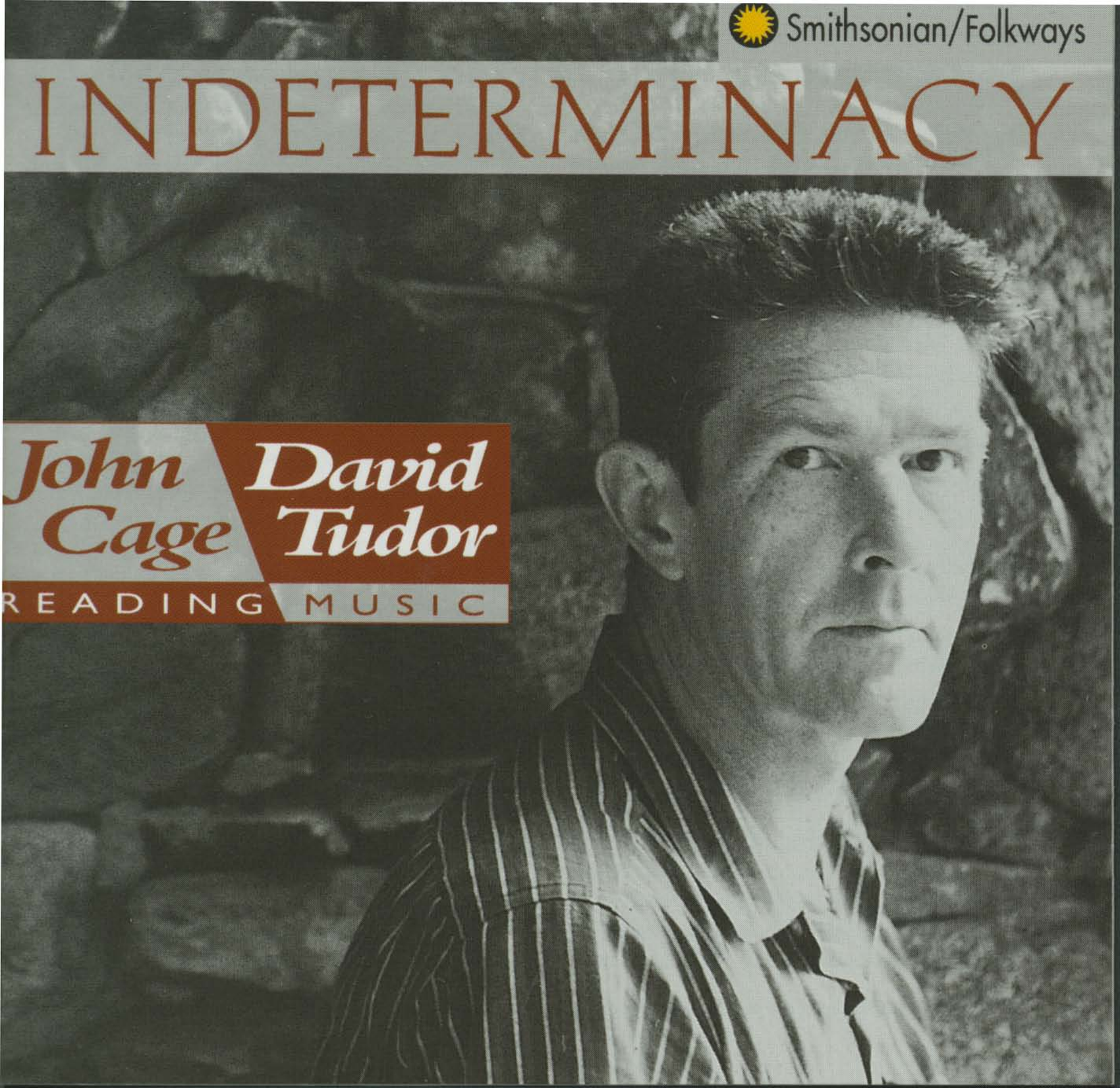
Smithsonian/Folkways

INDETERMINACY



John Cage

David Tudor

READING MUSIC

SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS CD SF 40804/5 AAD

JOHN CAGE:Reading/DAVID TUDOR:Music

INDETERMINACY

New Aspect of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music
Ninety Stories by John Cage, with Music

Originally issued in 1959 as Folkways FT 3704
Notes by John Cage
With a new introduction by Richard Kostelanetz

Disc One Total Time: 46:05
Disc Two Total Time: 44:17

In Zen they say: If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, try it for eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it's not boring at all but very interesting.

