

PERFORMING ARIS

2023 — 24



Japan Society Gallery Exhibition

Out of Bounds Japanese Women Artists in Fluxus October 13, 2023 — January 21, 2024



Mieko Shiomi, performing Water Music during Flux Week at Gallery Crystal, Tokyo, 1965.

Out of Bounds: Japanese Women Artists in Fluxus is the first exhibition to fully explore the contributions of four pioneering artists—Shigeko Kubota (1937-2015), Yoko Ono (b. 1933), Takako Saito (b. 1929) and Mieko Shiomi (b. 1938)—to Fluxus, a transnational network of artists, composers and poets that began in the early 1960s. Inspired by earlier avant-garde movements, such as Dadaism, and the experimental work of Marcel Duchamp and

John Cage, Fluxus artists challenged artistic conventions by embracing humor, chance occurrences, and process over product. Near the 60th anniversary of the movement's founding, this exhibition contextualizes the essential role that Kubota, Ono, Saito, and Shiomi played in Fluxus art, events, performances, and publishing.

Japan Society presents

Cage Shuffle

Thurs., Sept. 28 at 7:30 pm

—Followed by a Private Gathering for Artists and Members

Fri., Sept. 29 at 7:30 pm—Followed by an artist Q&A

John Cage's Japan Series - Program #1

Support for John Cage's Japan is generously provided by Doug and Teresa Peterson and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from Nancy and Joe Walker.



2023—2024 Performing Arts Season Support

The season is made possible by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.





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4 Isamitsu

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the opening of the Japan Society Performing Arts' 2023-24 season! Tonight is also the opening of our *John Cage's Japan* series, which continues through this December.

My earliest encounter with the works of John Cage occurred when I was around 17 years old, as a student preparing to major in musicology. The first work I came to know was also arguably Cage's most infamous "piece" (or, silent performance), 4'33". Over time, I continued to accumulate fragmented information about John Cage—including that Cage took Zen classes at Columbia University, was invited to Japan through the invitation of composer Toshi Ichiyanagi, was struck by the Japanese music concept of "ma" (or, silent moment), and that he wrote several works titled with Japanese words; etc... In a nutshell, I understood that Japan greatly influenced John Cage.

Ever since I moved to New York City in 1988, the hometown of Cage's music career, I anticipated that, surely, there would eventually be a concert focusing on the connection of "Cage & Japan." But... after years of anticipation, it never happened. Finally, about 10 years ago, I began thinking, "Maybe I should make it happen..." I set a goal for this event to take place in 2022, because it would be the 60th anniversary of John Cage's first trip to Japan. However, developing this idea into actual programming was not easy.

In January 2017, I saw the premiere of Paul Lazar's *Cage Shuffle* in New York. As my ear caught the names of the many Japanese people with whom Cage had exchanged ideas in Paul's lines, my own idea for the *John Cage's Japan* series was sparked. Placing this dance/theatrical production as a series opening felt absolutely appropriate, portraying John Cage's multi-dimensional and cross-disciplinary approach to music making and artistic expression. Paul and I worked together to locate Japan/Japanese references from over 100 short stories that Cage wrote under the title of *Indeterminacy*. Fortunately, there were more than enough stories to make tonight's Japan-focused version of *Cage Shuffle*. I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Paul and choreographer Annie-B Parson for their excitement in tackling this re-creation for us. Dear audience members, I hope their excitement will be shared with you.

Yoko Shioya Artistic Director

Ula Song

John Cage's Japan Series - Program #1

Cage Shuffle

Performer: Paul Lazar

Choreographer: Annie B. Parson

Movement Consultant: Catherine Gallasso

Texts: John Cage

John Cage's Japan Series continues with:

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Ryoanji

Saturday, Oct. 21 at 8:30 pm

—Pre-concert lecture at 7:30 pm

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

WORLD PREMIERE

Noh-opera/Noh-tation -

Decoding John Cage's Unrealized Project

Thursday, Nov. 16 at 7:30 pm

—Followed by an artist Q&A

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Cage Shock:

Homage to His First Japan Visit

Thursday, Dec. 7 at 7:30 pm

- -Pre-concert lecture at 6:30 pm
- —Followed by a Private Gathering for Artists and Members

ABOUT JOHN CAGE'S TEXTS

In the 1950s, John Cage became known for giving lectures that were musical performances in their own right. When he was asked to give a talk at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels, he decided to follow the suggestion of his friend and collaborator David Tudor and make a talk that was nothing but stories. The 30 stories were about a variety of subjects: Cage's music, Zen stories, friends and colleagues. To deliver the lecture, Cage timed his reading so that each story took exactly one minute: he read brief stories slowly and long stories quickly. While this was going on, Tudor would play Cage's music at the piano. With tongue in cheek, Cage gave his lecture a lengthy, technical-sounding title: "Indeterminacy: New Aspect of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music."

The lecture took on a life of its own. Cage delivered it again and again in various places; it was translated into German for a journal on new music. Cage kept writing new stories to include in the lecture. By the time he recorded it for Folkways Records, there were 90 stories, with new subjects coming into play: mushroom hunting, memories from his youth, traveling on tour.

"Indeterminacy" continued to grow in the 1960s. Some of the stories were used as filler in both of Cage's first two books, *Silence* (1961) and *A Year from Monday* (1967). It became the accompaniment to Merce Cunningham's 1965 dance *How to Pass, Kick, Fall, and Run*. Cage would sit at one side of the stage at a table, reading a sample of his still-growing collection of stories while smoking and sipping a glass of wine.

In many ways, "Indeterminacy," from which the texts for tonight's performance are taken, is a perfect introduction to Cage's music. Cage was an excellent storyteller, and the lecture is always entertaining, even as it slowly builds up a picture of its author's personality and unique way of viewing the world.

— James Pritchett, author of The Music of John Cage

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Paul Lazar (Performer) is a founding member, along with Annie-B Parson, of Big Dance Theater. He has co-directed and acted in works for Big Dance since 1991, including commissions from the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Walker Art Center, Dance Theater Workshop, Classic Stage Company and Japan Society. Lazar directed Christina Masciotti's Social Security at the Bushwick Starr, Elephant Room at St. Ann's Warehouse, and Young Jean Lee's Obie Award-winning We're Gonna Die at Joe's Pub, as well as a version of We're Gonna Die featuring David Byrne at the Meltdown Festival in London. Lazar also directed Bodycast: An Artist Lecture by Suzanne Bocanegra featuring Frances McDormand for the BAM Next Wave Festival, and Major Bang for The Foundry Theatre at St. Ann's Warehouse.

Lazar's one-person performance, *Cage Shuffle*, premiered at the American Realness Festival in 2017 and continues to tour the U.S. and Europe. Lazar has acted in over 40 feature films, including *Snowpiercer*, *The Host, Mickey Blue Eyes, Silence of the Lambs, Beloved, Lorenzo's Oil and Philadelphia*. His most recent stage works were *Macbeth* on Broadway and Irene Fornes' *Mud* at Mabou Mines, directed by Joanne Akalaitis.

Annie-B Parson (Choreographer) is the artistic director of Obie awardwinning Big Dance Theater, which she co-founded in 1991 with Paul Lazar and Molly Hickok. Parson has co-created over 20 large-scale works for such venues as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Old Vic/London, Saddler's Wells/London, The Walker, The National Theater/Paris, Japan Society and The Kitchen. Outside of her company, some of the artists she has worked with include David Byrne, David Bowie, Lorde, St. Vincent, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Wendy Whelan, Anne Carson, Esperanza Spalding, Suzan-Lori Parks, Laurie Anderson, Salt-n-Pepa, Jonathan Demme, and the Martha Graham Dance Company, Parson choreographed and did musical staging for American Utopia, and she choreographed Byrne's musical Here Lies Love which is currently on Broadway; as well as his tours with Brian Eno, and St. Vincent. Parson recently choreographed two operas: Candide at the Lyon Opera, and The Hours at The Metropolitan Opera. Parson's writing has been published in The Atlantic, and The Paris Review; her book The Choreography of Everyday Life is published by Verso Press. Upcoming, with Thomas F. DeFrantz, she is co-editing a book entitled: Dance History(s): Imagination as a Form of Study.

