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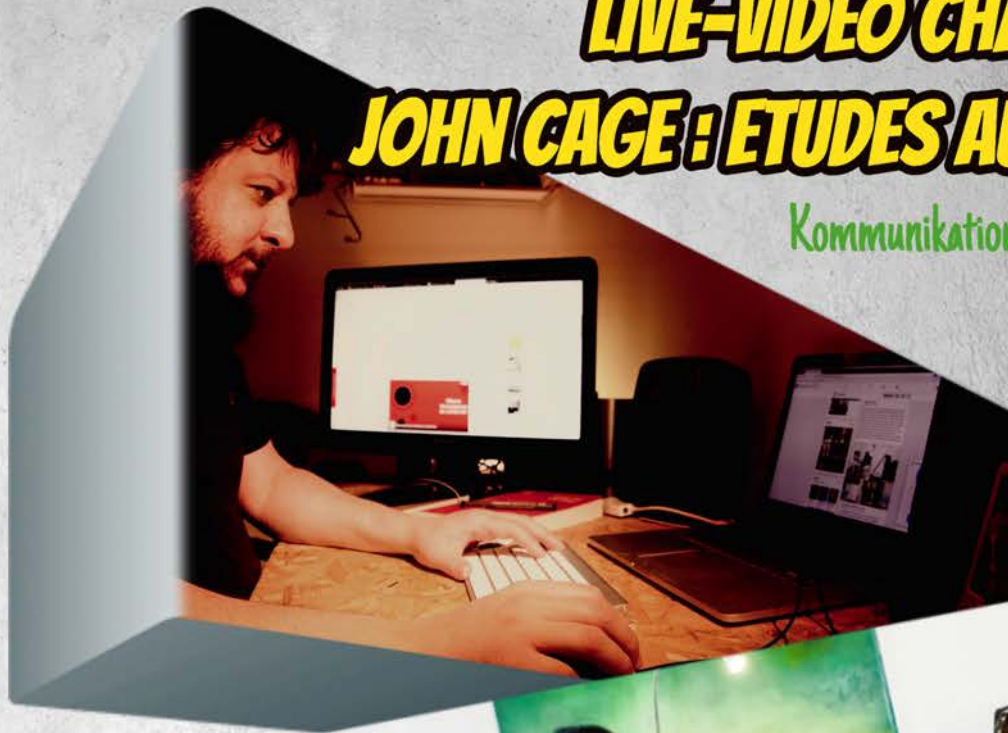
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Acht Brücken Festival 2020

LIVE-VIDEO CHAT **JOHN CAGE: ETUDES AUSTRALES**

Kommunikation in Quarantäne



Dokumentarcomic von Rei Nakamura

Fotos von Anja Limbrunner



Hi Peter! Alles klar bei dir in Köln?



Hi Rei! Ich bin gerade in der Philharmonie angekommen. Was für ein verrücktes Wetter! Und bei Dir?



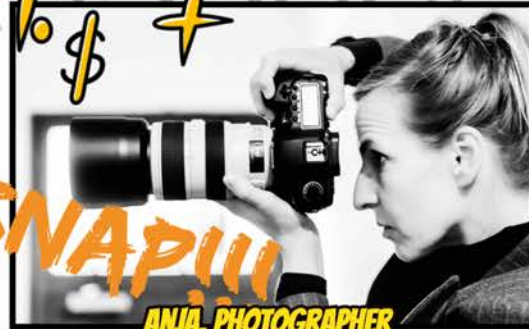
Nee, ein bisschen Regen aber es geht. Hey, können wir das Video vom Live-Chat checken? Ich klicke wieder bei der Testübertragung... siehst du mich?



Das Video scheint zu funktionieren..



Das Warten ist das schlimmste...



ANJA, PHOTOGRAPHER DOCUMENTING THE EVENT



So, I will play the etudes until someone asks a question...

HI EVERYONE!
I am Rei.
Welcome to my live video-chat Etudes Australes!



VINICIUS, COMPOSER, BERLIN



SNAP!!!

Hi Vinicius! ...You are asking...
"How much of Nakamura is part of the piece?"

FINALLY AFTER 9 MINUTES
I NOTICED THE QUESTIONS IN THE CHAT



...quite a lot. I remember when I started practicing this piece... It took me months until I could somehow take an initiative. I didn't know where to start and it takes a while until you can come into this world.



Hi Feliz, nice to have you in the chat!
...your question..."Do you think about performing differently with every performance?"

FELIZ, COMPOSER, GRAZ

Regarding the score, it is as if you are painting a huge picture on a canvas. He decided where you can place your brush, but with which color, which thickness of brush and how much paint he left it all up to you. So yes, there is a lot of Nakamura or let's say, of the interpreter...

Yes, it is different. The place and space influence me a lot. And the instrument. If you get a lot of resonance from the instrument as this one, you can make a longer piece. You can enjoy the resonance longer. The audience plays a role as well! The recording streamed yesterday is a rather fast version. I could not hear the resonance so well and neither did I feel any tension from the audience, since there were no audience and was a studio recording. This makes a big difference for me. I need to have the space and feel that the audience is present.



SNAP!!!



ANJA, WIEDER BEIM

**FOTOGRAPHIEREN UND HILFT UNS
BEI DER KAMERA-EINSTELLUNG**



Anja, was schlägst du vor?

MAURICE, SOUND ENGINEER



A WEEK AGO...

25.04.2020

SWR SCHLOSSBERGSAAL

LUKAS, SOUND ENGINEER

In diesem Winkel passt der Ausschnitt gut!