John Cage

The idea behind *Indeterminacy* was, like many Cagean ideas, essentially simple, if audaciously original....The acoustic innovation is the one-minute story, read by Cage at varying speeds reflective of the stories' lengths...In another room, beyond earshot of Cage, the pianist David Tudor...a veteran Cage collaborator, [played] miscellaneous sections from his parts for Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58) [and] prerecorded tape from Cage's *Fontana Mix* (1950-59).

from the enclosed notes by Richard Kostelanetz

Credits
Original recording produced by Moses Asch and John Cage; recorded by Mel Kaiser
Reissue supervised by Anthony Seeger and Matt Walters
Production coordinated by Matt Walters and Leslie Spitz-Edson
Remastered by Joe Gastwirt at Ocean View Digital, W. Los Angeles, California
Design by Carol Hardy
Photographs by David Gahr

Smithsonian Folkways

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings
Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

JOHN CAGE: Reading / DAVID TUDOR: Music

I N D E T E R M I N A C Y

New Aspect of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music
Ninety Stories by John Cage, with Music
Notes by John Cage
With a new introduction by Richard Kostelanetz

Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40804/5

Originally issued in 1959 as Folkways FT 3704

Disc One Total Time: 46:05
Disc Two Total Time: 44:17

Credits
Original recording produced by Moses Asch and John Cage; recorded by Mel Kaiser
Reissue supervised by Anthony Seeger and Matt Walters
Production coordinated by Matt Walters and Leslie Spitz-Edson
Remastered by Joe Gastwirt at Ocean View Digital, W. Los Angeles, California
Notes by John Cage
Introduction to the 1992 edition by Richard Kostelanetz
Design by Carol Hardy
Photographs by David Gahr

JOHN CAGE'S INDETERMINACY THEN AND NOW: 1992 INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

In Zen they say: If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, try it for eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it's not boring at all but very interesting.

John Cage

For most of the world, most of the time, John Cage (b. 1912) is an international avant-garde composer; for me he has always been an innovative American writer. My introduction to his writing came not from something in print but from *Indeterminacy* (1959), which appeared as a two-record box on Folkways a few years before his first book, *Silence* (1961). Until then, you would have had to see Cage perform to appreciate his writing; very little of it had ever appeared in print.

The idea behind *Indeterminacy* was, like many Cagean ideas, essentially simple, if audaciously original. In one acoustic space he would declaim any of ninety stories, taking a minute to finish each one. Thus, those with many words were necessarily read quickly; those with a few words, slowly. In another room, beyond earshot of Cage, the pianist David Tudor, by that time a veteran Cage collaborator, was playing miscellaneous sections from his parts for Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58), occasionally playing as well prerecorded tape from another Cage composition *Fontana Mix* (1958-59). As Cage wrote at the time, "David Tudor was free to make any continuity of his choice. There was no rehearsal beforehand involving both the reading and the music, for in all my recent music there are parts but no score."

Cage's stories tend to fall into several groups. Some are meant to be illustrations of his Buddhist devotion to his esthetics of accepting all sounds as equally legitimate. At a respite following a Zen service, he remembers, "The hostess and her husband, employing an out-of-tune piano and a cracked voice, gave a wretched performance of an excerpt from a third-rate Italian opera. I was embarrassed and glanced toward the Roshi to see how he was taking it. The expression on his face was absolutely beatific." Before a demonstration like this, Cage was forced to learn how far he had to go.

A recurring theme is overcoming adversity, as Cage tells the story of his teacher Arnold Schoenberg informing his

pupil Cage that he had no feeling for harmony. "He then said that I would always encounter an obstacle, that it would be as though I came to a wall through which I could not pass. I said, 'In that case I will devote my life to beating my head against that wall.'" What happened, of course, is that Cage made a constraint of his defect, composing a music so consistently devoid of harmony that it was scarcely missed.

