

"After the interval" (concert piece imJC)

For a while now I've been trying to listen to the concert itself (that privileged space where we meet to listen). Is *it* music? What about the gaps in it (the 'intervals') where we're not supposed to listen, where there's 'nothing to hear'? & the 4 minutes and 33 seconds of Cage's piece—it's frame, are they music too? Are they audible?

The fall of 2002 brought with it the 10th anniversary of John Cage's death, the 90th of his birthday, and the 50th anniversary of his composition 4'33". This time of year, which came to stand for Cage-the-name (the Cage who continued composing though often said it was absolutely unnecessary), brought all these questions (listening as affirmation & negation) to the fore.

Walter Zimmermann has expressed his concern that I'm going to objectify you. This is precisely my concern. The problem as I see it lies in the difference between hearing things & hearing them (listening to them) as music—that is, as, possibly, listening to them as something other than what they are: that listening itself is already objectification.

Of course had I written pitches & such there might be 'new' things to hear, something for you to focus on (though of course there'll be no shortage of 'performed' sounds for listening). But my concern is that regardless of what I might have written, the concert would still be there. That the frame that'll frame all tonight's pitches and noises and silences—*and* you as listener, participant—would still be there. Still there, framing & objectifying, but invisibly—in audibly. As both Feldman and Adorno put it, "hearing for us."

So maybe I will objectify you (as I am already with this pseudo-personal style of writing). Or you yourself. As ever in language: we say words, ideas, content, —& we solidify each other and our relations at the same time. But what seems critical, before presenting any new sounds, new sound configurations, new objects, is the critical awareness of this pre-sentation, and what it itself may suggest or entail: to make these questions, to make the concert itself, audible (& not in some situation of metaphoric 'freedom', but bare: leaving as little as possible to distract from the setting's 'objectification'—from the setting as object, and the effects of that setting).

The piece is dedicated to Cage (*in memorium*, in memory of...). And the title's a sort of multiple play on him: on the interval as relation ("but most musicians can't hear a single sound, they listen only to the relationship between two or more sounds")—that is, the continued presence of an objectifying relation (the concert); and on the other hand, the interval as intermission (the average intermission being about the same length as the average new music piece, 20ish minutes—a fact obliquely reflecting 4'33"'s relation to the pop song)—the intermission as the space between or outside the relation—or, in a sort of perpetual future, "after the interval".