the duration tossed is of a length that does not carry the sound beyond the structural space open to it.

It is thus possible to make a musical composition the continuity of which is free of individual taste and memory (psychology) and also of the literature and "traditions" of the art. The sounds enter the time-space centered within themselves, unimpeded by service to any abstraction, their 360 degrees of circumference free for an infinite play of interpretation.

Value judgments are not in the nature of this work as regards either composition, performance or listening. The idea of relation (the idea: 2) being absent, anything (the idea: 1) may happen. A “mistake” is beside the point, for once anything happens it authentically is.

## **The Recordings**

Harry Partch

Side One, Band 1

### **The Rose**

(from Eleven Intrusions)

Poem by Ella Young

Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Guitar II; Ben Johnston, Diamond Marimba.

*Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal; Harry Lindgreen, engineer*

Band 2

### **The Wind**

(from Eleven Intrusions)

Peom (“Aibric’s Song for Fionavar”) by Ella Young; added lines from Tao The King of Lao-tzu.

Harry Partch, intoning voice and Harmonic Canon I; Ben Johnston, Bass Marimba.

*Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal; Harry Lindgreen, engineer.*

Band 3

### **The Waterfall**

(from Eleven Intrusions)

Poem by Ella Young

Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Guitar II; Ben Johnston, Diamond Marimba.

*Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal; Harry Lindgreen, engineer.*

Bands 4-7

### **The Intruder**

**I Am a Peach Tree**

**A Midnight Farewell**

**Before the Cask of Wine**

(from Li Po Songs)

William Wendlandt, intoning voice; Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Viola.

*Recorded 1947 in Madison, Wis, by W.E Gilson; remastered 1962 by Danlee Mitchell.*

Band 8

### **The Street**

(from Eleven Intrusions)

Text from Knock on Any Door, by Williard Motley

Harry Partch, intoning voice and Harmonic Canon II; Ben Johnston, Bass Marimba.

*Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal; Harry Lindgreen, engineer.*

## Band 9

### **The Dreamer That Remains**

Text by Harry Partch

Harry Partch, Intoning Voice and Narrator; Mark Hoffman, Brash Musician; Danlee Mitchell, Second Musician; Jon Szanto, The Voice; Katherine Bjornson, Alexis Glattly, Michael Crosier, and the following instrumentalists, chorus; Ron Caruso, Gourd Tree; David Dunn, Adapted Viola; Dennis Dunn, New Harmonic Canon I; Jean-Charles Francoix, Quadrangularis Reversum; Jonathan Glasier, New Harmonic Canon I; Randy Hoffman, Eucal Blossom and Mbira Bass Dyad; Danlee Mitchell, New Kithara I; Emil Richards, Cloud-Chamber Bowls; Jon Szanto, Ektara and Boo II; Duane Thomas, Harmonin Canon II; Francis Thumm, Chromelodion; Jack Logan conducting. Danlee Mitchell, ensemble manager and assistant to Harry Partch.  
*Recorded in 1973 in San Diego; Mark Hoffman and Bruce Quillian, engineers.*

## Side Two

John Cage

Music of Changers (Parts III and IV)

David Tudor, piano.

*Recorded March 23, 1953, University of Illinois at Urbana.*

Previously unreleased.

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### **John Cage**

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A Book of Music for Two Prepared Pianos (1944); Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano (1946-48). Joshua Pierce and Maro Ajemian, pianos. Tomato 2-1001.

Cartridge Music (1960). John Cage and David Tudor, pianos and electronics. Mainstream 5015; Time S-8009.

HPSCHD for Harpsichords & Computer-generated Sound Tapes (composed with Lejaren Hiller) (1969).

Antoinette Vischer, Neely Bruce, and David Tudor, harpsichords. Nonesuch H-71224.

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26'1.1499" for a String Player (1955). Bertram Turetzky, contrabass. Nonesuch H-71237.

Variations II (1961). David Tudor, piano. Columbia MS-7051.

Variations IV (1964). John Cage and David Tudor, instruments and live electronics. Everest 3230, 3132; Everest LPBR-6132.

## **Harry Partch (compiled by Thomas McGeary)**

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma (1963-66). Los Angeles ensemble, Harry Partch directing. Composers Recordings CRI SD-213.

The Bewitched—A Dance Satire (1955). Freda (Pierce) Schell, Witch; University of Illinois ensemble, John Garvey conducting. Composers Recordings CRI SD-304.

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Daphne of the Dunes (1967); Barstow (1941); Castor and Pollux (1952). “The World of Harry Partch.” Ensemble, Danlee Mitchell conducting. Columbia MS-7207.

Delusion of the Fury (1965-66). Los Angeles ensemble, Danlee Mitchell conducting. Columbia M2-30576. Discussion-demonstration record included.

Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World (1955). “New Music for Trumpet.” Jack Logan, trumpet; San Diego ensemble. Orion ORS-7294.

### **Gate 5 Recordings**

The Bewitched—A Dance Satire (1955). Freda (Pierce) Schell, Witch; University of Illinois ensemble, John Garvey conducting. Issue 3; Issue E (excerpts).

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Plectra and Percussion Dances (1949-52): Castor and Pollux (1952); Ring Around the Moon (1949-50); Even Wild Horses (1952) (excerpts). Gate 5 Ensemble of Sausalito, Horace Schwartz conducting. Issues 1, 4, and C.

Revelation in the Courthouse Park (1960). Freda Pierce, soprano; Jeffrey Foote, bass-baritone; University of Illinois ensemble, John Garvey conducting. Issue F.