Some stories portray Cage's love for nature and especially for mushrooms. From them follow stories of his cooking and eating not just mushrooms but cabbages and hot peanuts. Yet others tell of the experience of touring, not only as a solo musician but as the music director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He likes to recall the witty remarks of his friends, such as the painter Jasper Johns and the late composer Morton Feldman. Few, to my recollection, speak of his reading, or his experience of art, or his opinions about music. Some are funny in the tradition of Twain, with an eternally innocent writer who is surprised at the foibles of the world. Like traditional comedy, but unlike tragedy, Cage's stories assume that all will turn out well in the end.

The acoustic innovation is the one-minute story, declaimed at varying speeds reflective of the stories' lengths, in sum redeeming the otherwise decadent form of the solo literary recital. *Indeterminacy* also represents Cage's comment on poetry and jazz, a complementary mixing of music and language that was popular in the 1950s. Always there is an elegance and wit that are uniquely Cagean, for even in print his stories display a distinctive prose. Since he has always been the most adept performer of his own writing, this record gives these unusual stories an even more unique voice. He later used these texts, along with new ones composed within the same constraint, as his contribution to the Merce Cunningham piece *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run* (1965), the dancers replacing David Tudor, so to speak. The paragraph-long story was a form, a constraint, Cage mastered, much as he would later master the mesostic.

The texts for many of these stories may be found in Cage's first two books, *A Year from Monday* (1967) and *Silence* (1961). In the latter they appear not only in the chapter marked "Indeterminacy" (pp. 260-273), but scattered throughout its pages, as Cage put it, "playing the function that odd bits of information play at the ends of columns in a small-town newspaper." He continues, "I suggest that they be read in the manner and in the situations that one reads newspapers—even the metropolitan ones—when he does so purposelessly: that is, jumping here and there and responding at the same time to environmental events and sounds." It follows that the disc *Indeterminacy* need not be heard in silence; it is perfectly appropriate to play it in a space filled with other sounds, even the noise of traffic or a radio(s) that could be playing yakati-yak as well as music.

One key to Cage's esthetic is the absence of hierarchy. Just as no story in *Indeterminacy* is necessarily more important than any other, so none is necessarily a beginning of the piece and none necessarily an end; they resemble slips of paper that are picked at random from a bowl until the bowl is empty. "My intention in putting the stories together in an unplanned way," he writes in *Silence*, "was to suggest that all things—stories, incidental sounds from the environment, and by extension, beings—*are* related, and that this complexity is more evident when it is not oversimplified by an idea of relationship in one person's mind."

For these performances of Cage and Tudor there was no definite beginning and no definite end. Quite simply, they began apart from each other and played until time ran out. Since each performer had his own stopwatch, there was reason to expect they would end around the same time. *Indeterminacy* exemplifies the flat, uninflected structure of superficially disconnected events that has always characterized Cage's music and, to no surprise, Merce Cunningham's dance. My own interpretation is that the scrupulous absence of hierarchy reflects not only Zen Buddhism, which Cage studied intensively at Columbia University in the late 1940s, but an anarchism that has informed his art and activities since the 1930s.

One theme is that indeterminacy differs from improvisation, because indeterminacy incorporates imaginative constraints. The idea of the poetry-jazz duets was that speaker and musicians would respond to one another, each spontaneously trying to reenforce the other, customarily in habitual ways. The principle of indeterminacy allows each performer to work apart from the other, indeed in this case unawares of each other, each with scores designed to minimize habit. If a reader is required to speak only fifteen words in sixty seconds, he or she cannot resort to pet ways of phrasing.

Those familiar with avant-garde

contemporary radio, especially as it is produced in Germany, can identify *Indeterminacy* as early *Neue Hörspiel* in that it is a primarily acoustic experience, involving speech as well as sounds. Indeed, *Indeterminacy* could be characterized as a radio program (that wouldn't benefit from a picture) of an avant-garde kind that wasn't produced in America at that time. It could also be classified as an early Cage "play" in a distinguished theatrical career.

Though Cage is, to my mind, a major American prose writer, who was recently the Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, you won't find his name in any history of American literature; you won't find any articles about his writing in the annual indices of the *Publication of the Modern Languages Association*. Even in this age of extensive study of contemporary literature, of the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, it is still possible for a well-known American writer to do distinctive work that is academically ignored.

Thirty-three years later (yes, a full thirty-three), it is good to have *Indeterminacy* back.

Richard Kostelanetz, 1992

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ has written many critical/historical books about contemporary literature, music, and art. His art incorporates words, numbers, and lines, into books, prints, audiotape, videotape, holography, and film. His audiotape composition, *Invocations*, appears on Folkways 37902.

