

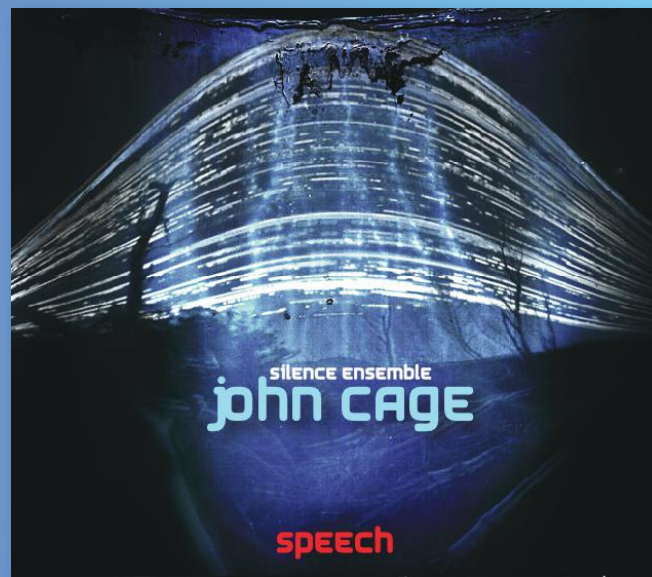
john cage

silence ensemble led by peter urpeth

**radio music for 1-8 performers
each at a single radio (1956), 6 mins**

**imaginary landscape no 5
for any forty-two
recordings (1952, 4 mins)**

**speech for five radios with
news reader(1955, 42 mins)**



These recordings of pieces by John Cage were made at a performance called Silence & Transmission held at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides on 20th September 2012, as part of the celebrations for Cage's centenary. They formed part of 120 Hours For Cage - a global celebration of Cage's work organised by The John Cage Trust.

The unifying theme of these works was not only their exploration of two key factors (silence and transmission) in Cage's compositional practice, but also a presentation of pieces that are neutral frameworks for site specific realisation. The site of this performance - an arts venue that is more than 50 miles off the north west coast of Scotland, and the source suppliers of materials for the pieces (a charity shop and a newsagents in Stornoway), combine to create work that is uniquely figurative of the location and aspects of its culture, environment and community.

Radio Music (1956), for 1-8 performers each at a single radio, and Speech (1955), for five radios with news reader, both contain instructions for tuning to specific radio frequencies which, in the location of these performances, were not in the majority of cases currently being used for any form of transmission, (or the location was so remote from the broadcast source as to be inaudible), or were close enough to occupied frequencies to contain anything other than white noise, atmospheric, thermal noise and other interference. Occasionally in these performances, the tuning did land on very clear and strong signals from commercial broadcasters. It is perhaps the balance between these elements that creates the locational and temporal specificity of these performances,

the greater noise elements representing perhaps the greater degree of 'remoteness' from centres of greater broadcast clutter. At the time of these recordings, it was also the policy of the UK government to switch off analogue broadcast frequencies. At that time, there was only very sparse access to digital signals in the Outer Hebrides, resulting in a situation that whilst these performances were the first time these pieces had been performed in the islands, it could also be the last.

In Speech, the news reader (John Cavanagh) selected two publications (the number specified in the score) that had been published and available locally on the day of the performance - the local newspaper (The Stornoway Gazette) and a trade title that covered a key local industry (Fishing News).

Imaginary Landscape No.5 (1952) for any 42 recordings, was constructed by Peter Urpeth from 2011-2012, using only the phonograph LP recordings available for sale at The Bethesda Charity Shop, Stornoway. Each Saturday Peter urpeth would use the I Ching to generate a random number and would then visit the charity store and count in from the front of the pile of recordings available according to the random number. He bought the resulting LP and that recording was then used in its place in the exact sequence specified in Cage's chart/score. The LPs were also recorded in the condition in which they were sold by the charity store. As such, complete with a dominance of Gaelic music, this version presents a snap-shot of site and time specific disposed of music that also reflects the discardees' preferences in terms of the beneficiary charity, in this case a store that supports the work of a local hospice.

Peter Urpeth (c) 2017

Radios: Peter Urpeth / Stuart Wilding / Gerry Loose / Jon Macleod
John Cavanagh News reader: John Cavanagh
Score realisations: Peter Urpeth. All works are published by Peters Edition
Front cover artwork from Deiseal (Sun-wise) a series of log-exposure
solargraphs taken on the isle of Lewis by Jon Macleod
Performance photo by John MacLean

Our thanks to An Lanntair Arts Centre, Peters Edition and The John Cage Trust