Six Poems by Li PO (1931-33); Windsong (1958) (excerpt); Eleven Intrusions (1946-50) (selections); Bless This House (1961); By the Rivers of Babylon (1931). “Thirty Years of Lyrical and Dramatic Music.” Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Viola; Ben and Betty Johnston, instruments; William Wendlandt, tenor; Donald Pippin, instruments; ensembles, John Garvey conducting. Issue A.

U.S. Highball (1943; revised 1955). Gate 5 Ensemble of Evanston, Ill., Jack McKenzie conducting.

### **Issue 6.**

Water! Water! (1961) (excerpts); Rotate the Body in All Its Planes (1961) (excerpts). University of Illinois ensemble, John Garvey conducting. Issue G.

The Wayward (1941-55) (selections): U.S. Highball (1943; revised 1955); The Letter (1943); Ulysses at the Edge (1955). Gate 5 Ensemble of Evanston, Ill., Jack McKenzie conducting. Issue B.

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U.S. Highball (1943). Harry Partch, intoning voice and instruments; William Wendlandt, tenor; Lee Hoiby, Kithara I; Christine Charnstrom, Chromelodeon I; Hulda Gieschen, Adapted Guitar I. Issued 1946 by Warren E. Gilson, Madison, Wis.

The Letter (1943); Dark Brother (1942-43); Eleven Intrusions (1946-50) (selections); spoken introduction and demonstration of instruments. “Partch Compositions.” Harry Partch, intoning voice and instruments; Ben Johnston, Betty Johnston, and Donald Pippin, instruments. Issued 1951 by Lauriston C. Marshall, Berkeley, Calif.

Ten Settings of Lyrics by Li Po (1931-33). Harry Partch, intoning voice and instruments; William Wendlandt, tenor. Issued 1947 by Warren E. Gilson, Madison, Wis.

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**John Cage** (See Selected Bibliography for 80203-2, *Sound Forms for Piano*)

Side One .....Total time 24:09

### Harry Partch

#### Band 1

- The Rose (from *Eleven Intrusions*) .....1:38  
Poem by Ella Young  
Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Guitar II; Ben Johnston, Diamond Marimba.  
Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal.; Harry Lindgreen, engineer

**Band 2**

**The Wind (from Eleven Intrusions) . . . . .1:38**  
**Poem (“Aibric’s Song for Fionavar”) by Ella Young; added lines from the Tao Teh King of Lao-tzu**  
**Harry Partch, intoning voice and Harmonic Canon I; Ben Johnston, Bass Marimba.**  
**Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal.; Harry Lindgreen, engineer**

**Band 3**

**The Waterfall . . . . .1:03**  
**(from Eleven Intrusions)**  
**Poem by Ella Young**  
**Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Guitar II; Ben Johnston, Diamond Marimba.**  
**Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal.; Harry Lindgreen, engineer**

**Bands 4-7**

**The Intruder . . . . .1:09**  
**I Am a Peach Tree . . . . .1:23**  
**A Midnight Farewell . . . . .1:15**  
**Before the Cask of Wine (from Li Po Songs) . . . . .2:10**  
**William Wendlandt, intoning voice; Harry Partch, intoning voice and Adapted Viola.**  
**Recorded 1947 in Madison, Wis., by W. E. Gilson; remastered 1962 by Danlee Mitchell**

**Band 8**

**The Street . . . . .2:39**  
**(from Eleven Intrusions) 11**  
**Text from Knock on Any Door, by Willard Motley**  
**Harry Partch, intoning voice and Harmonic Canon II; Ben Johnston, Bass Marimba.**  
**Recorded 1950 in Gualala, Cal.; Harry Lindgreen, engineer**

**Band 9**

**The Dreamer That Remains . . . . .10:27**  
**Text by Harry Partch**  
**Harry Partch, Intoning Voice and Narrator; Mark Hoffman, Brash Musician; Danlee Mitchell, Second Musician; Jon Szanto, The Voice; Katherine Bjornson, Alexis Glattly, Michael Crosier, and the following instrumentalists, chorus; Ron Caruso, Gourd Tree; David Dunn, Adapted Viola; Dennis Dunn, New Harmonic Canon I; Jean-Charles François, Quadrangularis Reversum; Jonathan Glasier, New Harmonic Canon I; Randy Hoffman, Eucal Blossom and Mbira Bass Dyad; Danlee Mitchell, New Kithara I; Emil Richards, Cloud-Chamber Bowls; Jon Szanto, Ektara and Boo II; Duane Thomas, Harmonic Canon II; Francis Thumm, Chromelodeon; Jack Logan conducting. Danlee Mitchell, ensemble manager and assistant to Harry Partch. Recorded 1973 in San Diego; Mark Hoffman and Bruce Quillian, engineers.**

**(All selections published by the Harry Partch Foundation.)**

**Producer: Danlee Mitchell Original recording engineered by Mark Hoffman and Bruce Quillian, San Diego, 1973 Ensemble Manager and Assistant to Harry Partch: Danlee Mitchell**

Side Two (Mono) . . . . . Total time 22:17

**John Cage**

Music of Changes (Parts III and IV)  
(publ. Henmar Music (ASCAP))

1 Part III . . . . . 10:19  
2 Part IV . . . . . 11:48

David Tudor, piano

David Tudor, avant-garde pianist and composer, studied with H. William Hawke, Irma Wolpe Rademaher, and Stefan Wolpe. He has long been associated with John Cage's oeuvre; among works he has premiered are Cage's Music of Changes and Pierre Boulez's Deuxième Sonate, as well as works by Earle Brown, Sylvano Bussotti, Morton Feldman, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. In the early 1960s, he and John Cage initiated a turn toward "live" as distinct from taped electronic music.

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