Suggested Reading

Cage, John. *Silence*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.

———. *A Year from Monday*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1967.

Kostelanetz, Richard. *Conversing with Cage*. New York: Limelight, 1989.

———, ed. *John Cage* (1970). New York: Da Capo, 1991.

MacLow, Jackson. "Something About the Writings of John Cage." In *Writing About John Cage*, edited by Richard Kostelanetz. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch and Marian Distler in 1949 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. Benefiting from their experience with the Asch and Disc labels, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record companies in the world, with a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are now available on high quality audio cassettes, each packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes, recordings to accompany published books, and a variety of other educational projects.

The Smithsonian/Folkways, Folkways, Cook, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian/Folkways, Folkways, Cook, and Paredon recordings are all available through Smithsonian/Folkways Mail Order, 416 Hungerford Drive Suite 320, Rockville MD 20850. Phone 301/443-2314; fax 301/443-1819 (Visa and MasterCard accepted).

For a free catalogue, write: The Whole Folkways Catalogue, Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza Suite 2600, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560, phone 202/287-3262, or fax 202/287-3699.

INDETERMINACY

New Aspect of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music

John Cage, 1959

For over 20 years I have been giving lectures. Many of them have been unusual as lectures, simply because I employed in them means of writing analogous to my composing means in the field of music. My intention was, often, to say what I had to say in a way which would exemplify it, which would, conceivably, permit a listener to experience it rather than to just hear about it. This means, essentially, that, being, as I am, engaged in a variety of activities, I attempt to introduce into each one of them aspects conventionally limited to the others. So it was that I gave about 1949 my *Lecture on Nothing* at the Artists' Club on 8th Street in New York City (the artists' club started by Robert Motherwell that predated the popular one associated with Philip Pavia, Bill de Kooning, et. al.). This *Lecture on Nothing* (recently published in *Incontri Musicali*) was written in the same rhythmic structure I employed at the time in my musical compositions (*Sonatas and Interludes*, *Three Dances*, etc.). One of the structural divisions was a repetition of a single page in which the refrain occurred "if anyone is sleepy let him go to sleep" some 14 times. Jeanne Reynal, I remember, stood up part way through, screamed, and then said, while I continued speaking, "John, I dearly love you, but I can't bear another minute." She then walked out. Later, during the question period, I gave 5 prepared answers regardless of the questions. This was a reflection of my engagement in Zen. At Black Mountain College, I organized an event which involved the paintings of Bob Rauschenberg, the dancing of Merce Cunningham, films, slides, phonograph records, radios, the poetries of Charles Olsen and M. C. Richards recited from the tops of ladders, the pianism of David Tudor, together with my lecture which ends: "A piece of string, a sunset, each acts." The audience was seated in the center of all this activity, and, later that summer, vacationing in New England, I visited America's first Synagogue to discover that the congregation was there seated precisely the way I had arranged the audience at Black Mountain. As I look back, I realize that this concern with poetry was early with me. At Pomona

College, in response to questions about the Lake Poets, I wrote in the manner of Gertrude Stein, irrelevantly and repetitiously. I got an A. The second time I did it I was failed. And between the *Lecture on Nothing* and the one here recorded, there are at least a dozen which are unconventionally written, notably the *London Lecture* which was written by means of chance operations, and the *Rutgers Lecture* which is largely a series of questions left unanswered. When M. C. Richards asked me why I didn't one day give a conventional informative lecture (adding that that would be the most shocking thing I could do), I said, "I don't give these lectures to surprise people, but out of the need for poetry." As I see it, poetry is not prose, simply because poetry is one way or another formalized. It is not poetry by reason of its content or ambiguity, but by reason of its allowing musical elements (time, sound) to be introduced into the world of words. Thus, traditionally, information, no matter how stuffy (e. g. the sutras and shastras of India), was conventionally transmitted by poetry. It was easier "to get" that way. (Karl Shapiro may have been thinking along these lines when he wrote his *Essay on Rime* in poetry.)

Late in September in 1958 I was in Stockholm in a hotel. I set about writing the present lecture which I was obliged to give a week later at the Brussels Fair. I recalled a remark made years before by David Tudor that I should make a talk that was nothing but stories. The idea was appealing when he gave it to me but I had never acted on it. A few weeks before, in Darmstadt, Karlheinz Stockhausen had said, "I'll publish your Brussels talk in *Die Reihe*." I replied, "You'd better wait and see what it is I write." He said, "No matter what it is, I'll publish it."