JOHN CAGE TIMELINE

1912:	Born in Los Angeles, California on September 5	1964:	Visits Japan with Merce Cunningham, concluding the Cunningham
			Dance Company's first world tour. Meets Japanese traditional music
1930:	Begins composing		instrumentalists through the introduction of Toru Takemitsu
1933:	Moves to New York, and begins composition lessons with Henry	1967:	Begins incorporating computer-generated chance operations into his
	Cowell and Adolph Weiss		compositions
1935:	Studies with Arnold Schoenberg	1976:	Composes and premieres Renga (連歌), commissioned by the Seiji
1938:	Meets Merce Cunningham		Ozawa-led Boston Symphony
1940:	Invents the prepared piano technique by placing objects between	1979:	Visits Japan to participate in the Pan Asian Festival II in Tokyo for the performance of <i>Aria</i> and <i>Song Books</i>
	the instrument's strings to emulate a percussion ensemble		performance of Ana and Song Books
1942:	Meets Marcel Duchamp	1981:	Attends the opening of the Exhibition of Marcel Duchamp at the
			Museum of Modern Art, Seibu Takanawa, Japan
1944:	Tours with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and pianist David Tudor throughout Europe	1981:	Cage begins composing Europeras 1 & 2, written by the chance operation
Late 1940s -	David Tudor tilloughout Europe		method to incorporate all the elements of opera, such as voice, orchestra,
early 1950s:	Begins attending lectures on Japanese Zen Buddhism by D. T. Suzuki		costumes, stage props, and lighting
1949:	Receives awards from The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation	1983:	Begins writing Ryoanji, inspired by his initial visit to Ryoanji temple in 1962
	and The American Academy to travel to Europe	1984:	Begins working with a computer to make large-scale computer-assisted
1951:	Begins using chance operations in his music, inspired by his		compositions
	relationship to Eastern philosophy and the I Ching, a Chinese	1985	Completes Ryoanji
	classic text, and composes Music of Changes	(March)	Completed Hybridge
1952:	Composes and premieres 4'33", marking the admission of silence	•	Interviewed about Ryoanji by WNYC at Music from Japan's concert
	into Cage's compositional repertoire		at Asia Society, New York City; when asked if it is accurate to say that
			Japan has been an important part of his life and influenced his ideas,
1956:	Starts teaching courses at The New School for Social Research	(4 10)	Cage responds with "It is."
	in New York City	(April) 1988:	Writes a letter to conductor Hiroyuki lwaki to describe intended
1959:	Includes Toshi Ichiyanagi , who moved to New York in 1952, as one		plans for his project Noh-Opera: Or the Complete Musical Works of
	of his students at The New School		Marcel Duchamp (unrealized)
		(December)	
1961:	Writes first and most widely read book, <i>Silence</i> , in which he states	1988:	Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters
	"without my engagement with Zen I doubt whether I would	10.00	
	have done what I have done."	1989:	Visits Japan to receive Kyoto Prize
1962:	Tours Japan for the first time, visits Tokyo, Kyoto, Nara, Osaka,	1992:	Dies on August 12 in New York City, following a stroke
	Matsushima, and Sapporo		

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JOHN CAGE'S JAPAN SERIES

Ryoanji

Sat., Oct. 21 at 8:30 pm

-Pre-concert lecture at 7:30 pm

Tickets: \$40/\$32 members

Composer: John Cage

Director: Tomomi Adachi

Literally connecting Japan and New York together for a one-night only event, New York's **International Contemporary Ensemble** will perform live in Japan Society's theater alongside musicians playing from Japan, streaming onto the stage in real time from a tea house in Kanazawa City. Inspired by the Zen rock garden of the renowned **Ryoanji Temple** in Kyoto, composer John Cage's *Ryoanji* will be interpreted by experimental performer/composer **Tomomi Adachi** in this cutting-edge concert that links two cities.

Trombone: Mike Lormand

Double bass: Lizzie Burns

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