Was ist mit dem Close-Up?



Kann man die Sterne gut erkennen?



WIR SIND BEREIT!

Sollen wir mit der Aufnahme beginnen?

BACK TO THE CHAT



GORDON, COMPOSER, HANNOVER

ANOTHER CHAT!
Gordon is asking...
"I know the tempo is not specified.
Do you experiment with the tempo?"



Actually, it is not specified even now. I allow the space to help me decide the tempo. My piano has a lot of resonance. Interestingly enough, if a specific resonance sounds in one instrument, it does not mean that it will sound the same in another. You need to discover the resonance of each instrument and in each space. Of course, I would love to have played in the Kölner Philharmonie, which is huge - such a pity! - I can imagine the resonance must be amazing. It must be an exceptional feeling playing under such a high ceiling. Back to tempo, the fast passages determine the tempo. This is based on your physical capacity: how fast can you play the leaps? The physical limitation is a theme here - just like in "Beds and Brackets" by N. A. Huber. What is a human body capable, or not capable of? And yes a tempo extremity, I would like to try in a big hall ...

**NO QUESTIONS...
PERFORMING XXIII FOR TWO
MINUTES, MY FAVORITE ONE,
EXPERIMENTING THE SLOW
TEMPO GORDON SUGGESTED**



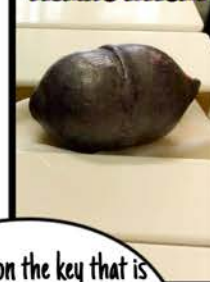
Referring back to the stars that John Cage was inspired by - In this particular piece, I see a few single stars that stand out, the resonance is like the milky way that embeds these single stars.



**PRE-CONCERT TALK WITH
LYDIA JESCHKE
BROADCAST ON MAY 1, WDR
KULTURAMBULANZ**

Resonance is essential in Etudes Australes. The ones with fewer notes have more muted held-on notes. That the resonance can become more foregrounded while the written notes act as triggers. I explained how the resonance is produced in the pre-concert talk but once again, here are the little objects I use.

FISHING WEIGHT



**TRAY MADE WITH FIMO
MODELLING CLAY**



This is a fishing weight and I made a tray to stabilize it.



Place it on top.



Place on the key that is supposed to be held down throughout the piece. These notes are written as diamonds at the beginning of the piece.



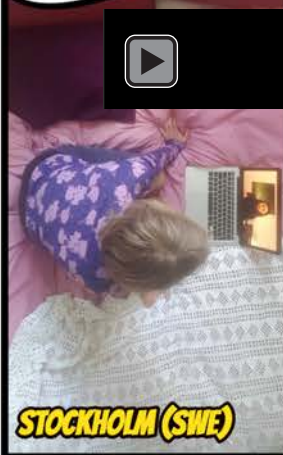
It even looks like a constellation!



GRAZ (AUT)



Have you thought of performing the etudes in a different order?



STOCKHOLM (SWE)

Yes, great question! Actually, my plan was to play them in a different order. My original concert program had three more pieces. Then, I organized them so that the final sound heard as note or as resonance in one etude was the first note of the next etude. However I had to change this to match the projected images, which I got from the Planetarium Freiburg. The idea was that the beginning had more singular pitches (single stars) and that towards the end, as in the last three Etudes, to my mind they are heard more as groups of constellations. Since the images at the end are more direct and fixed into constellations, I decided to arrange this chronologically.

Indeed he did. He wrote for Grete Sultan, a very virtuosic pianist, who was almost 70 at the time. Cage found it to be inappropriate to write arm clusters, or graphic scores. He returned to writing notes! As in many other compositions, he used chance operations and the I-ching to decide which notes to use, and to avoid his own personal preferences. He wanted to be selfless - again an idea in Zen. But he combined this principal with the physical limitation of the human body, in this piece the biggest leap for the hands is a major 9th, and 6 notes is the largest number of pitches to be played in one hand (especially when two notes can be played by one finger).

KÖLN (DE)



When you think that the stars are not positioned next to each other horizontally but that there are distances between the stars since they are in a three dimensional space, the proportions cannot only be considered purely horizontally. I dealt with the proportion a lot by listening. Each sound decides for itself where it belongs. The dynamic also decides almost by itself. When a special resonance is triggered, that is the note to be played with consciousness. Another example... it is like when writing calligraphy: the arm is in continuous motion and the movement behind is what you can see, when you see a good calligraphy. But what you see is only the result of the brush that landed on a two dimensional paper. Just like the calligraphy on paper, the sounds are just results of the motion. And therefore, my physical movements play an important role.

PARIS (FR)



BERLIN (DE)



HANNOVER (DE)



Do you think that Cage was thinking of your physical movement when writing this music?

HOREBEKE (BEL)



In addition to the physical limitation, a further aspect is to consider what lies behind the proportional notation. I believe that the proportions notated in this piece are relative. Unless you play everything much slower, you would not be able to play some of the densely written passages if I read the score according to mathematical precision. Gretés recording, she worked intensively with Cage, confirms this. I do not think that the proportions are absolute and leaps should be played mechanically. It has more to do with aspects of asymmetry and perception, as in Zen Buddhism, which Cage practiced.

KÖLN (DE)



SANTA FE (ARG)



Live music isn't replaceable. It is not possible to have the same experience by listening to a recording. So much gets lost. Especially in a recording, heard on a computer. But right now, all of us are in quarantine, we can't go to a concert hall, or even near to each other. So this is the only way we can communicate with each other.

FREIBURG (DE)



QUITO (ECU)