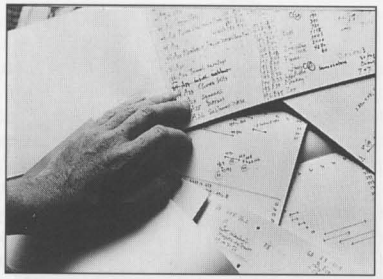
When the talk was given in Brussels, it was just the first 30 stories and without musical accompaniment. A recital by David Tudor and myself of music for two pianos followed the lecture. The title was *Indeterminacy: new aspect of form in instrumental and electronic music*. Karlheinz Stockhausen was in the audience. Later when I was in Milan making the *Fontana Mix* at the Studio di Fonologia, I received a letter from Karlheinz Stockhausen asking for a text for *Die Reihe*. I sent the Brussels talk. He published it.

When I got back to America in March 1959, there was a letter from Jack Arends asking me to lecture at Columbia Teachers College. I decided to write 60 more stories and to ask David Tudor to make a 90-minute accompaniment for the occasion. He did this using material from the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, employing several radios for noise elements.

A few days after the talk was given at Columbia, I went to see Emile de Antonio. I gave him a copy of the stories. After he read them, he telephoned to say they should be published. I mentioned this to David Tudor. He said, "It should be published as a record." The next day I got a letter from Roger Maren. He wrote to say that he had just seen Moe Asch who was interested in recording something of mine. I telephoned Moe Asch and we made an appointment. The day was set for the recording so that it could be made before David Tudor returned to Europe. David Tudor said, "Instead of radios, I'd like to use tracks from the *Fontana Mix*." I said, "Fine."

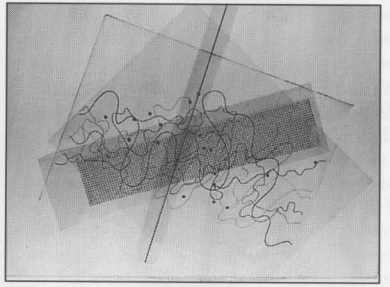
It took about an hour and a half for the recording engineer, Mel Kaiser, to set up the studio. Finally he asked me to speak a little to get the level. Then he did the same for the piano, the whistles, the tape machines and the amplified slinky. Then he said, "We're ready." However, I no sooner started speaking than he stopped me. I said, "What's the trouble?" He said, "You shouldn't pause the way you do between words; you should just speak naturally." I said, "But this is what I have to do. I tell one story a minute, and, when it's a short one, I have to spread it out. Later on when I come to a long one, I have to speak as rapidly as I can." He said, "O.K. I'll just keep my mouth shut." After the first side was made, he said, "I'm beginning to get the idea. I think we'd better do it over again." What had happened was that he had tried to get some kind of balance, rather than just letting the loud sounds occasionally drown out my voice. I explained that a comparable visual experience is that of seeing someone across the street, and then not being able to see him because a truck passes between. We

then made the first record over again, and continued with the other three. At the end of the session, David Tudor said, "You may want to cut that last sound I made at the piano. It's an ugly one." Editing, which took place the following week, was minimal. I lowered the level on my voice at one point near the end, and took out an echo that had developed on the tape before one sound somewhere in the middle. I didn't cut out the last sound as David Tudor had suggested, for to my ear it sounded perfectly acceptable. All this time, Moe Asch was out of town. When he returned, he listened to the record, and then called to say he was delighted. I said, "I'm glad you are, because I am too." He said, "When you write the album notes, write as much as you wish. Don't stint. And technical information too."



