

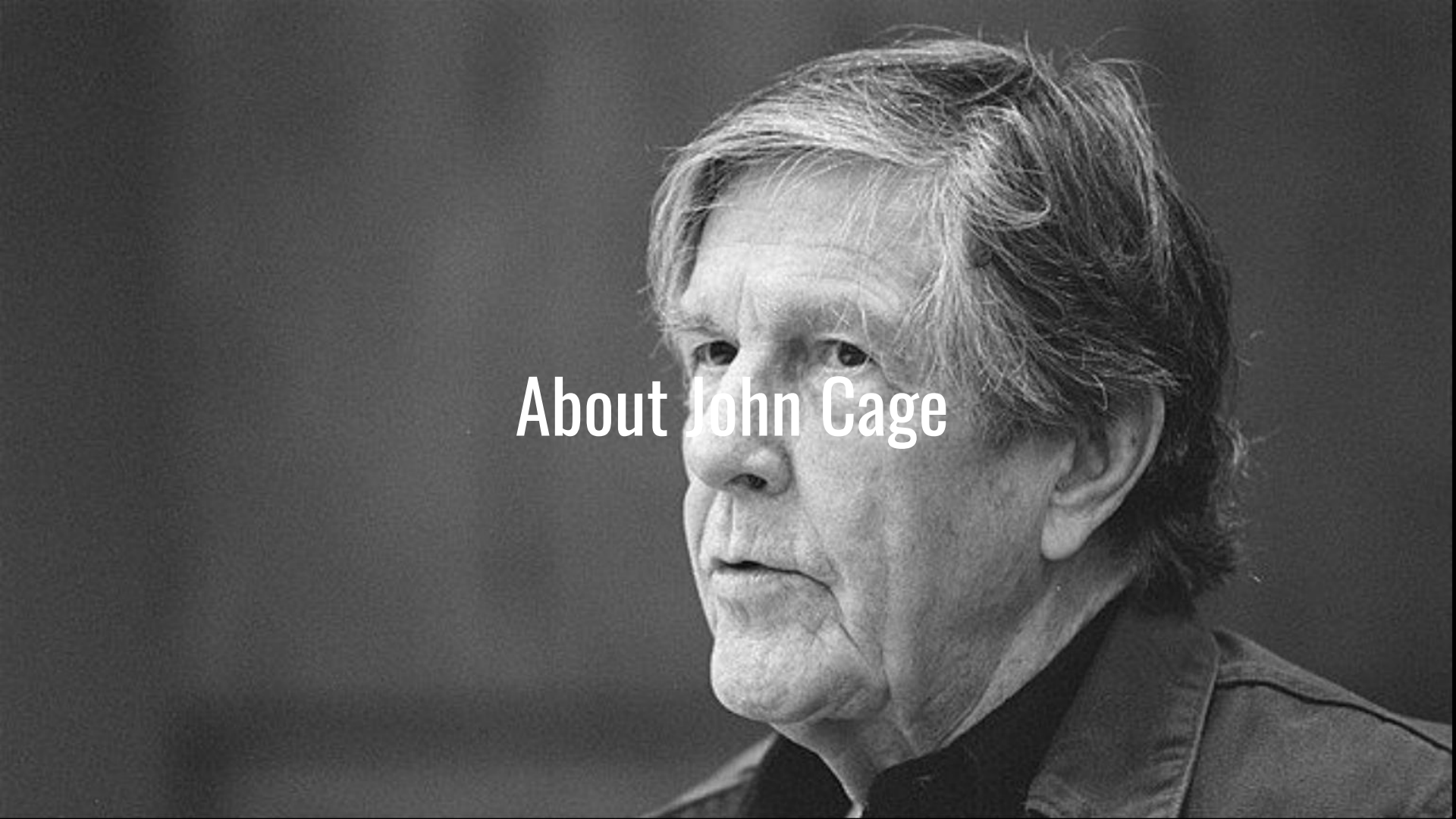
Let me perform something:

Thoughts?

Acceptance and Rejection

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A brief introduction to John Cage

A black and white portrait of John Cage, an older man with short, light-colored hair, looking slightly to the left. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "About John Cage" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

About John Cage

American Experimentalist

An experimenter of sound

- Born in 1912.
- One of the most influential figures in the American Avant-Garde.
- Influences from East Asian cultures.
- Philosophies often challenge pre-existing notions of music

About nothing

4'33"

- Composed in 1952
- In three movements/sections:
 - Movement 1: 33 seconds
 - Movement 2: 2 minutes and 40 seconds
 - Movement 3: 1 minute and 20 seconds.
- Cage instructs the performer(s) not to play anything and to remain silent throughout the performance.
- Contrary to popular opinion, NOT about silence



ma: negative space

- Cage wrote this piece with influence from Zen Buddhism
- 4'33" explores the “negative space”
- Think about traditional performing context:
 - Expectation: Sounds from performers
 - Negative space: sounds from environment (e.g ambient noises)

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wabi-sabi

- Traditionally, scores are used as a means of compacting information for future replication
 - Meaning, scores traditionally reflect the intentions of the composer which remain constant throughout each performance
 - The idea of “incompleteness” is regarded poorly in conventional music, where music often follows a structure.
 - However, the very notion of silence opens up infinite possibilities of interpretation due to infinite possibilities of background noise.
 - Hence 4’33” can be regarded as embracing imperfections.
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Breaking Boundaries

Performers vs Composers vs
Audience

- There has always been a traditional distinction between performers, composers and audience
 - However, the focus of ambient noise in 4'33" suggests that the audience also produces "music"
 - Which raises the question as to who is really producing the music?
 - The composer, the performer, or the audience?
 - This results in the blurring of roles.
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About the Prepared Piano

Let me (actually) perform something:

Demo time!

I need one volunteer for this

Non-piano sounds

On piano instruments

- Prepared piano: “Preparing” the piano by inserting random household items in between the strings.
- Expansion of timbral palette of the piano

World Music

Potential Influences

- New sounds - new “non-Western” sounds
- Potential influence from Eastern instrumental ensembles (e.g gongs in Javanese Gamelan)



John Cage: Three Dances for Two Prepared Pianos