Most of the stories are things that happened that stuck in my mind. Others I read in books and remembered, those, for instance, from Kwang-Tse and Sri Ramakrishna. The 2nd, 15th, 16th, 46th and 75th stories are to be found somewhere in the literature surrounding Zen. The statement, "Split the stick and there is Jesus," (19th story) comes, perhaps, from Huxley's *Perrenial Philosophy*, which I read when it first came out. The 29th story I read in one of Martin Buber's books. The 61st story is told in Joseph Campbell's *Hero with 1000 Faces*. Xenia (stories 72 and 73) is Xenia Cage. She was Xenia Andreyevna Kashevaroff whom I married in 1935; we were divorced 10 years later. Malcolm Roberts first delivered the lecture on Japanese Poetry (78th story). We (he, Xenia and I) were sitting, quite drunk, in a Seattle gutter; it was a full moon. He claimed that it had been given at the University of Washington by a Japanese scholar. Virgil Thomson told me the story about Chabrier, "the dirty" composer (story number 58). Henry Cowell told me the story about the Eskimo lady (the 25th). Merce Cunningham picked up, I don't know where, the one about the Japanese Abbott (the 13th). It may be discovered that I have remembered some of these stories inaccurately. However, this is the way they are now as far as I am concerned.

The continuity of the 90 stories was not planned. I simply made a list of all the stories I could think of and checked them off as I wrote them. Some that I remembered I was not able to write to my satisfaction, and so they do not appear. Whenever I have given the talk, someone comes up afterwards and insists that the continuity was a planned one, in spite of the ideas that are expressed regarding purposelessness, emptiness, chaos, etc. One lady, at Columbia, asked, during the discussion following the talk, "What, then, is your final goal?" I remarked that her question was that of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to applicants for fellowships, and that it had irritated artists for decades. Then I said that I did not see that we were going to a goal, but that we were living in process, and that that process is eternal.



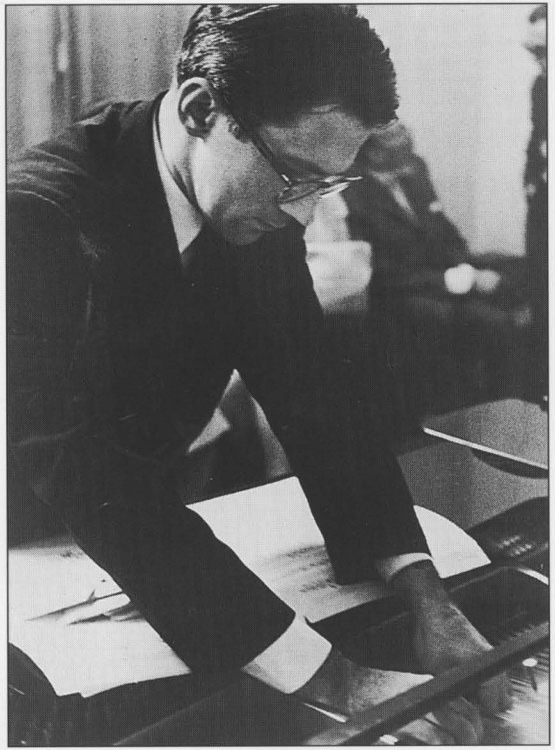
My intention in putting 90 stories together in an unplanned way is to suggest that all things, sounds, stories (and, by extension, beings) *are* related, and that this complexity is more evident when it is not over-simplified by an idea of relationship in one person's mind.

David Tudor plays material from his part of the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58), using tracks from the *Fontana Mix* (1958-59) as noise elements where these are notated in the *Concert*. (Manuscript pages of the *Concert*, together with notes and analytical statements, appear in the recording of my 25-year Retrospective Concert at Town Hall, issued by George Avakian, 10 W. 33rd St., N. Y. C. Other manuscript pages, originals, are available at the Stable Gallery, 58th and 7th Ave., N. Y. C.) David Tudor was free to make any continuity of his choice. There was no rehearsal beforehand involving both the reading and the music, for in all my recent music (since *Music for Piano*) there are

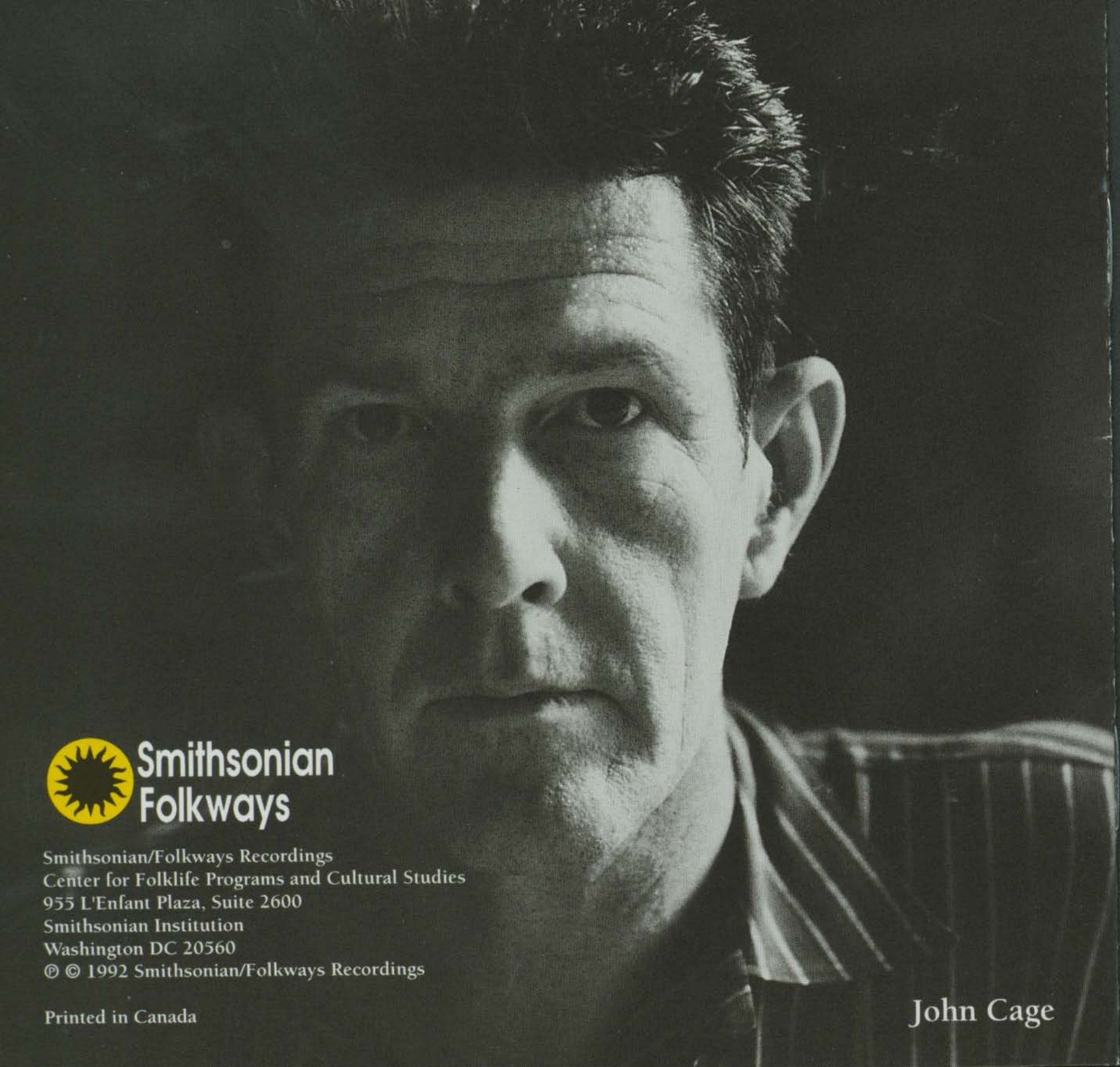
parts but no score. Each one of us rehearsed alone and employed a stop-watch during the actual recording session. Each did what he had to do, bringing about a situation which neither had foreseen.

The manuscript of the *Fontana Mix* is on transparent plastics which may be superimposed in any number of ways. There are ten sheets having points, and ten having differentiated curved lines. There is also a single straight line and a graph having 100 units horizontally and 20 vertically. By placing one of the sheets with points over one with curves and then superimposing the graph, it is possible to connect a point within the graph with one outside by means of the single straight line, and to make measurements which define the production of the sound in a studio for making tape music, specifically, the choice of sound source, alterations of frequency, amplitude, timbre, duration, mixtures, loops, and splicing. More detailed information regarding my methods of producing tape music with special reference to the *Williams Mix* appear in the Avakian album referred to above.

Critics frequently cry, "Dada," after attending one of my concerts or hearing a lecture. Others bemoan the interest in Zen. One of the liveliest lectures I ever heard was given by Nancy Wilson Ross about 1937 at the Cornish School in Seattle. It was called *Zen Buddhism and Dada*. There is a connection possible between the two, but neither Dada nor Zen are fixed tangibles. They change; and in quite different ways in different places and times, they invigorate actions. What was Dada in the twenties is now, with the exception of the work of Marcel Duchamp, just art. What I do, I do not wish blamed on Zen, though without my engagement with Zen (attendance at lectures by Alan Watts, D. T. Suzuki, reading of the literature) I doubt whether I would have done what I have. Recently, I am told, Alan Watts has questioned the relation between my work and Zen. I mention this in order to free Zen from any responsibility for my actions. I shall continue making them, however. I often point out that Dada nowadays has a space, an emptiness, in it that Dada formerly lacked. What, nowadays, New York-mid 20th Century, is Zen?



David Tudor



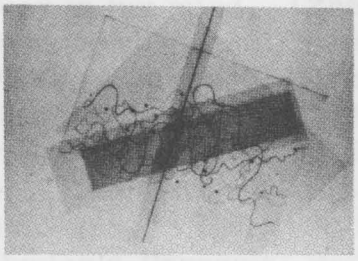
Smithsonian Folkways

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings
Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

Printed in Canada

John Cage

The continuity of the 90 stories was not planned. I simply made a list of all the stories I could think of and checked them off as I wrote them. Some that I remembered I was not able to write to my satisfaction, and so they do not appear. Whenever I have given the talk, someone comes up afterwards and insists that the continuity was a planned one, in spite of the ideas that are expressed regarding purposelessness, emptiness, chaos, etc. One lady, at Columbia, asked, during the discussion following the talk, "What, then, is your final goal?" I remarked that her question was that of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to applicants for fellowships, and that it had irritated artists for decades. Then I said that I did not see that we were going to a goal, but that we were living in process, and that that process is eternal. My intention in putting 90 stories together in an unplanned way is to suggest that all things, sounds, stories (and, by extension, beings) <u>are</u> related, and that this complexity is more evident when it is not over-simplified by an idea of relationship in one person's mind.



David Tudor plays material from his part of the Concert for Piano and Orchestra (1957-58), using tracks from the Fontana Mix (1958-59) as noise elements where these are notated in the Concert. (Manuscript pages of the Concert, together with notes and analytical statements appear in the recording of my 25-year Retrospective Concert at Town Hall, issued by George Avakian, 10 W. 33rd St., N.Y.C. Other manuscript pages, originals, are available at the Stable Gallery, 58th and 7th Ave., N.Y.C.) David Tudor was free to make any continuity of his choice. There was no rehearsal beforehand involving both the reading and the music, for in all my recent music (since Music for Piano) there are parts but no score. Each one of us rehearsed alone and employed a stop-watch during the actual recording session. Each did what he had to do, bringing about a situation which neither had forseen.

The manuscript of the Fontana Mix is on transparent plastics which may be superimposed in any number of ways. There are ten sheets having points, and ten having differentiated curved lines. There is also a single straight line and a graph having 100 units horizontally and 20 vertically. By placing one of the sheets with points over one with curves and then superimposing the graph, it is possible to connect a point within the graph with one outside by means of the single straight line, and to make measurements which define the production of the sound in a studio for making tape music, specifically, the choice of sound source, alterations of frequency, amplitude, timbre, duration, mixtures, loops, and splicing. More detailed information regarding my methods of producing tape music with special reference to the Williams Mix appear in the Avakian album referred to above.

Critics frequently cry, "Dada," after attending one of my concerts or hearing a lecture. Others bemoan the interest in Zen. One of the liveliest lectures I ever heard was given by Nancy Wilson Ross about 1937 at the Cornish School in Seattle. It was called Zen Buddhism and Dada. There is a connection possible between the two, but neither Dada nor Zen are fixed tangibles. They change; and in quite different ways in different places and times, they invigorate actions. What was Dada in the twenties is now, with the exception of the work of Marcel Duchamp, just art. What I do, I do not wish blamed on Zen, though without my engagement with Zen (attendance at lectures by Alan Watts, D. T. Suzuki, reading of the literature) I doubt whether I would have done what I have. Recently, I am told, Alan Watts has questioned the relation between my work and Zen. I mention this in order to free Zen from any responsibility for my actions. I shall continue making them, however. I often point out that Dada nowadays has a space, an emptiness, in it that Dada formerly lacked. What, nowadays, New York-mid 20th Century, is Zen?